

opened their undergraduate courses to extra-mural students, unless, as in the case of Queen's University, Kingston, only to a limited extent. The argument in favor of the system may be put, as Mr Jennings puts it in a communication to *The Australian School-master*. The mediæval system of giving oral instruction is still essential for the education of young children, but persons who have reached the sixth standard in the State schools, or the sub matriculation class in a private school, may enter on any pursuit by way of earning a livelihood, and, without neglecting the business of the moment, prepare for higher or more congenial pursuits, if more devoted to Minerva than to Mercury. Everything that could be said by way of explanation may be *written*; and written explanations have one very obvious advantage—they may be kept till they are fully and adequately mastered. A spoken explanation may be but half comprehended and soon forgotten; but *littera scripta manet*. In country places there are few amusements for winter evenings that are not injurious; the study of some subject, under expert guidance, gives perennial joy, and is a less expensive amusement than possibly any other.

A telegraphic despatch was lately sent from England to India in which it was stated that "Mr. Wren, the celebrated crammer," was dead, and a contemporary holds up his hands at the phraseology of the message, and exclaims—what a reputation to have—to be known to the world and handed down to posterity as "the celebrated crammer." What Canadian teacher, we may say on our own part, would care to have such a phrase written on his tombstone, even if it be only the idle spoken phrase of a newspaper reporter? That is only an idle spoken expression, one who knew Mr. Wren and his life-work declares, when

he says: "Knowing what we do of the character of the man, we can imagine his ghost chuckling, if not glorying, in a title which is an unbounded libel on his life-work. The men who went to Mr. Wren were already largely educated, and in most cases had the necessary information at their disposal. It was Mr. Wren's function to teach them how to make the very best use of their information and brains, and because he succeeded to an extraordinary extent by his ability, his energy, his insight into character, by his ready grasp of the strong and weak points of his pupils, and by his system of competent teachers and small classes, he is to be everlastingly and opprobriously dubbed 'the celebrated crammer.' The fact is Mr. Wren was a born teacher, and was as far removed from the real crammer as the north pole is from the south. Undoubtedly there is such a thing as 'cramming.' The genuine article may be found in India, where its manufacture is fostered by a multiplicity of subjects and of examinations which in too many cases, alas! put a premium on the accumulation and the merely mnemonical knowledge of heavy, ill-digested facts. But it is an abuse of terms to apply the offensive word 'cramming' to a system, such as that practised by the late Mr. Wren, where thoroughness went hand in hand with rapidity, where principles were explained, no difficulties slurred, important points emphasized, and where the utmost application and concentration were demanded."

Where this thing is going to end we do not know, but we can hardly think that it will end with benefit to our schools or the children attending them. Perhaps there is no truth in the report, but if there be it will hardly pass without discussion, and the sooner the discussion begins the better it will be for our boys. We give the paragraph for what it is worth.