

THE FAMILY PARLIAMENT.

[RULES OF DEBATE.—*The course of debate will be as follows:—Two principal speakers holding opposite views on the question discussed will be selected by the Editor; the argument of each to occupy about a page of the MAGAZINE. Readers of the MAGAZINE will then be invited to express their own views on the subject, to the Editor, who will at his discretion select some of the most suitable and concise of these communications for publication in a subsequent Part of the MAGAZINE. The opener of the Debate is to have the right of reply. The Editor's duty will be to act as a kind of "Mr. Speaker," consequently, while preserving due order in the discussion, he will not be held to endorse any opinions that may be expressed on either side, each debater being responsible for his own views.*]

QUESTION II.—ARE PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS BENEFICIAL TO YOUNG PEOPLE?

OPENER'S SPEECH.

MR. SPEAKER,

I presume, Sir, that at the present day no person will attempt to deny that examinations exert a very potent force in our midst. We look around and see them standing like Cerberus, at the very threshold of all the professions; with jealous eye they scrutinise every aspirant for a Government appointment; they exercise no light influence even in the world of commerce, while they have completely revolutionised the processes of education. All this must be generally admitted; but the question that for years has agitated, and still continues to disturb, the minds of many people, and especially the minds of parents, is as to whether the resultant has been good or ill—whether, in fact, the advantages of examinations outweigh the evils attendant upon them. This, Sir, is the question to which, with your permission, I would now address myself; and I hope to prove beyond all doubt that examinations are beneficial, and more particularly beneficial to young people.

And first of all, Sir, I will claim this for examinations, that to them is due in no small measure the higher standard of education common among all classes in the present day, as compared with that current twenty-five or thirty years ago. Of course due credit must be allowed to the general spread of knowledge, and to the awakening of the community to a sense of the imperative duty and necessity of educating the masses; but when every allowance has been made for these operating causes, much yet remains which the growth of examinations may fairly claim to have brought about. This is evidenced, for instance, in the wider dissemination of higher knowledge, in the keener appreciation of science, and in the great increase in the number of persons gifted with a certain literary ability. The existence of this power in examinations suggests to me at once a handful of arguments.

Examinations provide teachers with most valuable auxiliaries, without whose help, indeed, they would find it difficult if not impossible to induce the generality of their pupils to acquire all that is now commonly considered as representative of a liberal education. A writer who has given a large amount of attention to the subject of examinations, and who

has had much practical experience of their working, describes the auxiliaries arising from them as "the spirit of emulation, the hope of reward, and the dread of censure, or of failure;" and there is little doubt, Sir, that each of these is a most effective force in the hands of the teacher. Even by those who love knowledge for its own sake, stimulants to study are at times needed, while young people who are naturally dull or lazy especially require strong incentives of some sort. For the former class the spirit of emulation is undoubtedly of great value. Youth enjoys a contest—whether intellectual or physical—and the healthier its mind or muscles may be, the more keenly will it seek to show its quality by competing with others. This same spirit combined with the hope of reward, and the dread of failure, is also very efficacious in the case of lazy students, who may be gifted with considerable powers of mind, but who require special incentives to induce them to concentrate their energies on the acquisition of knowledge. In the case of the dull, perhaps the dread of failure and of censure possesses most influence, but even in their case the other forces are not valueless.

It will not do to lose sight of the positive market value of examinations. Not only are immediate rewards associated with very many of them—fellowships, scholarships, exhibitions, prizes, and such like—but in numerous cases they open an avenue for a permanent career. The average expenditure of parents upon the education of their children has undoubtedly increased largely of late years, and they naturally look for some early and evident result. This they find in examinations and their concomitant advantages. The hope of reward, therefore, and the dread of failure influence the young in a double sense—both directly in themselves, and indirectly through their parents.

Nor will it do to forget an economical aspect of the question. It is not only the successful candidates at an examination who benefit thereby, but also the unsuccessful. These last, even if they be not led to renewed efforts, have probably reached a higher standard of education than they would otherwise have attained. The educational wealth of the country is in this way year by year largely increased.

And now, Sir, I should like to say two or three words as to the moral qualities which examinations

call out—moral qualities which, in the case of boys at any rate, are the very ones needful to insure after-success in public life, when the days of education are over. Among these, I take it, are readiness of assimilation, concentration, determination, willingness to sacrifice ease and pleasure for work, endurance, courage, self-confidence.

A most important argument in favour of examinations is that they afford the best means of selection, and the readiest tests of knowledge. I can see how anxious my opponent is to meet me on this very ground, and I can anticipate all that he is going to say: how examinations are mere tests of cramming, how they fail sometimes to select the best candidates, and so on. Admitted that evils may and do sometimes arise therefrom, is this not the case with all schemes which, being human, are necessarily imperfect? But does not the good far transcend the evil? By due care on the part of teachers and examiners the latter may be reduced to a minimum, while the good will remain.

I presume, Sir, few will deny that the substitution of examinational tests for private patronage in the public service has done away with many of the abuses of the past; and as in the public service, so also in the case of other professions and callings to which examinations constitute an introduction. On this ground alone, until some more perfect method of selection can be invented, it is useless—nay, more—I contend it is harmful to declaim against examinations. The good that they have done to the country at large is evident; the evil is to a large extent visionary. A captious critic may perhaps succeed in knocking holes in the system—(it is so easy to throw stones!)—but until some one, gifted with far higher qualities than those of criticism, shall arise and point out to us a higher and better stimulant to study, a surer test of knowledge, a more perfect means of selection, depend upon it, Sir, examinations will exist, and exist, too, for the general good of the nation.

END OF OPENER'S ARGUMENT.

OPPONENT'S SPEECH.

MR. SPEAKER,

I am only too happy, Sir, to take up the challenge which the opener of this debate has thrown down, and I trust I may be able to prove not only the converse of the proposition, but even that public examinations for young people are positively harmful. In my opinion, examinations are the bane of modern education, they undermine and destroy all the vitality of the precious tree of knowledge, they substitute a desire for gain, and for immediate tangible results, in place of the love of learning for learning's sake; they encourage the seeking of the easiest roads to the desired goal and discourage real hard work; they are the fruitful parents of meannesses, trickeries, and deceptions of all sorts. These are hard words, but I am not afraid to use them, even at the risk of being called "a captious critic," and even though I may not be able at a second's notice to formulate a new scheme to take the place of a system which I hold to teem with evils.

I am glad, Sir, that the opener of the debate laid

such great stress on the changes that examinations have brought about, because I am in consequence spared the trouble of arguing that they have revolutionised educational processes. Almost before the young leave the preparatory school, examinations stare them in the face, and the evils begin. Here are some of them.

True honest school life is destroyed, or at any rate is in danger of becoming a thing of the past. Masters and pupils alike are in a league, whereby the old processes of sound education—slow, yet sure and thorough—are laid aside, and everything is done at the highest possible pressure. Studies which help to form and strengthen the mind are neglected because they are not required at this or that examination, or because they do not *pay* for the time spent upon them; while showy subjects, in whose acquirement memory is the most important factor, are eagerly studied, because they produce early and tangible results. This is not as it should be. Subjects of mere information are exalted high above real solid knowledge; students are trained to make a show of learning which they do not possess; and liberal education bows its head in despair before the fell twin-brother of examinations—the great giant "Cram."

Of the multifarious evils attendant upon "cramming" it is impossible, Sir, to speak at length. The system, although tolerated, is surely too universally condemned to need words of reprobation from me. How the young mind is made a mere vehicle for the transfer of dates and formulæ, instead of being trained to understand and assimilate truth—all this is beyond the region of controversy; I pass on therefore to other points.

In consequence of examinations the hope of gain plays far too important a part as an incentive to study. From their earliest days the young are incited to work only at those subjects in which they are most likely to excel; they compete at certain examinations not because they are the best conducted, or the most suitable, but because the rewards—direct or indirect—are high; they are taught to choose a career simply and solely because it is likely to be the most profitable. Is all this for their good?

Once more, the moral character of the young is still further injured by the action of examinations. In the desire to succeed at any cost, they resort to numberless artifices to outwit or to hoodwink the examiner, and in this they are too often supported by their teachers. If they prove fairly successful, they become conceited beyond measure, and the bonds of discipline and parental authority are loosened. They are apt to consider themselves more clever than their parents, and to this I am bold to attribute much of the slackening of the ties between father and son, mother and daughter, which is a characteristic of the day.

The question of health has an important bearing on this subject. Examinations lead to overwork and to excessive stimulation of the brain at irregular intervals, and it is to be feared that succeeding generations will recognise more clearly than we do now all the harm that has been done in this direction. In the case of

young people who are weakly by nature, the result of the excitement and overstrain of a series of examinations is often too immediately apparent.

The harmful effect of examinations upon parents and teachers is, I must admit, a little outside the present subject, but, Sir, I cannot refrain from saying just one word about it. Even as the children forget the true ends of study, so also do the parents; they look for successful results, and are heedless altogether as to whether or no a sound education is being afforded. And the teachers teach those subjects and in that way which will pay them best; they push on the most promising pupils, and neglect the dullard; and so, from beginning to end of the educational system, honest work is at a discount.

In conclusion, Sir, I will deal in few words with the assertion that examinations afford the best means of selection, not only in school and at College, but for

various public appointments. Is this a fact? I think not. Look at the army, to wit. Do we get better officers in consequence of the competition for appointments? Where is the examination in discipline, in self-control, in bodily endurance, in strength? Look again at the Civil Service of the Crown. Do examinations pick out men capable of diligence in routine work, men of tact in dealing with their fellows? No—a thousand times, no! Rather a body of men specially crammed with information which they will get rid of at the first convenient moment, just as a bricklayer's man will drop his hod the instant the dinner-bell rings! This is the much-lauded and beneficent effect of examinations as a means of selection; this is typical of their whole action in every step of the career of the young, and with this view of them before you, I am content to leave the case to the judgment of the Family Parliament.

TO OUR READERS.—*The Editor will be happy to receive the opinions of any Readers on the above Question, on either side, with a view to the publication of the most suitable and concise communications in the March Part, when the opener will exercise his right of reply upon the whole. Letters should be addressed "The Editor of 'Cassell's Family Magazine,' La Belle Sauvage Yard, London, E.C.," and in the top left-hand corner of the envelope should be written, "Family Parliament." All communications on the present Question must reach the Editor not later than January 10. The Editor cannot undertake to return any communications.*

An honorarium of £1 is. will be accorded (subject to the discretion of the Editor) to the best letter on either side of the Question; no letter to exceed 50 lines (500 words).

Next month a discussion will be opened on Question III., ARE EARLY MARRIAGES UNTHRIFTY? and the discussion on Question I. (HOME LIFE VERSUS PUBLIC LIFE FOR GIRLS) will be concluded.

UNIVERSITY EXTENSION IN EAST LONDON.

BY A LOCAL SECRETARY.



THE social reformer who had ventured ten years ago to predict that the time was not far distant when University Professors would be found teaching artisans in Whitechapel would probably have been regarded as an enthusiast, even by the most optimistic of his fellows. Nevertheless, it is at this moment a fact that the London Society for the Extension of University Teaching has commenced its fifth annual session in East London, and that the meeting-place of its students is at St. Jude's Schools, in Commercial Street, Whitechapel. Having been connected with this movement since the beginning of its work in the Tower Hamlets, I have here endeavoured to set on record my four years' experience, with the hope that it may prove perhaps helpful, or if not helpful, at least interesting, to others who are engaged in similar work. Those who know East London know that it is one of the most difficult parts of the Metropolis wherein an educational campaign may be conducted with success; for assuredly it is never easy to persuade those whose energies are exhausted at the day's close by physical labour to take up with much zeal that which involves a certain amount of mental labour.

It is very much the fashion with a certain class of newspaper writers to regard the East-end as sunk in the darkness of ignorance, and to give utterance to clever, cruel, things about "the plentiful lack of wisdom" which is to be found there. They do not remember that there is very much of hard, grinding toil in the every-day life of those of whom they write. Not drones but workers are they who dwell eastward of the City—workers whose portion of the honey of the hive is small, but whose share of its labour is large enough; so large indeed, that it would have been no matter for marvel if a movement whose objects are so high as those of the London Society for the Extension of University Teaching had met with failure at its outset. But it is no record of failure that I am writing here.

When, in the early part of the year 1877, it was proposed by the Rev. S. A. Barnett, the Vicar of St. Jude's, Whitechapel—one who has laboured as few men have laboured to bring brightness and beauty into the lives and homes of those among whom his work has been cast—that an effort should be made to introduce the classes of the University Extension Society to Whitechapel, the wise men of the East shook their heads gravely and said that success was impossible. But undismayed by adverse prophecy, a

Thank God, this is the case in thousands of instances (I am proud to admit it), but it is not the general rule, as those acquainted with large cities are forced to know, and such pleasant examples are usually the happy result of home influences and education abiding true and strong long after the home has been left.

The conclusion of the whole matter seems to be this: that whether or no Home life be the more conducive to bodily health, whether or no it be as lucrative as Public life (these are matters open to lengthy argument, and after all they must be

settled by individual cases), Home life indisputably brings fewer temptations to evil, and is more conducive to moral health; it is, speaking generally, richer in softening and refining influences; and it certainly fits girls for matrimony. Necessity may urge many girls into Public life, but wherever possible Home life is to be preferred.

The following is a summary of the speeches:—In favour of Home Life, 64; in favour of Public Life, 69; neutral, 8. Total, 141.

END OF DEBATE ON QUESTION I.

QUESTION II.—ARE PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS BENEFICIAL TO YOUNG PEOPLE?

(Debate continued.)

J. E. SHATTOCK:—Mr. Speaker,—To my mind one great argument in favour of "public examinations being beneficial to young people," has been omitted by the opener of the debate, and that is *their great utility as a supplement*—both in the case of boys and girls—to a home education; and by home education, I mean an education conducted either by the parents themselves, or by teachers selected for the purpose. There are numberless cases where girls, in particular, either from motives of economy, or from a desire to give them a thorough home training, extending over a wider range than mere book-learning, are able to have no reliable public test applied to their progress, except through the medium of public examinations.

J. EATON FEARN:—In nine cases out of ten examinations are the means of thwarting study. A young fellow of nervous temperament commences to study for some examination, and so afraid is he that he shall not pass, that he shatters his health by over-exertion, and so sickens himself of study, that the moment his examination is over he flings his books away for ever, considering himself *proficient*.

DR. KEGAN:—As to the effect upon health, I am disposed to think that the candidate who cannot bear the temporary stimulation of the brain, or a little occasional overwork and excitement, is not by nature fitted to fill any chief or responsible position in the world, or to properly discharge any duties that require calmness, courage, or forethought. And, moreover, if only fit and proper subjects and methods of examination be chosen and followed, the effect of the latter upon both parents and teachers will be beneficial rather than otherwise. And, finally, touching the matter of selection, and tests of knowledge, it may be observed that a candidate, in order to be successful at an important and searching examination, absolutely requires a certain amount, not merely of mental power, but of physical energy as well. It is possible indeed for a very diligent student to overtax his bodily strength, and so-wise materially debilitate it; but every collegian knows full well the fact that the stouter in body are almost always the stronger in mind. There is no reason why the body should not be cultivated in conjunction with the mind, and thereby the latter will be enabled to labour with more clearness and thoroughness. A "sound mind in a sound body" ought to be the paramount aim and end of every system of education; and I fail to see in a series of examinations anything that militates against this policy.

MARY ATKINSON:—As one who up to fifteen was the vainest and idlest of girls, and who afterwards learnt, through the Oxford and London University Examinations, that she was not the cleverest of females; and who, first through a spirit of emulation, and distaste for "plucking," and later through a love of knowledge for its sake, acquired a tolerable education, I take this opportunity of offering my tribute of gratitude to public examinations.

EPSILON:—Sir,—The impression conveyed to my mind by the speech of the opener in this debate is, that public examinations are the *cause* of the "higher standard of education common amongst all classes," that to them is "the increase in the educational wealth of the country" due. To this assumption I beg, Sir, to

demonstrate, and submit that they are merely the *index* of that growth of learning which is indebted to other influences. The rapidity with which knowledge spread, from the invention and use of the art of printing down to the period when public examinations became general, is a sufficient proof that knowledge will "grow from more to more" without such adventitious aid.

E. ISABEL COX:—It is too generally the case, to my mind, that children do their work with the idea that the sooner finished the sooner to play, thus showing that the craving for knowledge is not inherent in their nature, and to them learning is only a necessary evil. Up to a certain age in either sex, this is irremediable. An aim for work is almost necessary for young people, as we all know idleness is the bane of youth, and to meet this malady we have our grand public examinations, which to a certain degree help to take it out of the system. Public examinations serve as an incentive to work which did not exist in past days. Education was then fixed on a different basis. Study in its highest sense was confined to the clever or gifted few, for whom other pursuits had no charm; consequently, the less gifted let it drift carelessly by, there being no special emulation. Now, in these days of progress, scarcely a school exists (conducted upon modern principles) which does not send in and prepare its pupils for public examinations. No one can fail to notice the healthy active condition of the present system of education contrasted with the comparative deadness of the past.

T. P. GORDON:—While I am not prepared to go as far as the opener, I think his opponent will make few converts. Making due allowance for mere assertion, one might safely follow the negative argument to its conclusion without getting beyond the conviction that the present mode of examination has faults. This fact by no means proves the evil effects of examinations, but, in my humble opinion, proves the necessity for reform. That there are weak points in the present system, which, like every other good thing, is closely allied to evil, no reasonable person can doubt. But will the abolition of the good provide a remedy for evil?

W. T. HARRIS:—The examinations, Sir, most strongly to be condemned are, perhaps, those of our Elementary Schools. The injurious effect of these examinations was ably pointed out by the recent deputation to the Education Department. Schoolmasters admit that many children are positively hurt by the preparation; they are obliged to make dull scholars keep pace with the sharp, or their percentage of "passes" suffers—and anybody acquainted with school work knows what that means to the master.

G. S. SELBY:—This question, Sir, cannot and must not be decided upon side issues. A broad, general view of the whole facts of the case must be taken, if a correct judgment is to be formed. Let the question as to whether examinations are baneful or beneficial be decided by the results which they have produced. Is England to-day, educationally, better or worse than she was twenty-five years ago? If better (and I imagine there can be but one opinion about that), then to what extent are examinations responsible for the result? Both the opener and his opponent are agreed that examinations have revo-

lutionised educational processes in this country, so that the only decision at which we can well arrive is that they, mainly, are to be thanked for the progress made.

W. J. RITCHIE, after an argument in favour of examinations, says:—I shall conclude by merely stating the following additional arguments which, I presume, will take up all the space at my disposal. I. Public examinations are the best means for giving the student a real knowledge of his own ability. II. They bring out latent talent, encourage the diffident who set too low a value on their own worth, and they act as a restraint on the self-conceited who have no great ability. III. They train the young to those habits of energetic industry which are most desirable in after-life, and serve the same purpose as the aim which men in mature years make a goal of, to strive for as a help to urge them on.

E. S. PROCTER:—Examinations are a very imperfect test of character: many who have plenty of head knowledge are utterly unfit for positions of trust, it may be from lack of uprightness, from want of discernment in reading the character of others, from inability to impart instruction, or from absence of method—so necessary for insuring harmony. They rather judge of human nature as exhibited in separate qualities, than as a system formed of a combination of virtues.

M. TARBOLTON:—Is it not possible that as public examinations become *more* common, cramming may become *less* common? The preliminary education given in schools is now of such a kind that scholars are ready to pass their first examinations with little extra study, and having a good groundwork to go upon, the examinations in later life may be passed with comparatively slight effort.

EX-SCHOOLBOY:—Mr. Speaker,—Perhaps, as one of the "young people" whose case is being considered, I may be allowed to say a few words as to the beneficial (?) effects of public examinations in my own case. I had the misfortune to be sent to a school—there are many such in England at the present time—whose great glory was the number of honours gained yearly by its pupils in public competitive examinations. It was soon found out that I had a liking and some aptitude for one particular subject—Mathematics; and, as that was a subject which was considered a "strong point" of the school, I was at once set to work at it, and at it alone, with the view to competing for an open University Scholarship. In this one subject I was drilled morning, noon, and night; frequently, in order to complete the amount of work given to me, I was compelled to work—almost uninterruptedly—from 6, or even 5 a.m., to 10 p.m. The consequence of this overwork was that, when the time of examination was close upon me, I was taken ill and compelled to discontinue work. My illness grew serious, and threatened congestion of the brain, of which I had had one attack some years previously. I was ordered to give up work at once, and never again to attempt the study of Mathematics. Thus I am left in a weak state of health to begin all again; the only subject of which I have a fair knowledge is never likely to be of any practical use to me, while of subjects that would be use-

ful I know next to nothing. I may seem to speak bitterly, but I have had bitter cause to feel the truth of my words, my life having been practically ruined by this system.

NOMEN, in defence of public examinations, concludes by saying:—Again, examinations are beneficial to those who fail. What can be more beneficial to a conceited young man than to find that he does *not* know everything; that there is something more for him to learn? and what is more likely to reform him and transform him into an earnest student than failure at an examination?

Other speeches in favour of examinations:—John Carson, A. T. Cufley, H. E. Handsombody, M.A., One Interested, Joshua Good, Ernest Whipple, Edith A. Skemp, Fairfax, Maud H. Foot, M., H. B., J. Kidd Peebles, Anon., Jessie Barrett, M. M. D., K. W., J. Johnston, G. J. Yates, R. A. Ocean Wolfe, Chas. V. Crabb, C. B., F. M. Nelson, Mrs. W. Roberts, J. M., Pendente Lite, J. Newton Harris, E. Ernest Law, W. H. Gibson, Walter Cordwell, H. T. Munday, James Payne, H. Siddons, Juvenis, S. C. H., J. R. Ashworth, E. M. Argles, Megalosaurius, E. A., Henry Rafter, J. L. M., F. E. Russell, Emma Fraser, W. Speakman, F. Parker, J. Twomey, J. C. Simpson, M. G., M. Ritchie, X. I. X., W. Moxon, Francis Beard, K. S. Knox, R. W. Stewart, Alpha, Rev. J. Hanson, James Wilson, G. H. Ely, W. J. E., Ishmael Diogenes, J. S. Boothroyd, W. H., A. J. Shilton, E. H. Hartler, F. J. F., and others.

Other speeches against:—E. A. Smith, Beta, J. Ferguson, Veritas, M. Stobart, jun., May Maldock, Rev. T. K., F. W. Witter, Verena, R. J. Hopgood, Annie Holmes, J. A. Kirk, G. S., F. H. Low, H. Wells, F. S. Fakey, Grainger Tandy.

The Honorarium of One Guinea is awarded to J. A. COMPTON, Leeds, whose speech will be given in our next, together with the Opener's reply, &c., but no further speeches can be received on Question II.

VOTES OF READERS.

The votes of our readers on Question II. (Are Public Examinations Beneficial to Young People?) may now be sent to the Editor, who will make a return of the numbers on either side in the May Part of the Magazine.

The **Voting Paper** will be found between the Frontispiece and the first page of this Part. In the form is a dotted line to be filled up by the reader. If the reader be on the side of the opener (*i.e.*, in favour of public examinations), the word "Opener" is to be written on the dotted line. If the reader be on the side of the opponent (*i.e.*, against public examinations), the word "Opponent" is to be written on the dotted line. **Nothing else is to be written or marked upon the Voting Paper.**

The Voting Paper, when filled up as above directed, should be cut off at the perforated line, and sent to "The Editor of Cassell's Family Magazine, La Belle Sauvage Yard, London, E.C.," with the word "Vote" on the *top left-hand corner* of the envelope or wrapper. The vote may be enclosed in a stamped halfpenny wrapper.

No vote can be counted unless tendered on the printed Voting Paper, and sent in strict accordance with the above directions. The LAST DAY for receiving votes is March 10.

NOTICE.—The Debate on "EARLY MARRIAGES," opened in the previous Part, will be continued in our next: when also an important addition to the general scheme of the Family Parliament will be announced.

SWEET NATURE.



ALTHOUGH sweet natures we have loved, depart,
And fancy seeks their smile on heaven's
shore,
Yet are they present to the human heart,
Imperishable as the love they bore.
While here, it was their spirit that we loved,
Unseen but no less real than their clay:
Beauty intrinsic, that which breathed and moved

Within the circle of life's glaring day,
Still lives, enriching sorrow's darkling night;
And as some rose, the rarest of the year,
Whose blossom drank the morning's crimson
light,
Dies, but to live in perfume's airy sphere—
Sweet natures last, though time their dust destroy,
And beauty changes to a sightless joy.

QUESTION II.—ARE PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS BENEFICIAL TO YOUNG PEOPLE?

J. A. COMPSTON: Mr. Speaker,—I commence the remarks which I beg to be allowed to make on this subject, Sir, with the somewhat commonplace observation that the more one knows and learns, the more one feels how much yet remains unknown to be learned. I speak, Sir, as one of a class composed of persons who have not had the advantage of an expensive and protracted school-training, but who somewhat early in life have had to begin to fight its battles. Feeling, therefore, as I strongly do, the disadvantage in the struggle under which the persons of which that class consists labour, I beg to ask the attention of the House for a short time to the question before it as applied especially to these persons, forming as they do chiefly the great middle class of society. For, Sir, I venture to assert it is to this class that those competing in the public examinations largely belong. The middle class is ever striving to push its way up to the higher, and its members are conscious that without wealth, by education alone, and the position which that education will secure for them, can the object they seek be attained. Hence it is that, in my humble opinion, the prizes and rewards fall in the great majority of cases, not to those who seek to earn them simply for the sake of doing so, but to those who without them would forfeit some coveted aim because the "way" refuses to keep pace with the "will." My honourable friend who has so ably opened this subject in the negative (but with few of whose opinions I can agree) seems for the purposes of his argument to assume that it is possible to learn too much! I wonder, Sir, if he could name a subject, the learning of which is absolutely useless? Let us even suppose that the subject studied is of no present practical utility to the student (which I submit can seldom really happen), is it waste time which is spent in learning something of which before one was ignorant? Assuming for the purposes of the argument that some person has for some reason decided to present himself at a public examination, he is required to pass in subjects that to him appear to have no bearing

whatever upon the occupation which has been marked out for him. But is it, therefore, useless? I think not. His taste for that particular occupation may some time change, and he may desire to adopt some other, in which a knowledge of one of the subjects which now appear to be so unnecessary is a *sine qua non* of success, whereas had he been trained in the old system, probably no such subject would have been acquired by him. Coming now to the evils with which the system of public examinations is attended, no one, of course, would for one moment seek to deny that it has drawbacks. What then, Sir, shall be done? Because, at the hands of the few, the system which is so full of benefit to the many is applied to wrong objects, shall the many therefore suffer? Shall those who honestly strive to get on in life, and earn the rewards which are offered for hard work, be prevented from moving up, and made to remain where they are with no hope of ameliorating their condition? I think it will be found that the majority of this House is with my honourable friend the Opener of the debate.

OPENER'S REPLY.

MR. SPEAKER,

After the prolonged debate on this subject, and having in view, Sir, the general consensus of opinion in favour of examinations, I feel that I need not take up further time by repeating the answers to my opponent's arguments which have been forthcoming from so many who agree with my view of the question. Need I say I am thoroughly satisfied with the tone of the debate, and with the result, and that I am more than ever convinced that examinations are not only beneficial, but a necessity of the age?

The following is a summary of the speeches:—In favour of public examinations—83; against—22; Total 105.

END OF DEBATE ON QUESTION II.

QUESTION III.—ARE EARLY MARRIAGES UNTHRIFTY?

(Debate continued.)

REV. ALBERT LEE: If marriages were always undertaken in accordance with Opponent's ideal, we could withdraw many objections to his remarks. But what are the facts? Opponent says, "If they"—the young couple—"make the most of things;" but a young wife has not yet learnt how to do this. As a rule she starts upon her marriage career, having been but indifferently prepared. Take the case, also, where the young people begin by keeping a servant. If the wife is inexperienced, she does not control the servant; the servant controls her; and that certainly leads to needless expenditure.

REV. W. R. B.: I have seen a large number of early marriages—*i.e.*, between ages eighteen and twenty-four—and in quite ninety per cent. of the cases have seen as the result a noble self-reliance, ceaseless industry, fine sense of responsibilities, admirable self-respect, "where there's a will there's a way" kind of air; these expressions of character all focus to what we understand by the term thrift.

J. E. SHATTOCK: How many young mechanics, on less than a pound a week, at the age of eighteen or even earlier, imprudently rush into what they call the bliss of married life! and how soon do they find the cares and struggles, which they had previously either ignored or not anticipated, far outweigh the happiness they expected! Nothing has been laid by to furnish the home, however humble (and furnished apartments in any rank of life are very expensive); neither husband nor wife has practised self-denial in any way (what time have they had to do so?)—each has hitherto spent the wages earned mostly, if not entirely, on themselves; and when the earnings of one cease, or

when, as in more exceptional cases, the joint earnings are put together, from want of that management which training and experience can alone impart, they are found less and less able to meet their needs; then visits are paid to the pawnshop; and from one lower step to another the wretched pair sink into misery and ruin.

MRS. NICHOLSON: Man is made for marriage, and the time for it is clearly indicated. There is a glory around the spring of life; the path of youth is strewn with flowers, the heart is full of poetry, the air resonant with music: it is the time of love! In the glow of innocent passion, let the youthful bride and bridegroom wed. This earth would lose one of its loveliest sights were mating deferred till the summer or autumn of life, and only mature and sedate couples were seen wending their way to the altar. If God and nature are wrong in the time they appoint for marriage, and it is unthriftly to obey their dictates, man must be wiser than his Maker. If the transplanting of marriage from its proper place is good, would not the denying of it altogether be better?

J. T. R.: Amongst the mining and manufacturing classes early marriages are the rule, and the proportion of those who live the kind of life which conduces to thrift, and in its turn happiness, is certainly not a large one. In a group of about 500 families in a mining village, only about ten per cent. were believed to be really better off at the end than at the beginning of the great period of prosperity in the years 1871-74.

J. TAYLOR: As regards the *cost* of early marriage. When young men marry let them make their home their pleasure, their