
X—The Children's Corner

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(1902)

(This little essay was written as a contribution to a newly established and very learned college magazine. It was intended to put life into it. The magazine died.)

OUR good friend, the Editor of this magazine, had some fears that it might suffer by very reason of its excellence; that it might be bowed down by the weight of erudition it contains and become top-heavy with learning. Now this is as grave an ailment as can well threaten any publication, for it acts directly on the circulation. Knowing the Editor's apprehensions, we have ventured to suggest to him that possibly a hypodermic injection of some lighter matter near the back of the cover might be advisable. He has, therefore, permitted us to variegate this issue by the addition of a *Children's Corner for College Boys and Girls*. For the insertion of such a column we are convinced

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we need offer no apology to our young friends. Even in the cultivated mind of the college graduate—cultivated indeed by the years of diligent rolling, harrowing, planting, and possibly ploughing, at the hands of his tutors and examiners—it is often found that the wheat of wisdom is not unmixed with the chaff of childishness.

As soon, then, as we had conceived the idea of a Children's Corner, we set about thinking what we could put into it. We decided that the very best thing we could have to begin with would be a lot of letters from our little friends who have graduated, treating of some topic not too exacting on the intellect. This we knew to be the usual method of eliciting interest in the Children's Corners of Saturday journalism. So we sent them all a circular, which we felt sure would draw; we couched it in the following couching:—

“DEAR SIR,—Please write to the Editor of the Children's Corner, and state your personal experience of the value of a college education. Speak freely of yourself, but don't get delirious over it. Limit yourself, if you can, to a thousand words,

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and never write to us again. Send five dollars with your manuscript, and the Editor promises to make use of it."

The results obtained from our circular have been eminently satisfactory; indeed, we have received so many bright little letters that we are able to print only a small proportion of them. Here is our first example. It is from "Little Charlie," aged 29, a graduate with double first class in English and Metaphysics, now doing splendidly in a position of great trust in a saw-mill.

"DEAR MR. EDITOR,—I am glad you are asking a lot of college boys to write to you. I think a college training is a great help. I have found English invaluable and use nothing else. I must now close."

"DEAR MR. EDITOR;—I graduated not long ago and am only twenty-two, but I feel very old. I took Archæology and Sanskrit. Our course of reading in Sanskrit was the Vishnubuddayat, Part one, Book one, Page one. We also scanned

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the first three lines and examined the skins under the microscope. I don't think anything could have developed my mind quite in the way that Sanskrit and Noah's Archæology have. I owe a lot to my teachers and mean to pay them back some day. Since I took my degree I have got a job opening gates at a railway crossing, and am doing well, as I have just the touch required. When I get a little older I may get a job at a toll-gate."

So many thanks for your bright little letter, Teddie, and be sure not to let us hear from you from time to time. You forgot your five dollars, careless boy.

Here is a writer who signs himself Rev. Willie Weekshanks, aged thirty :—

"DEAR MR. EDITOR,—I think a college education is a very valuable thing, and I wish I had had one instead of taking Theology. I liked my college life so much and I revered all my professors. I used to take exact notes of everything they told me, exactly as I remembered it a week afterwards. If need be I could produce

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my notes before a" (Hush, hush, Willie, please don't talk of anything so painful as producing your notes. Surely, my dear little boy, we have had trouble enough).

Here is a letter from an Honour graduate in Classics :—

"DEAR MR. EDITOR,—I took Classics. For my part I think, at least, certainly on the one hand, that a college education, especially indeed Greek, develops the faculty of thinking, writing and quoting, on the other hand, with less lack of not saying nothing than anything. A man with a full knowledge of Latin and Greek feels himself a 'pons asinorum,' and in the hours of weariness and discouragement can always turn to his education as a delightful 'reductio ad absurdum.'"

• But let us pass on to some of the other features of our Children's Corner. Not to be in any way behind our great contemporaries in journalism, we hasten to present a Puzzle Competition. It is constructed on the very latest models. The puzzles are indeed somewhat difficult and

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elaborate, but we confidently invite all college children, both graduate and undergraduate, to try them. Come on then, here is our first. It is called, THE BURIED WORD :—

LAERTNOM

There! try and guess it! The letters of the above word if spelt backwards will produce the name of a Canadian city. Sit down now, and work at it; if you don't get at the solution at once, keep at it. To any McGill graduate or undergraduate sending a correct solution, accompanied by five dollars, we will forward a copy of the McGill Calendar.

Our second puzzle. This is for some of our little mathematical friends. It is called a double acrostic :—

McG*LL

On inserting a vowel in place of the above asterisk, the word will become the same word that was the word before the vowel removed was removed. Anyone finding the correct solution will forward us three dollars; on the

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receipt of each three dollars the competition is declared closed—as far as that competitor is concerned.

Our final puzzle. It consists in an historical prize competition, for which we propose the following:—

Name the four Georges, giving reasons, and sending four dollars.

OUR HOME STUDY CIRCLE

We had hoped to supplement our Puzzle Department with another feature which is its invariable accompaniment, and which we thought especially appropriate for College Magazine. This is the Home Study Circle. It is one of the noblest and most philanthropic developments of the modern journal. The admirable facilities for learning offered by these Home Study Circles, with the gratuitous examination papers and short lectures that accompany them, cannot fail to be highly estimated. By this means any man whose affairs have never given him leisure for academic instruction, may pick up in the course of, say, ten years, a fair knowledge of Persian, or Syriac,

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enough, that is to say, to make himself easily misunderstood. Indeed, with the help of such a Home Study Course, any intelligent boy or girl with a keen desire to add something to his ordinary studies may very quickly lose it. We had, therefore, begun to prepare a short Home Study Course in higher German philosophy. Our aim was to come to the help of people who were anxious to familiarize themselves with the ideas of some of the great German thinkers (Kant, Schopenhauer, Pilsener Lager, Wiener Schnitzel, etc. etc.), and yet who were unable to get a knowledge of these ideas either from their writings or from the criticisms on them, or through prayer for direct intervention. Unfortunately, difficulties of a technical nature, which need not here be explained, have prevented us from completing our course.

INDOOR GAMES

From the somewhat heavy subject that we treated in our last paragraph we turn with pleasure to present to our readers a sample of one of the new "Indoor Games for College

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Students" that we hope soon to give to the world. It is called

INDOOR FOOTBALL, OR FOOTBALL WITHOUT A BALL

In this game any number of players from fifteen to thirty seat themselves in a heap on any one player, usually the player next to the dealer. They then challenge him to get up, while one player stands with a stop-watch in his hand and counts forty seconds. Should the first player fail to rise before forty seconds are counted, the player with the watch declares him suffocated. This is called a "Down" and counts one. The player who was the "Down" is then leaned against the wall; his wind is supposed to be squeezed out. The player called the referee then blows a whistle and the players select another player and score a "down" off him. While the player is supposed to be down, all the rest must remain seated as before, and not rise from him until the referee, by counting forty and blowing his whistle, announces that in his opinion the other player is stifled. He is then leant against

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the wall beside the first player. When the whistle again blows the player nearest the referee strikes him behind the right ear. This is a "Touch," and counts two.

We cannot, of course, in this place attempt to give all the rules in detail. We may add, however, that while it counts two to strike the referee, to kick him counts three. To break his arm or leg counts four, to kill him outright is called Grand Slam, and counts one game.

There are so many interesting things that we are most eager to insert in this Children's Corner, that we fear the limited space at our disposal will not allow us to treat them all. In the interest, however, of our firer readers, we cannot well refrain from introducing one or two short extracts from our new "College Girls' Cookery Book."

I. RECIPT FOR LATIN PASTE

Take one pound of Bradley's Arnold, a little fluent extract of Virgil, some strong stems and roots. Grind well and soak. Let the mixture stand till it forms into a thick paste, which may

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be used for all kinds of Latin composition. It will be found an agreeable relish in quotations, and does well for public speeches if mixed with a little ginger. The paste is admirably suited for quotations in after-dinner speaking if well soaked in alcohol.

2. RECEIPT FOR PRESERVED LECTURES (Crème de Lecture)

First take a lecture. Then boil it down and remove the froth and gas from it by constant stirring. Skim it, strain it through a wet towel and serve hot or cold according to the taste of the examiner.

3. HOW TO MAKE HASH OF AN EXAMINATION PAPER (Papier Mâché)

Take a thorough smattering of the subject. Mix it completely in your mind. Spread it very thinly on paper and serve lukewarm. Try to avoid roasting.

We should have been delighted to add a few extracts from our new "Elementary Taxidermy for Students, or How to Stuff Examiners,"

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which we are certain would have made a pleasant feature of our Children's Corner. A few lines from our "Carpentry for College Boys; or how to make German Brackets," would not have been amiss. But we fear we have already trespassed too far on the Editor's kindness.