

memory with the contents of text-books in order to the passing of an examination, regardless of true mental culture or permanency of acquirement.

The effect upon the pupils is equally pernicious—they come to look upon the passing of an examination as the chief end of their school work, and, as one sham leads to another, the means by which the end is attained are not always honestly chosen.

The fault here is not in the system of schools, as such, nor in the examinations for promotion, as such, but in the maladministration of the system and in the misuse of the examination. Other evils are the natural outgrowth of this one. As cramming has taken the place of teaching, the massing of large numbers of pupils into single classes, in order that they may be the more conveniently crammed, is only too natural. Close upon the heels of this comes, not less naturally, a resort to that paragon of cramming processes, the concert conning and recitation of lessons—the modern school-room abomination, when carried to excess.

As a matter of fact, study, in any proper sense, has almost entirely disappeared from many a school-room. The opportunity for downright individual study is almost wholly lost, and in the place of a suitable alternation of study and recitation, has come an almost continuous exercise that is a sort of hybrid—neither study proper, nor recitation proper—that goes on from morning till evening varied only by change from one subject to another. It seems to me that this brings us very near to the root of the evil, which is voiced in the complaint that our pupils do not know how to study, and have not been trained to think.

In my judgment, therefore, the first step in the direction of reform is to remand the examination to its legitimate uses—the classification of pupils for the purposes of instruction—and enabling the superintendent to discover and to remedy faults in methods of teaching—giving due consideration to the judgment of the teachers in the former, and recognizing the other factors that enter into the work of the successful teachers in the latter.

When teachers come to be relieved of the incubus that the examination too often is, many of them—all that are true teachers or capable of becoming such—will return to (if they have abandoned them) or adopt (if they have never used them) more rational methods of teaching.