

THE MYSTERIES OF MODERN EDUCATION

I am an elderly person, educated by the solid, old-fashioned methods of half a century ago. I have a charming young friend named Margaret, who sometimes consents to enlighten me upon the Mysteries of Modern Education. A short time ago while she was paying me a visit of an afternoon, I sought to discover the bounds and area of her present intellectual attainments, and the following dialogue ensued:

Elderly Person: "What subjects are you now pursuing at school, my dear?"

Margaret: "Oh, arithmetic, and language and cookery and geography and history and dressmaking and calisthenics and mechanical drawing and reading and current events and literature."

Elderly Person (seriously): "Is that all?"

Margaret: "I may have forgotten some."

Elderly Person: "It would seem not to be impossible, my child." But tell me about your arithmetic. Where are you now?"

Margaret: "We are studying insurance and interest and bank bills and taxes."

I meditate a moment before resuming my questions. I look into the serious eyes of my young friend. Not much more than a baby, even though in two years she will enter the high school! How necessary that she shall become acquainted with taxes and insurance. Even now the tax collector may be looking for the revenue due from her large and varied financial interests. Investments foolsooth! Her investments should be in dolls and fairy tales for the present. But the demure maiden waits.

Elderly Person: "And what, Margaret, is your present knowledge of geography?"

Margaret: "Oh, I dislike geography! (with a sigh.) You see we had to hurry so. We got behind on Europe and so we had only two weeks for Asia and two days for Australia."

Rapid transit, even for these days, thinks the Elderly Person.

Elderly Person: "Can you tell me anything about these continents?"

Margaret: "Well, there are plains in Asia, and Sydney is in Australia, and Australia supplies Europe with beef."

There may be a reason why Margaret is not fond of geography.

Elderly Person: "And how about history?"

Margaret: "Oh, I don't like that either! We have to learn all about the English, French, Spanish and Dutch discoverers and what they discovered. I can't remember the Spanish names. I guess I'll get 'U' in the history test."

Elderly Person: "You spoke about cooking. What can you cook?"

Margaret: "We have had potato soup, and rice with sauce, and fudge, and chocolate pudding. We have to eat what we cook. The chocolate pudding made me sick for two days."

The Elderly Person wonders if Whittier would have been so sentimental about the little red schoolhouse by the road, if he had been obliged to eat chocolate pudding made by the maiden who "hated to go above him." He might have hated the maiden, and then he would have written no exquisite idyl of the district school. But, of course, methods change. The Elderly Person is growing old.

Elderly Person (who thinks that he has come upon a subject which the years cannot change!): "You said that you had language, Margaret, dear. Of course you know all about verbs and adverbs and prepo—"

Margaret (in high disdain): "No, indeed! I never

heard of those queer things. In language we write letters for positions."

Elderly Person (gasping): "The saints preserve us. For positions, did you say?"

Margaret: "Oh, yes! I have applied for a position as clerk, stenographer, and work in a hotel. I answered an advertisement for 'Boy Wanted.'"

The Elderly Person gazes at Margaret for some time, almost apprehensively. Can it be that her mind has been shaken by overstudy? The bright cheek and the clear eye dispel the fear. But in what subtle way can the new education suppose that answering an advertisement for "Boy wanted," is to benefit this "very pattern girl of girls, with her yellow hair tied up with a bewitching big black bow? Perhaps the idea came from Germany, in which case there is nothing more to be said.

The Elderly Person fears that he must have forgotten his young friend, the exponent of the Mysteries of Modern Education, at this point, for he was roused from his reverie by a polite voice, which said, "Excuse me, sir, but I must go home now. I have to read the daily papers for my current events class, and prepare my mechanical drawing and read two chapters in The Young Citizen for the class in civics."

After she was gone the Elderly Person recalled a passage from Elia to the effect that there could be no better education for a girl than to turn her loose in a library of the best English literature, and he wondered whether Margaret will be any better off after she has mastered all of the Mysteries of Modern Education.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Nothing is born full grown. It passes through a period of growth, and it must grow or die. The parent who is delighted with the innocent helplessness of his child, and rejoices at its little efforts at speech, becomes seriously alarmed if his lisping, tottering, help-requiring state threatens to become permanent. Would that the cessation of growth in the spiritual life created as much dismay! Would that it seemed as monstrous, as unnatural to have our spiritual as our natural growth checked! It would be a startling revelation to all of us were the discernment of our spiritual condition as keen and true as our vision of the body. What do you honestly believe that you would see yourself to be? Have you spiritually made the growth due to the time that you have been a Christian, or are you conscious that you are still a weak child? Have we grown up to maturity? Are we growing to maturity? Have we grown beyond our associates; or are we conscious that many others stand head and shoulders above us? Physically, we once needed to be lifted, if we were to see or touch or be on the level of certain things; we should be humiliated were it so still. Is it so spiritually? Do we find ourselves face to face with things which once towered above us and seemed unattainable? Can we stand alone now? Are we men in understanding, able for ourselves to see what is good, having within ourselves a strength sufficient for all needs of life, truly sons of God who have entered into the full liberty and strength that God means his sons to have? And being born again is a great thing, but it is not everything. The growing after birth to maturity is much more the end for which birth is alone desirable and valuable.—Marcus Dodds, D. D.

"What's the matter, Willie?" said Mrs Brown to her small son, who was crying. "My kite won't fly," sobbed Willie, "and I made it out of fly-paper, too."

There never was an angel who wouldn't take off her wings and cook for the man she loved.