

What Price the Modern Boy? IV.

4. Physical Decrepitude.

One would think from the size of the squad that responds to the call for spring practice that any mention of the need of physical exercise would be superfluous at Notre Dame. But while it is true that the enlarged gymnasium, the increase in the coaching staff, the further recognition of minor sports are the reorganization of interhall athletics, have done much to generalize participation in sound play, it is still true that Hull and the LaSalle magazine floor are still the training camps of too many of our students.

While we have not come to the point of using busses to transport students from one class room to another, walking is fast becoming a lost art. The street car company is making too much money; the boys who used to walk to Niles are burning to St. Joe; the beautiful kinks of the river, the Portage, the old Fort St. Joseph, the shaded Buchanan road, are known to few; the woods are deserted and the place is filled with lizards who don't know the difference between a cabbage tree and a prune bush.

If the university were to maintain a wood pile with a full supply of buck saws and wedges, with credit required of all students not enrolled in some major athletic endeavor, you wouldn't find any students running amuck with fire axes. A tired body yields to reason much more readily than a fresh one, and vigor of thought is helped by a sound body.

A sophisticated correspondent rises at this point to tell us that "the toast-eating sissies of today put on the biggest exhibition of rough-house the world has ever seen -- back in 1917-18." If the Rexall Rangers won the war, they weren't dieting on gedunk sundaes at the time.

5. Softening of the Memory.

A generation ago Advanced Thought raised a great hue and cry against parrot-like education, by which was meant the practice of requiring pupils to memorize things which they did not understand. Just as liquor was abolished (officially) because some people abused it, the Great Reform abolished memory work, and with it Memory, because some unskilled teachers abused it.

Today we are faced with an educational problem that amounts to trying to carry water in a sieve. When facts and principles cannot be remembered, the teacher must start from the ground up with each day's work. An untrained memory is a positive nuisance. It retains fragments of things that have appealed to the imagination, it is stuffed full of useless or hurtful material.

Lack of memory is ordinarily recognized as a disadvantage only when it hurts business; a salesman who cannot remember names and faces is handicapped. Its deeper hurt is spiritual: a man cannot philosophize safely without a knowledge of the past. James A. Farrell, President of the United States Steel Corporation, is recognized as the best salesman in the country; his memory enables him to quote the best rates and assure the best delivery; he can tell you any time just where each of his 120 ships is, and what cargo it is carrying; and he trained his memory by hard work as a young man. Dr. James J. Walsh can always tell you that there is nothing new under the sun, because his memory retains so much of his wide reading. Father Zahm sent for a book one day to verify a quotation he had made from memory; it was forty-six years since he had seen the book, and his quotation had been correct. Men with good memories are not so prone to error as others.

PRAYERS: Frank Hagenbarth's mother died Thursday morning. Prayers are requested for five special intentions, for three sick, and for two deceased persons.