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COLLEGE examinations form a much vexed subject, considered as they are from two such widely different points of view as are occupied by the educator and pedagogist, and the student.

From the fact that each will always show a varying degree of skill, it is clear that examinations will always prove more or less unsatisfactory, according as the instructor and student is more or less accurate,—the one in following essential and possible lines, the other in a due amount of conscientious work.

We have no sympathy with the idea that term work should settle the student's standing. The preparation for the examination, whether continued throughout the term in a consistent and rational manner, as it should be, or obtained as the result of a "cram," is necessary to the intelligent comprehension of any subject. The examination is therefore the only final test of proficiency, and nothing can take its place. If, as is held by those who would abolish examinations, a good term grade shows the ability to pass a successful examination, why should the person having it fear the test? But for reasons which need not be given here, it is by no means true that the term grade is a guide to the student's standing. It must be coupled with the examination. More or less rapidly absorbing successive portions of a subject without logically connecting them, it is needless to say, is not mastering it.

Granting, then, the necessity of the examination, what should its character be? With the sincere student it is not a childish question of the "hard" and "easy" examination, but of exactness, and logical connection. This is the final gathering of the harvest, and should to a certain degree bring out the entire subject. Salient points should have the preference, but only because they have constituted the backbone of the previous work, if rightly pursued. Odd questions have no place here, and only show that the instructor is erratic, or lacks pedagogical skill. The exactness we have spoken of, the rigid exclusion of impossible and unnecessary standards, requires the purity of the examination. Aside from any moral considerations, it is to the student's interest, in the long run to stand for precisely what he is.

The failure of an industrious student might condemn the methods of an instructor, while a process of "cribbing" would only add fungus growth