

fute, The mischief is not confined to the universities and the greater public schools. The latter, in all probability, suffer less than the schools and colleges which have sprung into existence within the last half century, and which have to make up in other ways for the prestige which they do not share with such schools as Eton, Winchester, Harrow, Rugby, and Westminster, for instance. In schools of all grades and classes, even down to the lowest public elementary schools, the mischief is showing itself. Nor is it merely a mental mischief, bad as that would be. Experience and science alike teach that there is a limit which nature imposes, and that the system cannot bear at the same time a double strain. Nature lays on the growing child, boy, or youth, a heavy tax in the building up of the house we live in, the formation of new bone, muscle and tissue, and mental overstrain at this period saps the foundations of vigor and capability in the future. The system of examinations with valuable prizes, or even only school reputation attached to them, puts in the background the true ends of education, and is responsible for the overstrain on young minds in young bodies.

The intellectual and moral, or if preferred the ethical, evils are no whit less. It is from the never-ending struggle between many different forms and methods, each striving to excel the other, upon continual difference, upon new ideas and new experiments, that the health and progress of every great science, and education is a science, depend. Uniformity means arrest of growth, and under the examination system as now practised all education tends to run in the same groove and be of the same type. To the schoolmaster or the lecturer the evil is no less. He surrenders self-direction in the grasp of this

octopus. He cannot take up such subjects as part of the school course in which he has the deepest interest, and in which consequently his teaching will be most impressive. He must take up the books and subjects set for him ; he must cramp himself within the artificial horizon which bounds his view. What will pay—to use an expression of the day largely due to education as it is—weighs on his mind. It weighs on the mind, too, of the learner, who must quench intellectual interest in the more pressing and more sordid business. The fact is examination is a good servant and a bad master. To use a simile of Cardinal Newman, Phaethon has got into the chariot of the sun. We may say at once that we do not see how any process of education can be carried on successfully without periodical tests and proofs being applied to it. But examinations were made for education, not education for examinations. And this is practically the state of the case. It was said of that most brilliant classic, the late Charles Stuart Calverley, that he could spot in any author every possible question which could occur to an examiner. As Mr. Frederic Harrison says, education has become a highly exciting match between the examiners and the crammers. The modern system has created a body of specialists called examiners, and in obedience to a great economic law another body of specialists called crammers has been called into being. The duty of the examiner is not to teach, not to test the knowledge or mental power, the reading, research, or thought of the examinee, not to gauge his real knowledge and intellectual power. It is rather to see what he does not know which his examiner knows. In fact the examinee is a wicket which the examiner

wants to bowl down. To this encounter the crammer comes beforehand, to teach the examinee how to keep up his wicket. Hence the object is to get an insight into the mind of the examiner, not for the learner to get an insight into that of his teacher ; not to master his author and his matter, but to acquire an artificial skill in passing the tests. And a very remarkable amount of skill is evolved on each side. There is of course a limit to the field of examination. There is a limit to the number of questions which an examiner can put. Thanks to this, and to the publication of examination papers, the crammer can survey the field and can send his subject into the field armed at all points to withstand the fiery darts of the evil one. The effect on the examinee is to make him regard examination papers as the goal for which he is working, to endow him with a preternaturally sharpened memory which can carry its edge for ten days, and then relapse into dullness. The rote faculties are cultivated at the expense of the rational faculties ; what is acquired is superficial ; the mental life is ended when the last fight with the examiner is over, and the man who has come out with the highest honors frequently does nothing in after years.

To the protest of the signatories are appended papers by Professor Max Müller, Professor Freeman, and Mr. Frederic Harrison. Most people are aware that to Sir Charles Trevelyan is due the credit of the great change which threw the Home Civil Service open to public competition by examination. But before this was effected Max Müller, in the columns of the *Times*, waged war against patronage and in favor of examination. His Oxford experience, and his connection with the University, begun

over forty years ago, has borne fruit, and he now writes that the system stands self-condemned. And he gives two practical reasons for his assertion. The one is the number of public schoolmen who fail to pass their college matriculation, or the University little-go. And the second is the number of Oxford and Cambridge graduates who require one or two years with a crammer to pass for the Civil Service. His Oxford experience, moreover, has taught this lesson—that, as all the work has but one object, namely, to pass examinations, all real pleasure is eliminated from study. What is got up is got up under prescription and compulsion, to be got rid of as soon as it has served its turn, leaving behind it nothing but an intellectual nausea. And he goes further. Max Müller points out that we are yearly losing the intellectual athletes, the men who stand a head and shoulders taller than their fellows, and are looked up to as born leaders of men, and we are gaining a stereotyped class in their place. Professor Freeman does not hesitate to speak of every examination as in itself an evil, as tending to make men read, not for the attainment of knowledge, but for the object of passing, and he would have their number reduced and the operation a more searching and real one. When examination ceased to be spontaneous, occasional, and simple, and grew to be organised into a trade, and the be-all and end-all of its own sphere, the mischief began. The system started some 40 years ago. It was started on an inclined plane, and the ball has been kept rolling ever since with increasing velocity. Whether the present movement will be sufficient to arrest its course remains to be seen. But it can