

interesting as a history of an upright public man; and it contains a remarkable proof of the usefulness in some cases of competitive examination. Evidently, as Lord Althorp said himself, he would have sunk into a mere sportsman, absorbed in hunting or shooting, and have been lost to the country, had not his sense of his powers been awakened and his ambition kindled by a college competition. Against mere test examinations, without competition, such as are usual in American colleges, nothing can well be said. No other method of ascertaining proficiency has been devised, and it will hardly be pretended that Newton or Faraday would have been turned from his natural bent by having to pass a college examination in mathematics or chemistry. No doubt love of the study and the duty of self-culture are much to be preferred as motives to compulsion or ambition. But to trust to these alone would be to consign a large proportion of our present students to idleness and vice. If examinations are to be abolished, the students must be picked. Imperfect, of course, any examination test is; but at Oxford and Cambridge the result generally accords with the previous reputation of the students, so that the injustice can hardly be very great. A university, of course, is concerned only with the results of literary and scientific education; it does not pretend either to impart or to test any practical qualities, except industry and perseverance, and to quarrel with the examination system for not selecting men of action is to quarrel with a circle for not being a square. That in any examination there is tolerably managed mere "cram"—that is, facts got up by rote—can compete with real knowledge few who have had experience in examinations will assert. We should like to see the man who, being ignorant of mathematics, could be crammed so as

to solve mathematical problems, or who, being ignorant of Latin, could be crammed so as to write the language correctly. But, as Mr. Lowe said, "Cram is what I know and you don't."

The student's health, no doubt, is sometimes injured by overstrain in preparing for examinations: it is probably injured at least ten times as often by the indulgences to which idleness is prone. But there is no need for overstraining. Even under the competitive system regular work for a moderate number of hours each day will do all that can possibly be done. The mind is not a pitcher; it can take in knowledge only by an active effort, of which it becomes incapable when it is jaded. In the examination itself, to produce your knowledge you must be fresh and vigorous; and the candidate who wishes to succeed had better reduce than increase the number of his hours of work as the time for the ordeal draws near. Bad habits will tell on the student as well as on other men. If your pupil breaks down, inquire whether he is over-reading himself; but inquire also how many cigars he smokes, and whether he works late at night. Rise early, reward your own virtue in so doing with a cup of tea or coffee, if Dr. Dio Lewis is not looking on; get a good deal of your work done before breakfast, when the understanding, though not the fancy, is at its best; spend the evening in recreation, and sleep well. Then if you break down, you may justly charge it to the account of examination or Evolution.

The proposal to abolish examinations presents itself in rather ominous conjunction with an almost avowed desire on the part of the holders of academical endowments to rid them of educational duty, indeed of fixed duty of every kind, and to turn the headships and fellowships into places of literary and scientific leisure. Universities, it is said, ought to be