

enthusiastic and successful teachers. It is upon such points that their advice is specially to be prized. What we want in teachers' conventions is not new and untried theories, or flowing orations about impossible projects of reform outside the school room itself, but the testimony of faithful and intelligent teachers, who, being allowed a wise liberty and discretion, have within those bounds tried certain methods and found them actually succeed. Found them succeed. "Ah! there," you say, "is the difficult point—what do you mean by success?" I freely admit, my friends, that this is a difficult point. Do I mean the figures which come out as the result of examinations? No and yes. I have had a great deal to do, first and last, with this matter of examinations, and my views concerning them have swayed from side to side.

Examinations in some shape we are bound to have. I do not see how any really good, solid teaching can be done without them. Too many examinations from outside are to every competent teacher an interruption, grief and nuisance. The examination system in our schools and colleges, when in the hands of the teachers themselves, is, so far as I am qualified to give an opinion, straightforward, helpful and judicious, but outside this, from the University down to the combined examinations of our Public Schools in Toronto, the system, if in any worthy sense it may be called a system at all, is—to my mind—delusive and profoundly unsatisfactory. I do not say this, I trust, in any carping spirit, or without sympathy with the difficulties of those who might seem at first sight, mainly responsible for what I honestly regard as a failure.

The obstacles to a true reform here are so huge, the causes of failure are so inextricably interwoven with our whole educational system—the reform would need to be so thorough from

head to foot—that for one such as myself to attempt here in a few brief sentences to deal with so vast a subject would be hopeless, and simply an act of presumption.

Two or three words, however, will suggest to you my line of thought, if I had space to work it out. Examination papers should be set, for the purpose of ascertaining, *not* what a pupil does not know, but to bring out what he ought to have been taught, and may reasonably be expected to know and to be able to produce. Examination papers should be composed upon certain settled principles, and within certain fixed and clearly defined limits, announced before hand to the teachers, and should practically be a guide and spur to the whole course of study in our schools and colleges. Examinations should be set that any faithful, intelligent teacher may know when his work is done and his pupils are prepared to pass with at least a moderate degree of credit. Examination papers should be so drawn up as to discourage and discredit the mere cramming of textbooks, or the anxious guaging of the peculiar noddles of individual examiners, or the rummaging among former series of questions, except in so far as one might discover the *principles*, if any, upon which the examinations are conducted.

Examiners should be trained men of the highest culture and ability, who have given themselves up to this very thing, under whose hand the examination papers, slowly, thoughtfully and skilfully composed, would gradually grow into instruments of precision, and become models of method and objects of attentive study and respect to all the teachers of the land. And such men should be well remunerated for their services.

These are some of the principles which at once suggest themselves. If they are sound, then our present way