

EDITORIAL

TEACHERS THIS AUTUMN, in the first months of the new school year, face the perennial problem of capturing the attention and arousing the interest of students whose mental machinery has become, perhaps, a bit rusted from the relaxation and leisure of summer vacation. Today, in our age of television, cinemascope and rock and roll, teachers are confronted with a special problem in this regard. Television alone, with its delightful ready-made phantasms, is exerting a harmful influence in smothering children's creative imagination while distracting their minds from more serious pursuits. America is fast developing a generation of children who have ceased to wonder at the truths and realities about them. Wonder, however, is the beginning of all learning. The teacher who can communicate and instill a sense of wonder in students, has won the first battle in the difficult task of educating youth. In this Fall issue of *Dominicana* Reginald Durbin, O.P., in an article "Did You Ever Wonder?" investigates the various stages of wonder and probes, in particular, the nature of philosophic wonder.

Of like importance is the role memory has to play in the education of youth. In the past few decades some educational groups, in reaction to an earlier generation's over-emphasis on memorization by rote, have almost completely discarded the use of memory from educational training. Catholics, and especially Thomists, have always stressed the necessary subsidiary function of memory in intellectual development. Benedict Thornett, O.P., in this issue, presents a lively and enlightening study on the nature of memory with practical rules for its development, drawn from traditional and modern sources.

For generations now, American education, and especially American secular education, has been a rudderless ship with a full sail of wind—going nowhere. "Progressive educationists," speaking through their chief proponent, John Dewey, have this to say, "We agree that we are uncertain as to where we are

going and where we want to go, and why we are doing what we are doing." John Dewey, master architect of such an apparently aimless educational system, came upon the house which centuries of tradition had built and seeing only the disrepair, the broken windows and entangling overgrowth—burned it down. He completely overlooked the strong foundation, the sturdy timbers and the ordered superstructure. Thomas J. Cunningham, O.P., in "The Cardinal and the Calculus" historically establishes the order and perfection of the liberal educational system which the wisdom of centuries had carefully constructed—with humane studies and liberal arts at its base and the higher sciences and wisdoms at its apex. This article resolves the dilemma of those defenders of the liberal arts tradition who unfortunately defend, not the true tradition, but a distorted and sterile type of the true liberal education.

In "The Saint Xavier Plan" John Burke, O.P., offers a lucid exposition of the true and traditional liberal education as it is developed and adapted to modern times. The Saint Xavier Plan is unique for its success in integrating education from the primary grades to the college level by a logical and psychological ordering of knowledge according to the principles of St. Thomas Aquinas and the traditions of western civilization.

William Seaver, O.P., in "The Promise of New Life" presents an acute analysis of yet another approach to an integrated curriculum—that of Christopher Dawson, renowned Catholic cultural historian. In Mr. Dawson's plan the study of Christian culture would provide the integrating principle of a university curriculum. The author's chief purpose in this article has been to probe the sources of Dawson's plan as found in his basic works—an achievement too often neglected by those who attempt to evaluate the plan.

Finally we would call the readers' attention to the lead book-review in our Friars' Bookshelf section—*In the University Tradition* by A. Whitney Griswold of Yale. It tells of Yale's effort to preserve and reinterpret the liberal arts tradition in the new age of science and specialization.

