

It is confessedly much easier to find fault with our present system, and to point out its many defects, than it is to suggest remedies, or to invent any method by which knowledge may be tested without involving similar difficulties and evils; but it will be something to diagnose the disease, to know in what respects our methods are injurious, and to trace the injuries to their causes; we shall then be able to consider whether there is any other method which can be adopted which shall be attended by better results.

The protesters have left us in no doubt as to the evils which they discern in nearly all parts of our present educational system. "Alike," they say, "in Public Elementary schools, in schools of all grades and for all classes, and at the universities, the same dangers are too often showing themselves under different forms. Children are treated by a public department, by managers and schoolmasters, as suitable instruments for earning Government money; young boys of the middle and richer classes are often trained for scholarships, with as little regard for the future as two-year-old horses are trained for races; and young men of real capability at the universities are led to believe that the main purpose of education is to enable them to win some great money prize, or take some distinguished place in an examination."

This is plain speaking, and it is plain speaking by men who know what they are talking about. Moreover, it tells us the simple truth, which is plain enough, when it is pointed out, to all who have eyes and who are willing to use them. The subscribers to the memorial protest against such a misdirection of education, and against the evils that actually and necessarily arise from it, and that they may not lay themselves open to the charge of sheltering themselves under vague generalities, they proceed to state very distinctly the evils which they denounce.

In the first place they notice the *physical mischief* resulting. This is seen in the diminution of bodily vigour and the consequent inability to resist certain forms of disease to which the young are exposed. But even in cases where these tangible ill effects are not disclosed, there are grounds for believing that the illegitimate demands made upon the youthful constitution, when it should be consolidating in all its parts, are made at the expense of future vigour and capability. Every one who has had practical acquaintance with the work of education must know how needful are these warnings. It is well-known that successful candidates for the Indian Civil Service, one of the most exacting in the way of examination, have often wrecked their health, and sometimes permanently, in the work of preparation.

But physical mischief is not the only evil consequence of the present system. There are also *equally serious evils of an intellectual and moral kind*. Among these the protest enumerates the following: 1. "That under the prize system all education tends to be of the same type;" 2. "That the preponderating influence of examinations destroys the best teaching;" 3. "The true value of different kinds of education cannot be so intelligently considered and so easily measured by the public when these great prizes are in existence."

These are serious indictments, and we strongly recommend the illustration given of them in the protest to the consideration of our teachers and others who have the control of the education of the country, and, indeed, to the governing boards of our schools, and to the parents of the children who will ultimately have to decide what method of education shall be adopted.

No less noteworthy than the largely signed protests are the brief comments upon it which have been published by Professors Max Müller, E. A. Freeman, and Frederic Harrison. Professor Müller tells us that he "did not sign the protest with a light heart," since nearly forty years ago he did his best "to prove the necessity of examinations for admission to the Civil Service;" and he thinks he was then substantially in the right, although he has no doubt at all as to the existence of the grave evils against which the protest is directed.

Here is a testimony, the testimony of a sober thinker, an enthusiast for learning, and one who is in thorough sympathy with the general progress of modern thought and knowledge, a testimony the serious import of which is not easily exhausted: "From what I have seen at Oxford and elsewhere, all real joy in study seems to me to have been destroyed by the examinations as now conducted. Young men imagine that all their work has but one object—to enable them to pass the examinations. Every book they have to read, even to the number of pages, is prescribed. No choice is allowed; no time is left to look either right or left. What is the result? The required number of

pages is got up under compulsion, therefore grudgingly, and after the examination is over, what has been got up is got rid of again like a heavy and useless burden. Nothing is converted in *succum et sanguinem*. The only thing that seems to remain is an intellectual nausea—a dislike of the food swallowed under compulsion."

Many of our teachers in this country have given precisely the same testimony. Professor Müller attributes a good deal of the fault to the examiners, and his remarks on the subject are of great weight: "In England most examiners are young men, in Germany they are invariably old. The 'ordinary professors,' who alone examine for academic degrees in German universities, try to find out what candidates have learnt and know; our young examiners seem chiefly bent on finding out what candidates do not know." We wonder if many persons interest themselves in the examination papers which are placed before the students, candidates for matriculation and for degrees, in our Canadian universities. Some of them will be found rather surprising. Not very long ago we had an opportunity of reading a series of questions on English grammar, and we can testify that most of the questions were of the most technical character, questions of which many excellent English scholars could answer very few, and which, alas! for the most part, might have been answered by persons who had hardly any real, thorough, and practical knowledge of the language.

We will only adduce further the testimony of Professor Freeman which is entirely to the same effect, and it is, as he remarks himself, the testimony of one who knew old Oxford and who now knows new Oxford, and who is the better able to compare and contrast them, because he has not been living in the University during the period of transition and change. "Just now," he says, "it seems to be understood that examinations are the chief end of life, at any rate of University life; they would seem to be thought to have an *opus operatum* merit for both the examiner and the examined. The object seems to be to multiply examinations as much as possible, to split them up and—what is called to 'specialize' them—to the extreme point. A man is not, as of old, wholly plucked or wholly passed; with the ingenuity of Italian tyrants, a piece of him is plucked or passed, while the rest of him is kept for the sport of another day. . . . I have deeply to thank my Oxford undergraduate course for causing me carefully to read several books, *Aristotle's Ethics* at their head, which I otherwise might not have read at all or might have read less thoroughly. But I do not thank it at all for examining me in anything. I do not mean because I only got a second class; for I got the 'pecuniary value' of a first class in the shape of a fellowship. What I do mean is that I read with very little comfort or pleasure, while there was before me the spectre of an examination, deadening everything and giving a wrong motive for one's work. When I had got my degree and my fellowship, I said, 'Now, I will begin really to read.' I began in October, 1845, and I have never stopped yet."

The reply to all this will be to ask for the remedy. What, then, do you propose to do? And this is a question which is not to be answered off hand. But it is a question which must sooner or later be answered; and the sooner we take it in hand, the better it will be for us all. For one thing, we must, to some extent, retrace our steps and discover at what point we have left the right track. If we cannot get rid of *competitive* examinations, we must minimize them as far as possible. We understand that they are unknown at the German Universities, and these certainly turn out educated, scholarly, thoughtful men. They are unknown at the University of Michigan. If we cannot do away with them, we might at least diminish the number of subjects with which the candidates are required to cram themselves. Let examiners, moreover, be a little more rational in their examinations, and let those who employ them look after them. It will be a miserable result of our fancied improvements if we verify Professor Max Müller's complaint, that our present method turns out nothing but mediocrities; for, as he remarks, "if history teaches anything, it teaches us that no country remains great without really great men, without a few men different from the rest."

"ROMANCE," says Andrew Lang, "appears to be, in literature, that element which gives a sudden sense of the strangeness and the beauty of life; that power which has the gift of dreams, and admits us into the region where men are more brave and women more beautiful and passions more intense than in ordinary existence. A million of novels about the Spanish Main may not be so romantic as a dozen lines spoken on the moonlit terrace of Belmont."

THE CHURCH AND THE PUBLIC.

IT is often said that publicity is the true protection against all kinds of evils—jobbing, injustice, and all the rest of it, and no doubt there is a great deal of truth in the saying. Very few people, indeed, can be trusted without supervision to do precisely to another as they would that that other should do to them. Town Councils are not immaculate or infallible, and have been known to perpetrate jobs for the benefit of friends or even for their own benefit, when the light from without has not fallen upon their proceedings. Even Church Courts, under whatever name—Synods, Sessions, Church meetings, or however they may be called—have been carried away, sometimes by prejudice, sometimes even by baser sentiments, so that they did not execute judgment or justice. As a rule, then, we are altogether in favour of publicity.

But we may have a little too much of it; and we think we have had a great deal too much of it in the case of the Reverend Mr. Jeffery and the Western Methodist Church. In saying this we are not specially blaming Mr. Jeffery or anybody else, but we are drawing attention to a state of things which is threatening to become a nuisance, and which is certainly doing harm to the public religious sentiment. It is for this reason, and not because we want to meddle with the affairs of any religious community, or even to point out the misconduct of any particular person, that we offer our comments upon this case.

It would be very difficult to mention a single point in this unhappy business which has been satisfactory from the beginning to the end of it. We do not blame the reporters with their sensational headings and their columns of interviewing. Reporters, like other men, must live: and in order to live they must work, and their work must be of the kind that people want and will pay for. It is plain that the public are a trifle hypocritical in reference to these matters. They complain of the floods of gossip which deluge the columns of the daily papers, and yet they buy eagerly the papers which contain them, and, if such things were not found in the papers, they would not buy them.

The fault, then, principally, is in the bad state of public opinion and sentiment on these subjects; and the improvement in these respects must be gradual, and must be brought about by the use of all lawful means. Until this happy consummation shall come a little nearer, we may at least make such comments upon particular incidents in Mr. Jeffery's case as may help to the formation of "a right judgment" on matters of this kind. In doing so we are guilty of no intrusion into the private affairs of any individual, or congregation, or community; we are simply exercising our undoubted right, nay, we are performing our bounden duty, of commenting upon facts which are not only public, but which have been made public by those who were interested in the occurrences.

One of the most sensible utterances in connection with the whole affair was the answer given by Mr. Jeffery to one of his latest interviewers. It was no use, he said, going back upon the past, it was better to let by-gones be by-gones. It is a pity that Mr. Jeffery and his friends, and his foes did not come to this conclusion a little earlier. It would certainly have prevented a great deal of unpleasant and unprofitable discussion, and a different termination of the dispute might have been reached.

There is some difficulty in ascertaining the beginning, or rather the beginners of the scandal. One thing, however, is abundantly plain, that there was not the least shadow of a ground for the rumour that the respected gentleman who has just resigned the Western Methodist Church had been guilty of intemperance in any form or shape. Not only was it testified by those who had intimate acquaintance and constant communication with him, during the time to which the accusation referred, that no example of the kind had come under their notice; but on the other side there was no attempt whatever to produce any testimony in support of the charge.

Such a state of matters would hardly be intelligible except in an age in which a number of good people have got carried away by the fanaticism of prohibition. It has been said that Mr. Jeffery does not hold the views on that subject which are commonly entertained by members of his communion. We know that persons who are extremely zealous on the side of prohibition are apt to have a bad opinion of those who refuse to go the whole way with them; and it is quite possible that this was the beginning of the trouble. It is the most charitable as well as the most reasonable explanation of the affair. Unless it is found here, we must go further and find an explanation in personal malice or hostility, a theory which is not lightly