

## THE MODERN ORDEAL

I wish some one would invent some method or means to take place of the awful ordeal to which the students and pupils of today are submitted—examinations.

A great scientist said, "Examination is like a fearful monster guarding our exits from school, throwing its shadow far ahead, compelling teacher and student to work incessantly toward an artificial show of knowledge. If it could be eliminated it would no longer be necessary to hammer in for years what would be entirely forgotten within a few months and deserves to be forgotten."

Every year there are numbers of school children, High School students and College students who suffer nervous breakdown, in some cases, of course they are extreme cases, become insane and even commit suicide because of their failure to pass in their examinations. Remember I am speaking of the student and not the pupil. For in the case of students who fail it is not lack of ability but nervousness and fear of failure and the humiliation which would be caused by their suggested intellectual inferiority which causes them to fail.

There are many cases such as the following: A boy ranks high in his examinations, not because he knew a great deal about the subjects in question or had thoroughly mastered the principles, but because he had an excellent memory. The night before an examination he was able to memorize sufficient formulae, or facts, or equations, or details to get him through his exam the following day. On the other hand a boy who falls below the acquired percentage of marks in the examinations or tests in all probabilities knows a great deal more than his stuffed-memory classmate and is placed below him. There are such examples in almost every one of the Colleges, High Schools, etc. A boy known to be one of the best scholars of the school failed in his exams, his teachers were able to say he was an unusually able student and his class work was among the highest and yet he failed.

Now the first case does not mean education in any sense of the word. It is mere memory trickery; it is not fair; it is not honest. In the second case it is unfair. That boy naturally thinks that his rank in school is the standard of his ability towards success. Also he may think as he lacks ability that he is mentally defective (that means plain stupid) and therefore he might as well give up.

In such a manner many of the finest of young Canada lose their self-confidence and later their ability. So it can be traced back to "examinations" for the cause of many a ruined career.