

In some cases the attempted quotations are very ludicrous as e. g. in the case of the candidate who asserts that Hydrogen Sulphide is an important *bleaching* agent and gives as evidence the story of the skipper (Williams, page 121) who "one night anchored his newly painted vessel near the Boston gas house, where the refuse was deposited with its escaping HS. In the morning to his consternation, the craft was found to be black. HS had come in contact with the lead in the white paint forming black PbS:

There were not many answers as glaringly absurd as this, but there were large numbers which contained internal evidence of being simply answers from memory.

Now, science is not intended to be a memory exercise, but to be a means of training the powers of observation and reasoning. If the text book is to be wholly or partially committed to memory, it would be far better to abolish the study of science, and to commit to memory passages from Shakespeare's plays, or from the Book of Psalms, rather than from Williams' Chemistry or Wormell's Natural Philosophy.

It would, therefore, be desirable to take steps to stop this memorising of science text books as much as possible. To a certain extent this can be done, by selecting questions with this end in view; but such a course would unduly restrict the range of questions to be asked. I would suggest that notice should be sent to teachers, and through them given to candidates, to the effect that henceforth answers which are quotations from the text book, and which, though partially, even largely accurate, show internal evidence of having been written down from memory, will be regarded as of no value; and that answers which are quotations from text books, and which though entirely accurate leave the examiner in doubt as to whether or not the candidate really understood what he has written, will be regarded as of little value. Such a regulation as this would show teachers and candidates that memorising is of no avail and that a little intelligent work will not only be educationally better than a large amount of memorising but will also go farther on examination day. The latter part of the regulation suggested may seem a little hard, viz: that a perfect answer should get low marks because expressed in the words of the text book. But it is the business of the candidate to convince the examiner by his answers of his mastery of the subject. A mere quotation from the text book is not thus convincing; while if the candidate really understands the passage which he quotes he can readily give the substance of it in his own words.

Should the above suggestion be adopted, while the questions set at examinations were maintained at their present order of difficulty, it would probably result that the number of passes would be much, perhaps very much, reduced. As the study of science would thus be discouraged, it would be desirable at the same time to make the questions simpler than they have usually been hitherto. To one who judges of an examination by the difficulty of the questions asked, the standard of the science portion of the 'leaving examination' would in that case appear to have been lowered. In reality however it would have been raised, and as the methods of teaching improved it might gradually be raised still more, until the real standard became what the apparent standard now is."