

HOW TO PASS EXAMINATIONS.

The present enquiry, as Plato would call it, is one that calls for no apology. Every student feels himself drawn towards examinations. The subject is, consequently, of equal interest to the three months' Freshman from Minnehaha, Manitoulin, who has his own theory of the creation, and can prove it, and to the sad-eyed Senior, who has forgotten the vacative of *ὁ βασιλεὺς*, and whose only prayer is for peace.

There are two distinct methods, as there are two distinct times, for passing examinations. The first method may be briefly dismissed; I do not propose to deal with it in this paper. It involves the purchase of all such works as are mentioned in the College Curriculum, and the painful absorption of thirty-three per cent. of their contracts; it necessitates a debilitating insomnia during lectures and a subordination of the individual intellect in favor of the opinions of the dead. It leaves behind it, in too many cases, a residue of facts and actual knowledge, which is only eradicated in the course of years. It cannot be denied that such a system possesses certain advantages for students who prefer to pass their examinations in May, or who have mistaken views on the subject of University honors. Judged upon wider grounds, however, it is far inferior to the other, or September system of passing examinations, which I propose to discuss in this article. In this process, the student, disregarding the mere technicalities of the text books, relies rather on the inventive faculties of his own genius and the promptings of a fertile originality. He avails himself, moreover, of certain special arts and devices for encompassing his examiner, which are the legacy of the great minds that have gone before him, and in which his training is admirable.

I do not say that this latter system will not enable a man to pass an examination in May; it is often singularly successful even then. But it can only be brought to perfection when the mind of the operator has been invigorated, during the summer months, by imbibing lager beer at a summer resort, and by hours of profound contemplation under a cedar tree.

As to the relative merits of the two systems there can be but one opinion. The man who has been severely trained during his University life, in the September System, is able, not only to pass the examination required of him, but can pass *any* examination. He is just as much prepared to take a degree in Conchology or Japanese Archaeology, as he is in his own department. This fact has often been heartily affirmed by the examining body.

Considered as a mental test, the September System is again undoubtedly superior. It can hardly convey much sense of intellectual power to have an examiner ask you a question which you know, and which he knows you know, and which, moreover, he knows, and which you know he knows. The true test of ability is when the examiner asks a question which you know you don't know, and which you answer in such a way that he can't prove anything against you.

Let us now first consider the general principles on which the procedure of the September scientist is based; after which we will pass to a few of the special devices to be adopted in the various subjects.

Perhaps the most important point of all is the matter of handwriting. When you know anything for a fact,

write it down very plainly and legibly. When you are not sure of anything, dash it off in hurried, illegible characters, as if you were suffering from such a rush of ideas as to cause an intolerable pressure on the brain. Do not, however, end your answer illegibly. As you near the conclusion, which you are always careful to state in general terms, your writing must become plainer and plainer, till it ends as a model of lucidity. This suggests an express train being brought to a gradual stop; it implies that your magnificent brain, having recovered from the delirium of action, is resuming the measured pulsation of its habitual calm.

Nor is this all that must be observed in connection with handwriting. The writing of the candidate must be a female hand. This is easily contrived by remembering that a female hand, as known to University examiners, is one in which four and a half words fill a line, and which has such a slope to it that when applied to a sheet of foolscap, the square on the hypotenuse of a line of writing is equal to the sum of the squares on the edges of the paper. To heighten the illusion of femininity, it is well to throw a little sachet powder and a violet stalk into the envelope. Bear in mind, that it is far easier to please an examiner if you are a girl with a blue shirt-waist and deep-brown hair, than if you are a man with a grey flannel shirt, and last week's whiskers. If you doubt this fact, watch the demeanor of any member of the Faculty unbending in the presence of the sex.

This question of pleasing the examiner personally is of the greatest importance, and brings us to another maxim of general application. Purchase the books on the subject of your examination written by the examiner. These you will find at any of the better-class second-hand stores on York St. You can easily tell them by the appreciative labels, such as: "Intensely interesting; seven cents."—or— "Ten Years' Lectures on Metaphysics, reduced to five cents (worth fifty)." The prices thus quoted do not, of course, represent the actual value of these works. The dealer will always sell them at about fifty per cent. reduction, provided the book is removed within twenty-four hours.

Having thus secured one of the examiner's books, commit to memory two sentences. Choose these near the end of the book, and quote them in your papers, introducing them with the words: "It has been ably said by an eminent authority, whose name I have mislaid."

Not only should the examiner's own books be subjected to this treatment, but also any book which the examiner is known to take from the College Library. When he replaces the book, secure it and search its contents diligently. If it contains tobacco ashes, he has been using it to prepare his paper; if you find no tobacco ashes, but human hair and black pins, the book was for his wife and not for himself. Observe that the hair must be longer than five inches, unless the examiner is bald.

We come now to an axiom of the highest practical utility. Never answer a direct question. For instance: If the examiner asks you, point blank, what is the ablative of *hostis la spear*, ignore the question entirely. Do not even leave its number blank. If that particular answer ought to be No. 2, call your next one No. 2. It is impossible to prove that you didn't overlook it accidentally. It may be objected that if the examiner could keep cool and confine himself to direct