

so much about mental hygiene we have forgotten that a good diet is the first rule of health and that books are still the cheapest and the best form of intellectual nourishment. Moreover, reading is the best stimulus, the surest invitation to quiet meditation, to rational analysis, to creative thought. A well-known figure in Canadian university life, disturbed by the business of these days of "audio-visual" education and of precise laboratory techniques, used to say to his science students, "If you want to get an idea, go and take a walk by yourself. No one ever had an idea in a lab." Many will agree from experience that he is right. Reading and walking are the best provokers of thought. The present generation is rapidly losing both these useful arts.

Modern universities encourage, in spite of some qualms, early specialization. This means that many students have no knowledge at all worth the name, of certain important areas of learning, and these gaps in his knowledge occur too often in the areas which should be the focal point for all others. How can there be a unity of knowledge, an integration of learning, a philosophy, when the centre is dropped out? Nowadays we admit the importance of man in the mass. We are paying, and we know we ought to pay, increasing attention to research in political science and sociology. We are, however, forgetting man as an individual, as he is found in literature, as he appears in history. We lose thereby the vivid understanding of the person which comes from seeing him set forth clearly at his best, and at his worst, and in all kinds of situations. We lose the great moral lessons which must be taught, which must be learned by anyone who, for example, has considered seriously and sympathetically the great figures of literature and of history. And we lose, moreover, our whole sense of the mystery of life, of the spiritual nature of man, for only in literature, sacred and profane, do we find men dealing boldly with the unknown and with the unknowable. We must derive from literature the surest foundation of our knowledge of man and the preparation for an understanding of God.

Modern universities also and perhaps inevitably encourage early research. Many of their advanced students have no adequate background even in the field of their own research. They have, as a rule, done no wide reading. It is safe to say that in very few of our academic departments does the specialist master the classics of his field. This is as true in history and in literature as in the sciences. Even when the student becomes a professor he may receive no encouragement and he may have no time for the wide reading and intensive thought necessary to his teaching and to his scholarship.

May I offer an illustration which has come to my attention of what I believe to be a most dangerous contempt of wide reading and ripe reflection along with an undue emphasis on so called "research". In a certain university professorial publications are classified either as "research" or as "magazine articles". The latter, less worthy category may and does often include essays of a high quality giving evidence of wide reading and of deep reflection. Such essays perform what I take to be the proper task of the humanist in applying his understanding of human nature and human experience to current human problems. They are rated, however, even though they may be published in the most reputable periodicals, as