

ENVIRONMENT

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EXAMINATIONS.

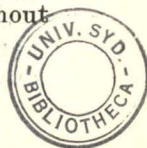
As an examination approaches, the majority of competitors feel that life is too strenuous, that a bark humpy in a sunny glade by the banks of the usual rippling stream makes a very pleasant home, that lying in the sun or strolling through the bush is the best way of drifting through life contentedly, and that all competitive effort should be discountenanced.

Students who know that their knowledge of a subject is superior to that of all others—in their own school at least—fear that the “test” examination may not place them in the top position even in their own class; students who hope to pass think that possibly they may not be lucky; students who know that their knowledge is negligible, fear the consequences of the inevitable disclosure of that fact. Competition is worrying and disturbing.

What a relief at any school if it were announced at morning assembly that in future, though homework might be given, there would be no test applied or effort made to find out whether it had been done; that masters and mistresses would talk, and that students would be encouraged to read, but that no questions would be asked of the boys or girls, so that any appearance of competition or examination might thus be avoided! No further weekly tests would be set, there would be no more term or annual examinations, and of course anything, such as Intermediate or Leaving Certificate examinations, which might compare the qualifications of pupils of different schools, would be abolished. No tests of the pupils, no tests of the masters, and the world outside the school asked to accept the newcomers in the same spirit, and to let them have everything without question or competitive effort.

How restfully retrogressive to contemplate!

26 APR. 1935



Unfortunately most of the leaders, who control affairs such as these, have been brought up under the bad old system of competitive examination; they have learnt to be restless and not easily satisfied, to fight against difficulties which arise and to overcome rather than to dodge them; they themselves would not long be content to rest in glorious isolation on their backs in the sun, and consequently cannot rightly appreciate the point of view of those who feel that civilisation has made life too long and too complicated, that the Australian pioneers were people to be condemned rather than to be praised, and that examinations are unpleasant and unnecessary institutions which should be abolished. Alike to the candidate and examiner they are periods to be dreaded, sessions of, at the very least, grave disturbance and discomfort. It clearly has not occurred to the Educational Commissions which have recently been assembled in Sydney that the very fact that there has been such a clamour against examinations and systems of examinations discloses the fact that they are disturbing elements, which prevent schools and scholars settling down to a placid, contented, and undisturbed period of tranquillity, and so might well be discontinued. There are many people who, quite rationally, are satisfied that all examinations should be so regulated that they abolish competition, and who favour various schemes by means of which the striving of scholar against scholar even in class may be prevented, but who are so inconsistent that they do not go far enough to prevent the strife that must take place even within the individual if he be forced to develop his mind. There are some few teachers who are even more illogical, and do not mind examinations which they themselves control, which are only tests of the knowledge and intelligence of their own students and competitions within their own classes; unfortunately it has been suggested that their object is not so much to save their pupils from the introduction of a disturbing ferment, as to protect themselves from the possibilities of conflict with their peers. Why should they not seek this more tranquil life? All that the most advanced thinker could further demand would be that they should also permit their charges to share it. Even the private schools are not free to develop as they will; parents demand "results", whatever that may mean, and apparently wish their children to sit for competitive

examinations, not only in sports but also in routine school subjects; employers ask that potential employees should have passed "the Intermediate Certificate Examination or its equivalent".

The remedy is obvious: destroy every living being, every living cell, and declare The Great Examination a failure; thus the restless, progressing, competing life would stop, and we would have no more troubles with our educational systems.

EUCALYPTUS OILS.

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THE mention of Eucalyptus oil recalls immediately its use for a cough or cold by placing three drops of the oil on a piece of sugar and the swallowing of the confection. A better method of treatment is by inhaling the oil from the surface of water which has been heated to boiling point. The efficacy of the oil, especially for the treatment of influenza and severe cold in the head is considerably enhanced by the addition of a few crystals of menthol to the oil. These particular uses are very well-known, but many other and, in my opinion, more important uses are not so well-known.

There is no better substance for the removal of grease stains and tar from clothes, even the most delicately coloured fabrics, than certain grades of Eucalyptus Oil which will be described later. Apart from their use as clothes cleaners, Eucalyptus Oils are very useful for the renovation of tapestry, car and furniture upholstery.

The industrial grades of Eucalyptus Oil, which will also be discussed in detail later, are without superior as solvents for tar, grease, raw rubber and paint. Admixtures of these oils with kerosene or petrol are excellent for the removal of grease from various parts of motor cars such as wheels, and for the cleaning of the hands after such work. No motorist should be without a bottle of industrial Eucalyptus Oil. Old paint and varnish brushes which have been neglected and placed on one side as useless are readily restored to a useful condition by soaking them in *Eucalyptus dives* Oil.