

The Stimulation of Modern School Life

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DURING the past forty years a breath of freedom has been passing over the length and breadth of English-speaking countries and penetrating even into the sacred precincts of boarding school life. Varied and stimulating lectures take the place of old-fashioned recitations; swimming, basket ball, tennis and cricket oust the inevitable daily walk, changes grateful to mind and body but more grateful as bespeaking newer methods of tone and handling. But tendencies such as these once let loose cannot easily be arrested and a question arises as to how far change and variety is beneficial in itself, how far a good preparation for the comparative monotony of country, town and hamlet life?

For there is danger in stimulation as well as stagnation and a luxurious school can enervate as surely as a conventual can deaden and repress. Are modern schools obtaining a happy medium, are they stimulating yet at the same time guarding against an undue love of pleasure and excitement? Questions as far-reaching and as momentous as these cannot be briefly answered, but light can be thrown upon them by taking into account the changed conditions of education itself as well as the change in the early life and training of the child. For life even in a country village is comparatively stimulating to-day and children enter even from their earliest days, the pleasures and amusements hitherto set apart to grown-up life. Before they came to school they have had "a good time" and they intend at school and throughout life to have a good time also.

A school cannot change the spirit of an age, but it can call out the best of that spirit,

make pleasure a handmaid instead of a tyrant, and bring brightness and variety into everyday life. But apart from the question of previous training, it is hard to see how a girl can stand the strain of modern education if it is not lightened and made as attractive as possible. The tide of education has risen year by year. Facts and dates are as many as in days gone by and a wide range of Scripture history and literature has to be covered. Light pieces of music yield to classical, execution to harmony and technique. The playground is invaded by the Drill Mistress enforcing rules as strictly as in a boys' school, every game being played in absolute silence.

In the old-fashioned school of forty years ago a girl played the piano, studied a little Scripture and Literature, painted on china, and copied water colors, but a mother of to-day would not be satisfied with a like education for her daughter. She does not usually ask for matriculation, for matriculation spells giving up art and music and many outdoor games, and she is anxious that her daughter should strengthen herself physically as much as possible. She wishes her also to interest herself in domestic science, for domestic science will be serviceable wherever her lot is cast, especially in the West where "helps" are occasional if not unobtainable. But as the mother of to-day adds athletics, gymnastics and domestic science to the already over-crowded list of subjects, she forgets that each pursuit takes up time and that year by year her daughter finds herself face to face with a time-table so crowded that it tends to make life as hard and strenuous as that of her grandmother's was, barren and unprofitable.

It is here that the skill of the educator steps in, and by presenting lessons in as stimulating and interesting a form as possible, enables the girl to pass with comparatively little effort from the domain of pleasure into the domain of achievement, from the freedom and brightness of her childish days into a life worth living, a life, moreover, distinctly bearing upon the hereafter. For an educator has to fear above all a cleavage between school life and after life, which may bring serious consequences with it. An over-repressed girl may lack self-control as surely as an over-indulged school girl, and in a sudden access of excitement on her entrance to society may become a restless, feverish, pleasure-seeking woman, a woman who is never to be found when work or sacrifice is required. Moreover, the girl of to-day steps into a freedom and breadth of life inconceivable to women of the Victorian age. She is free, flattered and courted on every side and unless she has a peculiar strong character, unless she has learned at school to keep a right balance between pleasure and duty, such a transition comes with an overpowering rush upon her. The duty of the modern school is to find clean and healthy outlets, to give everything that will strengthen judgment and self-control so that as the girl leaves school she passes from a wide and generous tone of school thought and companionship into a wide and generous tone of life from keen, big-hearted school days to keen, big-hearted society days, from holding out a hand to friendless and lonely school mates, into caring for the wants and needs of women all the world over.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

CANADA'S educational progress in commensurate with her material prosperity. The older universities with one or two exceptions show marvellous growth in attendance and scholastic vigour. The newer universities in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia are being moulded into working condition. Whether our public schools are keeping step with our secondary schools and colleges is an open question. The public schools have been handicapped by political and religious considerations which have not affected higher education. This possibly explains the growth of private schools for young children, such as are thriving everywhere where population is at all dense, the growth of boarding schools for boys and girls of every age, and the wonderfully wide extension of the "business" college. It is the purpose of this article to show how wonderfully secondary schools and the private or commercial institutions are succeeding and how great a part they are playing in the work of educating the future Canadian citizen.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

When the present attendance at the University of Toronto is compared with the attendance ten years ago, a marvellous rate of growth is shown. In 1897, the registration totalled 1,353, made up of 923 in Arts, 295 in Medicine, and 135 in Engineer-

ing and Applied Science. The increase in the ten-year period is over two hundred per cent. The following table gives the details for the past two years:—

	'07-8.	'08-9.
Arts	1,774	2,138
Medicine	755	690
Applied Science	724	750
Household Science	73	74
Education	211	190
Forestry	8	24
Total	3,545	3,866

There are large increases in the faculties of Applied Science, Arts, and Medicine. While the increase in University College, Medicine and Applied Science has been very great during the last ten years, it must also be remembered that Trinity College has entered the University since that time, and new departments of Household Science, Education and Forestry have been added.

This University last year granted 597 degrees to students in all faculties and institutions connected with her, and 497 diplomas and certificates.

MCGILL UNIVERSITY

McGill University cannot boast of any wonderful increase in the attendance of students dur-

ing the past ten years, although the figures to-day show that over 500 more were enrolled during the past session than there were in attendance during the session of 1898-99. Then, the number stood at 1,248, to-day the registration is 1,759. The details of the past two years are as follows:—

	'07-8.	'08-9.
Law	37	42
Arts	512	397
Applied Science	485	564
Affiliated Colleges	96	127
Medicine	352	333
Graduate School	45	66
Total	1,527	1,529
Deduct number registered in more than one faculty	46	38
	1,481	1,491
Macdonald College	215	268
Total	1,696	1,759

The chief increase is in the Faculty of Applied Science. The numbers have jumped in the ten-year period from 231 to 564. There has been a decrease, however, in the Faculty of Medicine due, no doubt, to two reasons: (1) The destruction of the great part of the Medical Building by fire in April, 1907, and (2) The lengthening of the term for the doctor's degree from four to five years. These two causes produced a falling off in attendance during the last two years, but the fact that the



Games Day at St. Andrews, Toronto.



A Cricket Match at U.C.C., Toronto.