

sics or Mathematics, where the pupil is required to do something, an examination is nearly always a good test; while in the case of others, such as History or Geography, where it is a matter rather of memory, unless the questions are well selected they are of little practical value. Yet, even in such subjects, an experienced and judicious examiner can set a paper that will be a fair test of the candidates' thoroughness of preparation. And here, more than anywhere else, perhaps, should be tested their knowledge of English composition and grammar. Lists of names—of kings or battles, of rivers or lakes—should be asked for in moderation, and should be replaced by short essays on topics connected with the subjects under discussion, the accuracy of the facts given being also taken into account in making the awards.

An examiner such as has just been referred to, never stoops to the perhaps too common practice of asking about unimportant things little likely to be known, or of giving prominence to details best left in books, to be sought there when wanted,—in other words, he does not ask "catch questions."

One of the things often urged against the efficiency of examinations in general, is the fact that many pupils have a happy faculty for "getting up" just what is required shortly before the examination. It is said that they derive no benefit therefrom. No doubt there are such pupils, and, more than that, there are teachers who, having, as it were, made a special study of the chances of examinations, are able to "get up" a whole class for the ordeal, and have them pass with flying colours. But this is not altogether the fault of the examination; and even this aptitude is not without its value, for it shows a power of acquisition and retentiveness not to be entirely overlooked.

In spite, then, of all that can be said, not without some truth, to the contrary, examinations are valuable in at least three particulars. First, they act as stimulants to the doing of good work, though, of course, a danger lies here that scarcely needs pointing out. Second, they set a standard which may serve as a guide to a conception of what learning really is; hence that standard must not be too low. Then, most important of all, they incite the pupil to learn how best to produce his acquired knowledge, and how to express himself in a correct and logical manner.