

our profession by distinctions gained in examinations. Again, I have toiled at the task of carrying pupils through examinations, and still do so; but, with all this, I have frequently been filled with misgivings that, looked at in reference to the higher functions of the schoolmaster, some of this work has been as barren of permanent and desirable results as if the time had been spent in engraving volumes on the sand of the sea-shore. Mere examinations occupy now less and less of my thoughts; and, while I am still trying to secure what good may be got from them, I am always thinking how to counteract the evil consequences which they naturally produce.

It will at once be seen that there can be but little sympathy between men who share these views and the man who is known as the private "coach,"—the man who exists *through, for, and by* the examination system. Too frequently has this man usurped the place of the schoolmaster, and we believe, greatly to the injury of the community. The educator should be one who has "dipped into the future far as human eye can see," but the man whose whole time and thought, whose whole life is spent in cramming boys and youths with facts for production in an examination, has a vision so limited that its range sinks into insignificance compared with the extent of the work which the schoolmaster has to recognize. A person of this type is "not a desirable guide for man or beast."

In order to bring out the importance of the unexamined work of the schoolmaster, let us glance at some of the dangers and evils resulting from two exclusive attention to examinations.

In schools where this habit is found, a student is estimated solely by the rank he acquires in a table of marks and it is by the same criterion that he is apt to estimate himself. He at last gets to regard all his work as designed only to enable him to pass, and looks on it exclusively with an eye to the use he can make of it in examinations. He thinks only of how best to arrange and re-arrange, condense and re-condense, and make an affective display on paper. Knowledge comes to be regarded, not as something to be sought for and valued on account of its intrinsic worth, or as the means and instrument for the realization of lofty aims and noble purposes, but in a purely commercial spirit, a mercenary spirit, as a thing that *pays* in a certain specified competition. Hence he works like an isolated atom, as though he merely had certain selfish ends to attain—a habit which inevitably results in shutting up the scholar more and more in a world of ideas of a purely self-regarding nature. But the business of the schoolmaster is to enlarge the boy's sympathies, and to extend his vision, so that he may at length arrive at the perception of the fact that the happiness of the individuals of a community is best secured when in every man the well-being of the community and the well-being of himself live and operate together as motives of action. The welfare of each man is best achieved by securing the welfare of all. The contrary proposition, however, more nearly expresses to the natural mind what seems to be true. "The immediate gain lies before it—can be seen and handled; and the law which demands its sacrifice in order to arrive at a wider and more prolific result appears to contradict the senses, and to bring ruin and no benefit in its train."

In this business of "coaching," a natural weakness of the untrained mind is confirmed and deepened, until susceptibility to higher motives is deadened, and almost destroyed. Such work is not simply unworthy of the schoolmaster, it is the direct reversal of his true work.

The school where the master thinks and speaks of nothing but the examination, becomes sooner or later a mere "cramming" establishment. It may be necessary

to say, I do not apply this term as a compliment. I know that some distinguished, pains taking, and successful masters have recently spoken in favour of "cramming." But I feel persuaded that this fact arises from their attributing a different meaning to the term from that in which I accept it. It is not a word with so fixed a meaning that we understand the same thing by it. We get at its present use, I suppose, from the analogy between food and instruction. But the analogy is not complete. The Strasbourg goose is crammed up to his death, not so the examination competitor. The former is not expected, after having acquired an abnormal liver through being crammed, to strut about and perform all the functions of a goose; but the latter is expected to survive the cramming, and somehow or other, in spite of it, to become a useful member of society. Men have sometimes undergone a vicious system of training, and have become great in spite of it, and their success in life has prevented others from recognizing the evils of the system. It is easy, therefore, to understand how it is that teachers answer differently the questions, "What is cramming?" and "What are the results?" We have often to put into the memory—to cause to be learnt by heart—things which the people imperfectly understands. We all know, for instance, that a choice and pregnant passage from a good author, once learnt, will appear constantly in new connection and surrounded by new lights. To learn such an extract is not to "cram,"—provided the digestion of the passage commences from the moment of its being committed the memory. The cramming which is so objectional, is the forcing down of facts in such a way that digestion of them is impossible. Such digestion, in fact, never commences, nor is ever intended to commence. The facts are piled upon one another, to be vomitted wholesale with the last possible change.

A student at Oxford once complained to his tutor, that he could not understand some of his work; and the reply was, "Oh! never mind that! Nobody ever tries to understand it. *Cram* it."

Now let us further consider the condition of a school in which the examinations have wholly engrossed the master's thoughts. The desire to obtain scholars with that passive, receptive capacity which enable them to secure examination honours, leads the teachers to pass over the work which lies nearest to them,—the great object sought for being the winning of prizes.

A boy should enter school in order that he may be supplied, so to speak, with a map or plan of life. As a sea-captain about to go on a voyage inquires for charts of his course, so the lad requires to know where he may expect danger, and what courses are likely to lead to a prosperous voyage. Instead of these charts, he is supplied with an aid to run a short, race for a prize of contemptible value, with overloaded canvas, each sail of which is simply an advertisement sheet. The body is estimated solely by his prospect of getting advertisable honours. And so, in the school, the regular work of education is laid aside, and special preparation takes its place. The few clever or precocious lads who may possibly win, are trained and entered for the race. Those who could not be made to win pay for those who do win. A few great successes advertised bring together numbers whose fees will have built up a fortune before the hollowness of their training is discovered.

Meanwhile, a competition—a scramble—has arisen for the clever boys. Some Public Schools—and, I regret to say, some schools supported by City Companies—advertise scholarships to be competed for by outsiders. There would not be much objection to these prizes being given as an incentive to work in the school itself, where all the circumstances attending that work could be known; but