

food, want of cleanliness and restricted exercise are the fruitful causes of disease and death among children attending school, but excessive study, we may say, never. We have yet to learn that teachers meet with such a ready response to their demand for home preparation that they feel impelled from motives of humanity to advise their pupils to moderate their ardor. Boys have a remarkable faculty of taking care of themselves in this respect, and we think that it is likely to continue in vigorous exercise as long as there are boys. With girls it may be different. Their temperament is more nervous, they are not so strong and robust and not so capable of long continued exertion, and therefore, for them, a more limited curriculum should be prescribed. But we think that most teachers will agree with us when we say that though girls are perhaps more conscientious than boys, they are equally well endowed with the instinct of self-preservation.

We are convinced that the foolish and often frantic call for indiscriminate interference on behalf of pupils is for the most part groundless. The boys, and the girls too, must laugh at a great deal that is said about mitigating their deplorable condition. Many of the evils from which they are said to suffer they hear of for the first time from the fervid utterances of humanitarian physicians and amateur philanthropists. They must wonder what it all means, but must have some faint notion that the school-boy millennium is at hand. Fortunately, however, if they are led to indulge in day-dreams of a time when there shall be no more lessons, no more themes, they are soon recalled to the realities of the present by the inspiring summons of their teacher to fresh and more vigorous and more strenuous effort. And the more intense their application to their studies the more satisfactory are the results, and the keener their enjoyment of times of relaxation when they occur.

We have had ample opportunity during many years to observe the effect of study upon most diligent students of both sexes, and can confidently aver that it is a most healthful occupation. In the course of a quarter of a century not one death has been recorded nor one instance of injury arising from an over-zealous prosecution of study.

But if the school curriculum be of such dimensions that its subjects, in number and range, are beyond the powers of the average pupil, and the time which the various subjects demand passes the limits of prudence, and curtails that which is required for amusement and exercise, it cannot be too strongly condemned. The chairman of the London (England) School Board, in his annual address, delivered a week or two ago, says: "The great danger which apparently

threatens the steady progress of elementary education is the pressure which is constantly being exerted to render obligatory additional subjects of instruction, without reference to the varying circumstances of the children, or the settled conditions of elementary school life. We are in danger of destroying the efficiency of elementary education by attempting to teach a little of many things, instead of teaching what it is practicable to teach thoroughly and well." And this danger, of which Rev. Mr. Diggle warned his colleagues, is one which we fear threatens us too. The time-table is becoming so crowded with subjects that it is absolutely impossible to find time for them all. Distraction instead of interest ensues. The pupil in his home work does not aim at understanding his lessons but merely memorizes, while in school the time is so broken up into fragments that it is only possible to test his preparation, without securing his sympathy or calling into exercise his thinking powers. For the duty of the teacher is not confined to the communication of knowledge, but he must see that it is understood, and that the mind of the pupil is so disciplined that he will be able to acquire knowledge for himself. If the time-table does not admit of this, then it is bad and ought to be rectified. In the hurry and mental confusion arising from a multiplicity of subjects the pupil has no time to think, the intellectual atmosphere of such a school is not favorable to thought, there is cram throughout—drill if you wish to call it, but certainly it is not education. Hand-books or primers of all the sciences are in the hands of the pupils, and crammed, and often so unintelligently that they do not even understand the language employed. Worry and bewilderment are the result to diligent pupils, and often nervous collapse. If this is the evil complained of as over-pressure, there is not an intelligent teacher in the land but will heartily sympathize with the hostile criticism with which it is assailed, and cordially co-operate in any earnest attempt to banish it from our schools.

THE NEWFOUNDLAND SCHOOL SYSTEM.

The letter of "L. G. M.," in another column, will be read with interest. As the subject has been pretty thoroughly discussed, and both sides have had a fair hearing, we feel that the interests of our readers have been fully served by what has thus far appeared in these columns. We hope, therefore, that the letter which appears to-day will close the discussion, so far as this paper is concerned.

In inviting to our columns in June last an article on the present system of education in Newfoundland, we were actuated with one desire only—to obtain and