

A Critical Examination.

BY A VICTIM.

WHAT kind of an examination is the fairest test? At the present time, we are no more tempted to enter into a convincing answer to this question, than to sketch the history of the philosopher's stone or the elixir of life. A discussion on any of these topics would be equally fascinating in interest and futile in results. We have been schooled by long practice, to recognize examinations as a painful necessity, an adjunct, a kind of air-brake of modern civilized life, as distinguished from the liberty of the untutored savage. No more would we seek to mitigate the miseries attached to this modern inquisition, or rob it of its terrors—to attempt this were to deal a most unfair blow at the end which it has been largely designed to serve. Rather would we now draw attention to a few most singular expressions under which questions are not unfrequently disguised, to the wonderment and confusion of the student:

At the very outset, we must record our abhorrence of all questions beginning with the words, Tell what you know about, &c. There is no evil intention or design which arouses suspicion sooner than these words. On the one hand, the examiner shows a ruthless intention to sound the mind of his prey to the very depths, while the latter is apt to place himself upon his guard and maintain a cold reserve. It has been suggested that questions such as the above are interspersed over a paper, in order that the examiner may relieve the dull monotony of his work, by occasional fits of smothered laughter at the ridiculous simplicity of the unfortunate ones, who have been momentarily betrayed into the trap. We cannot vouch for the truth of this plausible explanation. Apart from this, however, there are manifest objections to questions couched in the above terms. The student, as is most likely, may be a man of comprehensive mind, and could easily compile a quarto volume on what he knows of the point in hand, if he but had the time. Even if his knowledge is limited to a minimum, the case would not be altered or rather would be vastly improved. He might then well reply that he knows nothing of the subject, yet for this correct, concise, and admirably unambiguous answer, the inconsistent examiner is pleased to give no credit. Thus, in either case, the student is heavily handicapped. In the first instance, the answer cannot really be given owing to a far too wide grasp of the subject. In the latter case the correct answer goes for nothing. It is evident that the obnoxious phrase has done service long enough. Not less objectionable, though infinitely more dignified, is the expression, Criticise, &c. It is not unfrequently remarked that the world is plagued with critics. It may be so. But who shall censure the helpless student, if he is forced in his own defence, and against his conscience, to come under the above category, so sweepingly condemned? The explanation of the above oft repeated charge is, perhaps, to be sought in the fact that it is extremely easy to criticise. But if this statement were applied to an examination paper, we should be landed on the climax of a *reductio ad absurdum*. To credit an examiner with an easy question is too great a stretch of charity, is, to say the least, uncharitable. But leaving this aspect of the case, it is very apparent that critics, like doctors, were made to disagree. If the student, as is natural, is gifted with keen discernment and piercing insight, and if the examiner accidentally happens to be open to conviction, then jus-

tice may prevail. Again, if the student merely repeats what he has heard at second-hand, then he gives no criticism at all, and therefore is not entitled to a single mark. If he is asked to criticise a work which he has never seen, much less read, then is not a premium placed on pilfering from some one else an opinion which cannot be verified? The student becomes a plagiarist of the first water, and the examiner aids and abets him. Is this proceeding consistent with a high sense of honor and self-respect?

(To be continued.)

Coin des Lecteurs de Langue Francaise.

NOUVELLES ET FAITS DIVERS.

M. LE PROFESSOR COUSSIRAT, qui a eu une douloureuse attaque de lumbago, est enfin sur pied après avoir gardé la chambre pendant de longues semaines.

M. LE PASTEUR Dionne est sur le point de quitter Namur où il a passé plusieurs mois. Son nom a été mis sur la liste des *probationers*.

M. I. P. BRUNEAU a été appelé à desservir l'église française de Kankakee, Illinois. Il a accepté et nous quittera sous peu. Nous lui souhaitons beaucoup de succès et aussi peu de fièvre tremblante que possible.

M. A. CAUBOUÉ, pasteur à Joliette, a été appelé à St. Hyacinthe. Il doit s'y installer sous peu.

Les améliorations faites dans l'église du *Sauveur*. à Montréal, ont coûté \$545.00, dont le troupeau a contribué \$150.00. Ce petit troupeau a donné plus de \$300.00 pendant l'année.

Voici le tableau des nominations des étudiants aux postes missionnaires pour l'été:—MM. J. L. Morin, Joliette; S. Rondeau, Montebello; A. B. Clement, Namur; A. Groulx, Grenville; V. Groulx, Bille Rivière; E. F. Seylaz, Grand Falls, N.B.; T. Lockert, St. Jude; P. Briol, St. Jean Chrysostome; S. A. A. Thomas, Otter Lake; J. E. Duclos, Cap Breton.

LE JOURNAL a définitivement passé entre les mains de MM. les étudiants, ce dont je me réjouis d'une joie fort grande! M. J. L. Morin, mon sympathique ami, a été nommé rédacteur du *Coin des Lecteurs Français*, et M. Thomas, le chanteur fort connu, rédacteur adjoint. Bon courage et beaucoup de succès aux confrères qui nous succèdent et nous remplacent tout à la fois. Nous disons adieu au journal. *Sic transit!*...

LES exercices de clôtures du collège presbytérien ont eu lieu le mercredi soir, 4 courant, avec un éclat inaccoutumé. Le *Morrice Hall* regorgeait de monde. Les presbytériens les plus huppés de la ville étaient là, ainsi qu'un grand nombre de pasteurs de la campagne, tout aussi huppés. L'estrade craquait sous le nombre des professeurs, des chargés de cours et des bacheliers en théologie dont les robes, les épitoges et les chausses aux différentes couleurs faisait un très-bel effet. On a fait quatre gradués, cinq bacheliers en théologie et un docteur, le doyen lui-même. Il y a longtemps que nous souhaitions ce grade pour lui. M. Morin s'est distingué comme toujours. Quatre prix, formant un total de \$150.00, et la première place de l'année n'est pas mal pour un homme qui étudie dans une langue étrangère et qui a enseigné cinq heures et demie pendant tout l'hiver. MM. Thomas, Seylaz, Clément, V. Groulx, A. Groulx et S. Rondeau se sont aussi distingués.

Le banquet de l'*Alma Mater* a pleinement réussi; à peu près 120 convives, 3½ heures à table, 19 discours, une abondance de fleurs et de jolies femmes, et un menu...!

ME sera-t il permis de dire que petit à petit l'esprit du monde se glisse dans notre collège? La richesse arrive, les titres et les insignes se multiplient: gardons-nous d'encourager chez nos jeunes étudiants cette ambition qui n'a pas pour but suprême le salut des âmes. Pour nous, étudiants et pasteurs, le reste ne doit être que fumée.