

The signatories to the protest, amongst whom are to be found men like Mr. Max Muller, Mr. Frederic Harrison, and Mr. Freeman, besides some eighty members of Parliament, are 431 in number. Not all of them have the same objection to the present system, but everyone of them has some fault to find. Hardly will the late Education Commission vie in importance with the persons who have signed this protest. Such persons then as Dr. Dale, Bishop Browne of Winchester, Sir Arthur Sullivan, Mr. Aubrey de Vere, Miss. O. M. Yonge, Dr. Cameron Lees, Mr. E. Lynn Linton, Sir Henry Layard, Mrs. Thackeray Ritchie, Mr. J. A. Froude, Rev. H. R. Haweis, Mr. J. G. Holyoake, and Sir Edwin Arnold have signed the protest. We do not mention other names, not less important perhaps, for the simple reason that a full description would take up too much space. All these persons, with others, find fault on various grounds with the present system of examination. The majority of them complain of the arrangement of rewards. Children are treated by a Public Department, by Managers and schoolmasters, as suitable instruments for earning Government money; "young boys of the middle and richer classes are often trained for scholarships, with as little regard for the future as two-year-old horses are trained for races; and young men of real capability at the Universities are led to believe that the main purpose of education is to enable them to win some great money prize, or take some distinguished place in an examination." Further, the protest sets forth that "great" examinations and the valuable prizes attached to them are responsible for a large part of the over-strain placed now on young bodies and young minds; that a worship of uniformity means arrest of intellectual growth; and that the present system tends to exalt him who appears to know above him who knows. In the opinion of the protestants the British educational system is a body without a soul, and its necessary result will be the encouragement of students who only study because knowledge has prizes—"who can only be tempted to

follow knowledge because she means a sum of money, the public triumph of a successful class, or the gaining of a place."

Most strong denunciations are levelled against the present competitive system. Professor Max Muller, formerly a heretic of heretics, has joined the army which declaims against examinations as a criterion of knowledge. "From what I have seen at Oxford and elsewhere," he writes, "all real joy in study seems to me to have been destroyed by the examinations as now conducted. Young men imagine that all their work has but one object—to enable them to pass the examinations. The required number of pages is got up under compulsion, therefore ungrudgingly, and after the examination is over what has been got up is got rid of again, like a heavy and useless burden. Nothing is converted *in succum et sanguinem*." Again Mr. E. A. Freeman, whilst acknowledging the hopelessness of the English world ever reaching such a stage as the abolition of examinations would mean, is free to confess that "every examination is in itself an evil, as making men read, not

for the attainment of knowledge, but for the object of passing the examination, perhaps of compassing its 'pecuniary value.'" Mr. Frederic Harrison, who certainly cannot be charged with disregarding utilitarianism, condemns also the present system. "Examination," he writes, "like so many other things, is useful as long as it is spontaneous, occasional, and simple. Its mischief begins when it grows to be organized into a trade, and the be-all and end-all of its own sphere. The less the student be 'prepared,' in the technical sense, the better. The myriad examinations which now encompass human life have called out an army of trained examiners who have reduced the business to a complicated art as difficult and special as chess. Like chess-playing the art of examiner and examinee has been wondrously developed by practice." It is with regard to this latter development—the development of the examinee—that education has really most to do. We are not free from it here—from this craze of judging power by answering capacity. More and more are we drifting into the quagmire from which the signatories of this protest in the *Nineteenth Century* are seeking to extricate English education. Our University authorities require particular knowledge, or rather they require that an examinee shall be so trained by his teacher that he will be able to answer the questions asked, and this means the granting of professional degrees to students who are able to answer certain questions. The pursuit of knowledge for its own sake is not sufficiently encouraged. The knowledge which receives recognition is that which gradually makes a doctor or a lawyer out of a given subject. The University is degenerating into a pill and brief factory—degenerating, too, just at a time when other centres of learning are striving to regain the right path. This article in the *Nineteenth Century* ought to be sufficient to show leading spirits of the University that education does not show its fruits solely or even mainly in a power to answer questions. If they will not be influenced by the men who have signed the protest to which we have referred they will hardly be persuaded until the mischief has reached such dimensions that it will have ceased to be controllable.

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