

To the Editor of the Mail-Star

Kindly allow me to add a brief footnote to the tribute recently paid on your editorial page to the late Edward Cummings.

I write as an old student to whom the flying years and much familiarity with teaching and teachers have demonstrated the fact - but dimly apprehended by my youthful mind - that Edward Cummings was a truly Christian gentleman and a magnificent teacher.

As a teacher he was a disciplinarian who demanded and commanded that constant respect for his function that he manifested in his own life of devotion to his students. The rigors of his own ascetic approach to scholarship were mitigated by his vast patience with those who pursued knowledge haltingly, and by his evident passion to communicate his own love of learning to those of all degrees of talent. Not even the convoy system of education enforced upon teachers in those days deterred him from adapting his methods to the diverse needs and aptitudes of his pupils. Not above stooping to drill and repetition in subjects where training in exactitude was the basic need, he could by penetrating thrusts of his incisive yet comprehensive mind resolve difficulties of detail or enlarge horizons and encourage dreams. Nor will any of my generation, at least, ever forget those precious hours when his acute and far-ranging comments on current items in the daily paper provided means of escape from the repelling rigidities of formal geography into realms of gold and far adventure.

I do not pretend that to be his student was an experience of daily joy; but it was a rewarding experience if for no other reason than the indelible impression it left on us of the essential nobility of that integrity of mind and soul constantly exemplified by Edward Cummings.

*ECm*

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