

¶Teaching is such a thankless job.

TREASURES IN HEAVEN

IN the rosy idealism of my professional youth I swallowed hook, line, and sinker the *cliché* that the teacher's chief reward comes in deferred payments, in checks of happiness, and the golden glow of work well done. I was led to believe, moreover, that every grateful parent would be eager some day to lay at my feet a quantity of rustless tributes, set off by paeans of praise and "all-that-I-am" speeches.

I am now less certain about these moth-proof intangibles. On the contrary, the teacher may be roundly abused if little Jim cannot tell *was* from *saw*, or finally ends up at some jail instead of a university; while if he succeeds, parents can think of the most unusual explanations for educational spurts. Among the miracle workers are summer camps, scouting, bicycles, religion, hair-cuts, long pants, silver slippers, anything in fact except the slow process of awakening a child's energies through the evolutionary and even painful business of school instruction. Has John finally learned to concentrate? It was the motor trip to San Diego that did it. Did Jean eventually acquire poise? It was because she had that permanent wave.

I have decided that this tendency of parents to withhold tribute from us Caesars exists chiefly because growth is such an imperceptible process. But a single vivid experience like earning a dollar or going to a camp is dramatic, hence its before-and-after effects are noted. If a boy who leaves home for camp in a generally messy and ill-mannered state returns with a coat of tan and a temporarily improved disposition, it is natural that his parents beam and feel that their money has been well spent.

In the ordinary school, on the other hand, the reverse may be happening. Last year Arthur knew his tables; this year, at least as far as Father can find out in a ruthless three-minute examination as he is about to leave for a bridge party, Arthur knows absolutely nothing. "Why, at your age I—" and the fight is on.

While the reminiscences of rich old men indicate that all they are and have they owe to the classics, the younger generation and its parents recognize no such slow process of development. Perhaps it is only in senility that we are given perspec-

tive to see, alas, too late, that but for dear old Dr. Blimber's stubborn insistence on mastery or Miss Spencer's creative touch

in literature we might have become thoroughly ignorant and bad characters.—*Burton P. Fowler, condensed from Journal of Education.*

