

THE CANADIAN MAGAZINE.

VOL. I.

MAY, 1893.

No. 3.

EDUCATION VS. CRAM.

BY A. H. MORRISON.

“Nothing extenuate,
nor set down aught in malice.”

—*Othello*.

“WHAT is Truth?” once asked doubting Pilate. What is Education? may well be asked by some doubters of to-day.

It is strange how the very natures of entities frequently become transformed. It is equally strange how the meanings of words may be wrested from their original signification.

We see how, in evolution, the puny and acrid crab may be developed into the large and luscious sweeting. We have learned how, according to the law of degeneration, the very soul-essence, subtle, elevated, all-embracing, of such a term as *education* may be contorted and cribbed into the dwarfish limits of such a Calaban-monosyllable as *cram*.

That these two words have become synonymous terms to the average Canadian mind of to-day, there can be but little doubt; yet, that the words themselves, as regards innate and ultimate signification, are as wide as the poles asunder, can be as little a point of dispute.

For what is their pedigree and what their kinship?

Education, as the genealogy, *i. e.*, the etymology of the word, informs us, is a Classic, from the Latin: *educo*, *edu-*

cure; from *e*, out, and *duco*, *ducere* to lead; therefore, to lead out.

Cram, as the genealogy of the word informs us, is a Teuton, from the Anglo-Saxon: *crammian*, to stuff; therefore, to press or squeeze in.

Whether “to lead out” and “to squeeze in” be synonymous terms is a question that certain exponents of latter-day Canadian educational methods have decided to answer in the affirmative.

But a question of some significance yet remains. Is the ultimatum of these exponents of latter-day methods, of a truth, an all-authoritative and final one? Have others, more especially those in whose special interest all educational institutions are founded and maintained, any voice in the matter of deciding whether the terms are really synonymous, and whether the processes suggested by the two terms should be pursued on equal and parallel planes?

The answer is obvious. Those most interested, that is, those being educated, or having young people to educate, have a voice, and a very loud voice, in the matter, and it is full time that this voice were making itself heard, to combat, on the one hand, the open effrontery of political expedience, and, on the other, the secret, but no less self-interested and too often dangerous, hobby of private egotism, which, out-