

What Price the Modern Boy? V.6. Cramping of the Imagination.

Poetry, architecture, minstrelsy, chemistry, creative music and painting, artistic living, the romantic novel; all the joyous fruits of the imagination will soon be things of the past. The S.P.C.C. gave the stork a ticket-of-leave about fifteen years ago, and soon after Santa Claus was bundled out, bag and baggage. The up-to-date Mother Goose is giving us a terrible crop of three-year-old wise-crackers (if you haven't read any of these literary Castorias go down to the public library and see what they're handing out to their go-cart customers; it's no wonder the mothers don't get the dishes done).

What are we coming to? Nowadays when little Rollo starts to tell mother his bed-time story about the seventeen bears he shot one day, sister Prue says, "Be yourself, Rollo," and another Munchausen takes the count. Modern inventions have taken all the pep out of Jules Verne, tales of the high-jackers in the daily papers have dulled the senses to Stevenson and Scott, the movies have broken the spell of magic lands. Engineering is replacing architecture; noise is replacing music; money, not faith, is building cathedrals. Whitman called on a very accurate memory for his inventory "poems"; his modern imitators, having neither imagination nor memory, seem to use models.

The imagination is a creative faculty. Its function is to bring together two things existing apart to serve man in a united existence. Advertisers are paying for a low grade of imagination: the man who brought together the two words "Eskimo" and "pie" was paid well for the idea (it is said that the thing designated by the expression was an accidental discovery, not a creature of the imagination).

Michelangelo had a good imagination; so had Dante; so had Lincoln and Washington. Wilson's imagination was better than his memory. The small-town boy used to be able to develop good imaginations, but movie, radio and flivver have killed his chance. That imagination is at a low ebb among college students is evident to any teachers who answers questions in class.

And youth suffers. Without imagination there are no ideals, and without ideals man becomes carnal and brutal; without imagination there is no sense of humor, no subtlety, and man becomes a cynic; without imagination there can be no religious symbolism, no sacred pageantry, and religion is reduced to a rule of thumb. Without imagination man becomes a pragmatist, cold, calculating cruel, selfish, egotistical, suspicious, heartless. How much is left to the imagination in the movies? The producers play to the lowest grade of imagination in the various types of audiences, and the loud roar comes from slapstick cruelty and open, not suggested, coarseness. Shakespeare would be played without scenery when people had imaginations. With imagination brought to the aid of faith the Mass becomes a morning paradise.

A wild, undisciplined imagination, may be more harmful to a young man than a stagnant one. Principles of truth, rules of faith and morals, set limits to the lawful use of the imagination, the violation of these rules blocks the work of education. The scatter-brain is the man who is the fickle slave of every passing fancy; the degenerate lets his imagination sink into the gutter. Nervous disorders come from all these afflictions.

The Bulletin's correspondents are frequently troubled with lack of imagination or with disordered imagination. The former infer too little, the latter, too much. The library and the woods develop the imagination better than the type of amusement sought in S.E.

Prayers.

Three students ask prayers for deceased relatives, and three for sick persons. Louis Bolczal's mother died Saturday afternoon. A student wishes to give public thanks for the recovery of his mother's health after a long and serious illness.