



THE PASQUANEY ANNUAL

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EDITORIAL

Every year as the dog-day heat of summer descends on the Eastern United States the railroad terminals of New York and Boston are thronged by children of all ages, all classes, and both sexes whirling about placards inscribed with Indian names. It is the famous American institution, the camp exodus. No other country in the world has seen anything comparable except perhaps the fearful flight of children from London during the war-ridden days of this September. Thank heaven it is not the dread of impending air raids but the dread of cities' dusty heat or the fruitless boredom of ordinary resort life that drives forth this multitude.

They come to enjoy the sanities of an outdoor life for a part of the summer, and whether we like it or not, we must realize that more than anything else this is an attempt at restoring youth to their natural selves after ten months of devitalizing drought. For there is no doubt but that the lives of American youth are more than a little unpoised in most instances, filled to exhaustion or boredom with movies, spectacles, and arrangements made for them. The need is for a child to extract pleasures from his environment by means of some effort and inventiveness. Most fully of any camp does Pasquaney meet this problem.

The first day we spend at Pasquaney brings us realization that we are part of a camp that is of a higher order and in some ways different. It might be well to attempt an analysis of this unconscious sense with a view to finding from what it springs.

The fact that Pasquaney, founded in 1895, was one of the very first summer camps in this country and the fact that it has carried through its forty-five years its original purposes are some indication of success. It is natural and right to conclude that this camp has acquired traditions, that is, customs which have been handed on from year to year. Curiously, almost every one of these traditions stems back to one man and his ideals—the beloved Mr. Ned who founded the camp with the conviction that the “poor little rich boys” could benefit from a summer of moral and physical exercise.

As one enters the counsellors' office today—it once was Mr. Ned's—one is immediately conscious of the hundreds of photographs of men and athletes, clippings from newspapers that relate to Pasquaney boys of the early years of this century, old Long Walk menus, and college banners tacked on the walls. It reminds one of the type of college room prevalent in the “nineties” , yes; but there is something more that one senses—an extraordinarily intense interest in boys that must have been the founder's. A member of the Council in the early twenties confirmed this impression even more when he told us how in those summers when Mr. Ned was no longer able to get around the camp as much as formerly any one on the office porch could hear the scratch of his pen as he drove it across the pages of his voluminous correspondence with boys of former years. Through the winter these letters would keep them in touch with him and his idealism. We might pause to consider for a moment what his ideals were and their connection with the sanity needed in modern education that we mentioned above.

When Pasquaney was founded, the Newfound region was as yet untouristed and virtually undiscovered; the comforts of civilized life not only were left out of Pasquaney's scheme, but were impossible. Yet as the tide of civilization swept in on this region the camp stood adamant against undue luxuries. Dormitories have remained to this day simple, open, almost barnlike. Cold showers have replaced stripped-to-the-waist washing, but only for convenience sake. Every job that does not require professional competence is left to the boys in the form of daily duties. The pleasures of our many walks and trips depend still for the most part on good legs and arms rather than wheels. The do-nothing is given small sympathy in such a scheme. In the end the responsibility for his happiness is placed in exactly the right place—on the boy's own shoulders.

One cannot overlook either the most discussed point of Pasquaney's code, its insistence on the importance of character and its development. Mr. Ned approached this concept with the mystical fervor of the stern moralist. He had the passionate belief of the man who knows deeply his mission. There is no doubting that at times he was opinionated; yet his person had a monumentality and a power to inspire that are above reproach—displaying itself most strongly in its influence on the camp when he could no longer be its head. Through his second-in-command, Mr. Teddy, who is now our captain, the tradition has been carried on nobly and a gentler spirit in its application added. The counsellors' analysis of boy characters have become increasingly penetrating though their application more subtle. They feel, we believe, that a trust has been placed in their intellectual honesty when they attack this task, and criticism is reluctant unless the issue is clear-cut.

In the end, it is not so much Pasquaney the place that interests us here; it is Pasquaney the institution composed of men and boys who have been its campers. It is on their lives that its success depends. It is to them and the inspiration of their Mr. Ned and Mr. Teddy that this book is dedicated, and it is a summer of their work that it commemorates.