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EDUCATIONAL CHIT-CHAT

By Anna J. Cooper

SPEEDING

A machine age with its top-notch goal on mass production necessarily overrides the individual, sacrificing spiritual values as it throws open the throttle to "let her go" for all she's worth! Smash the record! Never mind about the scenery—just get there! a few hundredths of a second quicker, a few millimeters faster, a few feet higher and a few rounds of refueling longer than the latest and most startling top-notcher.

It is most unfortunate that this craze for speeding and top-notching should strike our educational programs. Youth is the time for growth—and growth, to be healthy, should be normal and without artificial forcing.

"Only God can make a tree," and He has never yet made one overnight. Mushrooms come that way, but trees never. "Skipping grades" and making four years in three may flatter teachers and stimulate the superiority complex of some students, but I always feel that there is something lost—something of solidarity and strength, something that will be sorely missed when one comes to stand up before the inexorable demands of a cold and calculating world. Educational speeding is like glimpsing Niagara from an express train. It takes time for observation, reflection, appreciation—the basis and essential condition of that genuine mental growth which we call education and which is power.

Particularly disastrous are those fads for speeding up education which inject the insidious stimulant of "something to prove." Propaganda, whether for or against, is artificial and baneful when applied to human cultures. It is high time

that those who are holding the whip hand thought out their own program to meet the needs and direct the development of their charges, and parents and guardians must insist that children, shut out from so many cultural contacts calculated to make growth largely a matter of natural absorption from

a congenial atmosphere, shall not be forced under the strain of "stunt" performances into exceeding the speed limit, just to show that we can. The sequel to young Sidis and Katherine Stover, the two top-notchers in speeding through college, does not inspire emulation for our children. Above all we must conserve their health. See that the "medicine ball" is mixed in with the day's responsibilities. Old and young need it, regularly, systematically, purposefully. The studious child more than all others needs it. Envious about marks and the honor roll, he is under a strain that few parents realize and not many teachers appreciate, because both are keyed up to the same pitch, and most are ready to fight to the last ditch for the paltry difference between a V. G. and E.

Relax, relax, I say. Take a deep breath and smile. If the youngster is doing his best (and many, I grant, are not), let him have the reward of your satisfaction. Give him time, and a real romping, rollicking vacation for swimming, tennis, camping in the woods with only Mother Nature's big reference books to study over.

GREAT GAME OF SPORT

As a race we are likely to underestimate the influence of athletic performances. Cultured Negroes concede that the talent of a Hayes or a Tanner stimulates a more tolerant attitude on the part of oppressors. Recently, the writer heard a leading race man remark, upon reading a laudatory news item concerning Kobeson's late London success, "Any Negro can act, sing or dance. What we need are a few men who can succeed in business." It is not my purpose to disdain a need for some giants in the commercial arena, but I do think talented successes in art and athletics are making tremendous onslaughts against the army of racial intolerants.

When Tolan was acclaimed officially the world's fastest sprint human, and the Haitian Negro, Cator, of the University of Paris was recognized inter-nationally the world's champion broad jumper, this writer was led to note the prevalence of Negro champions in track and field athletics.

The battle of brawn involves a fighting temperament and a strength of character traits that challenge the admiration of count-