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ARE EXAMINATIONS OF ANY VALUE?

This is a question which is frequently asked, and as time goes on, the affirmative answer is less frequently heard. That our present examination system is all wrong, almost every one who has given any attention to the question can scarcely deny, but it remains for some one to propose a better plan. That an examiner can by putting a dozen questions to a student, find out his capacity is an erroneous idea. We have for years held this opinion, and have seen it proved; it stands to reason that it should be so.

In pharmacy as in other sciences, a man's knowledge is usually gauged by his ability to answer the questions put to him, but that he can or cannot answer these questions does not prove that the candidate is or is not a competent druggist. When we take into consideration the manner in which examinations are conducted in all English-speaking countries, with the average candidate so nervous that in the majority

of cases he does not know "where he is at," with the conditions surrounding him so totally unlike those prevailing in his ordinary work, it is not surprising that so many fail to pass. In the great majority of cases the man with the steadiest nerves and greatest amount of cramming ability is the successful one. Pharmacy examinations are all run on the same plan, and that is the wrong one.

Two plans might be put in force; one is to let the colleges of pharmacy have a joint examination board, formed by members of the faculty, as at present, and members appointed by the local board or association, and in figuring up the results let the points made by each candidate during his regular college work be counted in. By this plan the whole college work of each candidate would be taken into consideration, and therefore a better idea of his ability could be obtained. We think that the teacher will know more about the ability of a student by months of personal contact, than any examiner, no matter how able, by half a dozen haphazard questions, not one of which perhaps is of any real importance as indicating the point at issue.

The ideal plan, although like other ideals, impracticable, would be to have the candidates work in the shops of the examiners say for three days in each week, with about half an hour's questioning each day on matters that have come up in the day's business, then let each examiner express his opinion of the candidate's ability, based upon his actual work as a salesman, dispenser and chemist. The difficulty with this plan is that where a large class was to be examined it would take a long time to carry it out, but it would be the plan to test the real ability of the candidates.

BORAX AND IODINE.

These commodities have attracted a good deal of attention lately, owing to the operations of "conventions" which have more or less successfully governed the prices at which they are sold.

Borax, or baborate of soda, and boracic acid, are constantly increasing in the number of economic uses to which they are put, and in the aggregate