

May 12, 1926

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What Price the Modern Boy? XIII.

2. Untutored Educators (Continued).

We have reviewed some of the serious intellectual handicaps of our educational system (the moral handicaps are too many to be considered here). What have they to do with the modern boy? They are primarily responsible for some of his weaknesses, and they contribute to others through failure to correct faults implanted by goofy parents.

If it were not for the splendid development of athletics in American schools results would be much more tragic than they are. Games give a sort of mental activity, some of them a very useful sort, and they take up some of the time bestowed upon the student by our wasteful system. They don't do a whole lot for the memory, some of them help the imagination quite a bit, precision is necessary in many of them, frivolity is checked to a degree, as games provide a higher type of amusement than jazz. They have the wholesome moral effect of making the body tired and contributing to good sportsmanship, which is one phase of the general virtue of honesty.

The evil effects of the educational system are found in their fulness in the modern boy who eschews athletics and has no compensating mental activity that takes him to the library or the workshop. It was for him that the word collegiate came to have a distressing meaning.

3. Independent Philosophers.

Luther enunciated the principle, "It makes no difference what you do, provided you have faith." The pendulum has now swung in the opposite direction. The principle of Indifferentism is: "It makes no difference what you believe, provided you do what's right." It seems not to occur to the Indifferentist that one cannot know what's right unless he believes something; and while he inveighs against the crime wave and lawlessness, in his blindness he cannot see that the grafter and the gunman are "leading their own lives," determining for themselves what's right.

Luther's principle of private interpretation made every man his own theologian (although Luther waxed wrathful when such an interpretation conflicted with his own); Kant's destruction of metaphysics made every man his own philosopher. All that remains of philosophy (practically speaking) outside the Catholic Church at the present time is experimental psychology; and while some excellent observation of facts has resulted, the interpretation of these facts has given rise to numerous contradictory philosophies.

A commencement speaker at Notre Dame several years ago, a prominent figure in our national life, made the astounding assertion that ethical principles change. It is that sort of thing that makes the poison in our civilization, poison that breaks out in festering sores that we try to cure without removing the cause. If there is no eternal, unchangeable natural law, then perhaps the gunman is right, free love is right, anarchy is right, private property is a myth, mother love is hypocrisy.

When the world ignores Scholastic Philosophy it digs its own grave. If life has a meaning, we should be able within a life-time to find out that meaning. If we are to cut ourselves off from the wisdom of all those who are gone before us, if each of us is to figure out life's meaning by the purely experimental process, selfishness will eat up civilization. With independent philosophies we are too busy with material things to bother about spiritual values, and the rule of life becomes "Take what you can while you can."

Prayers are requested for four deceased persons, three who are sick, and for three special intentions.