

the farce (perhaps there is something of tragedy in it) goes on. Pharaoh's taskmasters' demanding bricks without straw is nothing to it. Men, who at college were among the brightest in their year, are growing old before their time, wearing themselves out with worry and anxiety lest the examination results should show that their allotted task has not been performed to the satisfaction of lazy or over-eager boys, of their fathers, and of the Board, doing themselves the greatest possible injury by lowering their ideals to a level compatible with holding on to a mere pittance upon which they may keep body and soul together, but on which they can with difficulty manage to buy, in the shape of books and periodicals, food enough to keep their minds from starving.

For the state of things at present existing, I have blamed pupils, parents and school boards chiefly. To be quite just, I must add that they have in many instances merely bettered the instructions of schoolmasters themselves. For some years past it has been most perniciously fashionable in the event of great success, to trumpet abroad the number of certificates won, the number of matriculants passed, the number of honours and scholarships obtained, and then to fall to comparing the relative standing of the schools of the province. Such methods smack of the turf, and men who make use of them are one in spirit with jockeys who ride horses to the winning post, and with bookmakers who make gain out of races. The pity of it is that many a bright girl and boy are run to death by their jockeys, and have no strength left to carry them through the struggles of later life.

I do not undervalue success in examinations any more than I do in anything else. But, as soon as examinations are made the chief aim of school effort, I protest against them.

They should be a test of the character of work done, and, as far as is possible, of a candidate's ability to think. Certainly the results of any one year should not be taken to prove by themselves the capability or the incapability of any man or woman engaged in teaching, for, as I hold most strongly, teaching and education do not consist in passing examinations and in preparing candidates for them.

In a properly graded school, with a competent staff doing its duty fully, with boys and girls honestly doing their best according to the brain power given them, and not making too great haste toward a money-earning position, there ought to be few failures, or none, at any examination where it is a mere question of passing. Honour-getting is a different matter.

It is only to the comparatively few that honours can fall, and it has always been a difficult matter for me to decide who was the more deserving of credit—the bright honour man or his master. At any rate, taking into account the difficulty of ensuring a succession of clever boys, he is a wise man who does not glory too much in honour lists, for the innings of dull boys surely comes soon or late. And, then, what becomes of the reputation built up on a run of success that was due as much to the clever pupils of former years as to the master? The sooner we get back to the old-fashioned view, that education is a training of the whole man, and that knowledge is worth more than the empty display of it, the better for the country at large, and the sooner will cause for disappointment at results and disappointment itself disappear, the sooner, also, will every one concerned be less and less anxious to cast blame for failure upon some one else, but will seriously try to see where his own fault lies and will remedy it if he can.