THE TECH.

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HAT “coming events cast their shadows before” is very true of our examination system, and every man at the Institute now feels himself well within the penumbra of the approaching ordeal. In less than a week, we shall all be attempting to demonstrate our knowledge of each and every subject in papers from which our instructors will deduce our ignorance. It is a gloomy subject, but it is an all important one. The examination is the very keystone of our educational system. There is everything to be said in its disfavor; there is but one argument to advance in its support; and this one, the bare fact that nothing can take its place, is inescapable. In lecture courses it is inevitable, and even when daily recitations have been the rule, the examination does give an insight into the student’s work not to be gained in any other manner. But while nothing, therefore, can be said as to any abandonment of the system, much might be advanced relative to its use and misuse. An examination cannot be an absolute gauge of a student’s knowledge, and making it so is the greatest evil of the system. A Professor of first year mathematics in the Institute was asked by one of his students—a man who had secured a mark of above 90 per cent. in his daily work—whether, if he fell slightly below 70 in the examination, his class work would help to give him the necessary Credit. The Professor answered,—“No; if you get 70, you will receive a Credit; if 69, a Pass.” It is nonsense to suppose that any paper of ten questions or less can be made out which shall, on some particular day, determine each student’s exact knowledge of the subject in question, and give results of such value as to completely overshadow the class work evidence of each daily assignment faithfully performed. We have many professors and instructors, we are glad to say, who labor conscientiously to avoid this mistake; who esteem the examination for just what it is worth; and who, by taking all factors into account, and marking on the average of the class, attain results which are unquestioned for fairness. To the others we would only say,—“Go thou and do likewise.”

To the Seniors we wish success. You are on the home stretch now, and you will get there by degrees. The Juniors and Sophomores are only to repeat once more a sad experience, and have our commiseration. To the Freshmen a word of warning. Be not deceived at the easiness of your entrance examinations; they are so for reasons known alone to the Faculty; these which are coming are not so, and except by hard and continuous work in cramming many of you are destined