

Extracts from the Principal's Report, College Day, March 6th, 1954.

Your Lordship, Reverend Clergy, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A little lad just six, enjoying his birthday cake, was asked how old he was. He looked up proudly and answered, "Going on seven".

Growth—

Stella Maris College is also "going on". A tangible proof lies in the March Examinations of 1953, when compared with the number of candidates presented in previous years, as also in the results obtained especially in the Intermediate groups. As to the B.A. classes, we find satisfaction in the fact that the first batch presented in Mathematics and allied subjects succeeded in obtaining three First Classes and one Second Class out of a total of nine students.

Another consoling feature was the completion of the Drawing and Painting Course, when four artists took their degrees, scoring two First Classes, and two Second Classes. For the first time we also brought the Indian Music syllabus to completion when the four candidates appearing secured one First Class, two Second Classes and one Pass. Talent in music, painting and drawing are all gifts from God. The College rejoices at the success of the students just as a window receives light, simply to reflect back to God His own favours.

This brings events up to July '53 when, like the little lad the College was "going on seven". Now that its number of courses has increased there is a greater demand for admission with a consequent rush for seats. The entrants of this year are of an enterprising kind, bent on making College life well worth living. There is no place in their lives for boredom, which generates revolution. If it is true of the Intermediates, it is also true of the College as a whole, where moral teaching is in honour.

Diploma in Social Service.—

The same atmosphere exists among the students of the newly established Diploma Course. The College is an institution for the general diffusion of knowledge. Knowledge creates love and love in turn generates knowledge. We see how these two processes perfected each other in Stella Maris. In the first years, our students knew little or nothing of Social Service. Knowledge grew, so did love. More love craved for better knowledge of slum dwellers. A Junior League sprang up, diffusing more knowledge and calling for more love which blossomed forth into a private one-year course in 1952. This in turn gave way to the present Diploma Course of the University of Madras and bids well to satisfy women's yearning for service on a more scientific basis. The course includes the study of the fundamental principles and methods in Social Work: Psychology, Child Welfare, Indian Social and Economic problems, together with practical training in field work. The students are given the opportunity of applying theory to practical experience in Social Welfare agencies. The fortnightly visits are intended to give them

orientation in the field of Social Work, while more detailed studies, observations, and active participation in welfare agencies are made during the vacation, when groups go out for training in Rural Uplift, Medical Social Work, Child Welfare, and Labour Relations.

With the kind assistance of the Corporation of Madras, the Rural Uplift group had the joy of seeing their labours crowned by the opening of an elementary school in Lalitha Nagar cheri, in January of this year. Their next ambition is the establishment of a medical centre to care for nearby cheris.

Other groups go to different local hospitals to study the emotional and social problems of the patients. They have so far succeeded in securing homes for destitute cases, and permanent medical care for lepers and paralytics.

The students of the child welfare group study the administration of the Welfare Institutions, the behaviour of the inmates in relation to their needs, and act as intermediaries between the children of these institutions and their respective homes ; four others are training as labour officers in factories.

We wish to express our gratitude to Dr. Vaz for his series of lectures on communicable diseases, and to the Health Department for sending a Doctor to complete the syllabus.

Hostel Impressions.—

Visit the Hostel at study time, when all is silent and still, and you would never suspect the gaiety its 150 members are ready to emit at the first stroke of the clock, or when perchance a harmless lizard happens to descend uninvited upon a group of non-zoologists. And then

Friendliness and good-will are the outstanding characteristics in our 1954 Hostelites. Social life has been a full one. Shyness vanished in a strong solution of weekly socials, forums and talent programmes. Budding artists revealing a touch of talent were not allowed to vegetate, but whisked promptly into the Hostel Choral or Dramatic Society, a decision they never regretted. Evening games have been another popular feature. Bleeding toes sometimes far outnumber the goals, but this proves no deterrent to sporting enthusiasts. A picnic, whether by day or night, is always welcome and there have been several of both varieties.

But Hostelites are just as eager to give as to get. Off to the cheris they go with a ready smile, to organise games, make a survey or deliver a speech. Monthly trips up to the creche at St. Thomas' Mount with gifts of food, clothing, sweets and toys are red-letter days in their diaries. "Ready for anything", a fire in the Chemistry Lab. transformed them into fire-fighters, springing from nowhere with pails, kettles and pans of sand.

As the year draws to a close, warm friends find it hard to face goodbyes, for "We've lived together like one big family and have shared each other's difficulties and pleasures. You have co-operated with us in every way and we've felt like big sisters to you." May God shower His choicest blessings on all of you.

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Deterioration of the standard of education is a frequent topic of discussion today. None can deny the fact that it is low. Is there anything Stella Maris College can do about it ? Very little, yet that little has been attempted.

Last June an appeal went out challenging Parents, Students and Lecturers to form a united front for the advancement of studies. Should either of these fail, the whole system would lack co-ordination and unity.

I. Long experience has convinced us that absences are detrimental to progress : a lecture once lost is lost for ever. To remedy this we appealed to the Parents to see that their daughters put in full attendance the whole year through. This request has not fallen on deaf ears ; the attendance has improved beyond all expectation ; so also has the standard of studies.

II. The second point in the appeal had reference to the daily home preparation of assignments. Here again there has been marked improvement.

III. A third request had reference to seasonal reports which do not always carry out their mission of conveying to Parents the actual standing of the students. This also has had some effect.

A more personal contact of Parents and College Authorities must lead to a better understanding of students' problems. The interest of all must converge on each Student taken individually. Acting on these presumptions deterioration must cede the way to progress.

In Conclusion.—

The life of a College is a perpetual "going on," a striving after that inaccessible peak of perfection. In this upward climb we are encouraged to find ourselves in such distinguished company as that of the Director of Public Instruction, Srimathi O. C. Srinivasan, who laid aside very important official business to cheer the College on its way to full maturity. They say that education is bad or good ; the best makes the best citizens, and they will be none too good for this land of India. In our efforts to give of the best, we have been encouraged by the ever paternal interest of His Grace the Archbishop, our venerated Bishop, the clergy, Professors and a host of devoted friends. It is their hope that Stella Maris while "going on" in age may also increase "in wisdom and grace before God and man."

