

the meaning of the new movement in education.

Now, far be it for the Journal to recommend a revolution. That is not the way of true reform. It will take twenty years to reach the goal we now have in view, and then there will be just as urgent a demand for another step forward. But can we not keep moving? As a matter of fact we are moving, and the people intend that we shall move. Teachers and educationalists should be the servants of the people.

Are the Examinations a Test of School Efficiency ?

Of all absurd things in education none is more absurd than this that parents and trustees should measure school success by the results of the mid-summer examinations. All the examinations pretend to test is the knowledge and the power of the students, and the power tested is very limited indeed. A good school considers things of greater moment such as physical and moral condition, attitude to truth, beauty and goodness, habit, taste, character, conduct, ability to do things, power of initiative, power of self-control, knowledge of men and nature, disposition, tolerance, social power, and attitude—all these and a dozen other things that will suggest themselves. How absurd, then, to make success or failure in one little field the measure of worth. Down in Ontario and in the Western States fifty years ago it was common to have tests in spelling. All the schools in a township or a state sent representatives to the annual contest.

The school sending the winner was heralded as the best school in the township or state. As well proclaim the lady to be the best dressed who wears the finest buttons on her shoes.

Schools that place a high value on examination results often fail to attend to weightier matters. This is true in the colleges particularly. One reason why

teaching in the elementary schools is, as a rule, superior to that in colleges and universities is the fact that the teachers are free to work for something more than examination results.

As a matter of fact, it is a very easy thing to get pupils through examinations. Those who have coached students know how simple a matter it is for a cunning instructor to select probable questions and drill on these. A coach in this city, looking over the mathematical papers set for ten years past, was so successful in handling a green student that in three nights instruction he had guessed over two-thirds of the problems. This is but one illustration. Up and down the country there are coaches of this kind at work all the time in the schools. They are not by any means our best teachers. This Journal does not wish teaching to be degraded to the level of coaching, and consequently protests against the action of parents and trustees who take a narrow view.

A gentleman writing from an eastern province, soliciting an appointment in the West, concluded his letter with this sentence, "I have always passed from 85 to 95 per cent. of my pupils." To us that was a doubtful recommendation. Evidently some teachers have not advanced beyond the examination ideal.

Now, of course, it is possible for all the other worthy things mentioned above to go along with success at examinations. It is possible. That is all that need be said. But success at examination is not pedagogically the kingdom of heaven, which if attained will ensure the attainment of all things else.

The Journal congratulates those students who have succeeded at the examinations; it congratulates schools that have had average or more than average success where such schools are in other respects worthy; but it congratulates chiefly those schools which have exalted individual and community character and efficiency even at the expense of lesser things. And all this is written