

or carried to the kindergarten, public or private, and be subjected to the excitement of elaborate study-games and a crowd of other children. The children's party, with its late hours and heavy supper, is the horror especially of the holiday season. Where there is a large circle of friends, it becomes a grievous evil at all seasons. Fairly launched on his school days, the child has to run the gauntlet of an elaborate programme of studies. We try to keep ourselves in touch with the best in educational improvements, but we confess to regarding it with something akin to alarm, the multiplication of subjects in the public schools, and the perpetual harassments of inspection and examination. A large part of it is utter dissipation to the scholar. Instead of developing, in a simple and natural way on a few elementary lines, the child, if of a keen and active mind, becomes a little prodigy of knowledge, but with vital forces exhausted. If careless or dull, the attempt to learn so many things at once distracts, and the child becomes the victim of chronic inaccuracy. Robustness of intellect and thoroughness are sacrificed to the dissipations of show and cram.

Libraries and reading-rooms are answerable for no small amount of dissipation. We are not decrying these. We would have them established in every community, and used. But the superabundance of reading matter has its dangers. In the old days when the whole stock of available books consisted in the two or three shelves of the corner kitchen cupboard, there was no choice. The few books were read over and over again. There were mastered; and the mastering process developed strong and sturdy intellects. The few books, thoroughly read, were like plain fare well masticated and digested. The boy who had leisurely made them his own, was already educated

in the best sense of the term, his faculties trained for efficient use. A boy of fifteen set loose, without guidance, in a well-stocked reading-room, and with the privilege of as many books a week from the Public Library as he can skim, is in sore peril of knowing nothing well, and indeed of losing the power of ever learning anything thoroughly. It is a question whether his leisure hours would not be better spent at a trade or at hard work in the garden, without books at all, than remaining at large in the fields of miscellaneous literature, as many town and city boys are permitted to do.

A physician, speaking the other day at a college commencement, advised his young professional graduates not to give much time to society. Its distractions would be fatal to any real progress or success. The waste of time and energy on the part of young people in amusement is perfectly appalling. Recreation they must have. Indeed, to forego recreation is often to commit grievous sin. But is it not of too frequent occurrence that the youth endures his daily task at the bench, or in the shop or office, only that, the moment he is free, he may plunge into some form of gaiety? Now and then, one finds young fellows who utilize their hours out of business in fitting themselves better for their work. Everyone can quote remarkable instances of success through such concentration of endeavour. But they are, after all, the exception. Short hours of work are prized, because they leave long hours for idling or recreation. The town or city is preferred to the country, because it brings shorter hours of labour and more time for amusement.

The question is a very serious one for those who have charge of the young. It is a difficult one as well, especially in the larger centres. It seems almost impossible to secure simplicity