

THE MERCER CLUSTER

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WELCOME TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees will arrive on the Mercer campus today for the semi-annual meeting. The students and faculty extend them a cordial welcome, feeling that their visit will mean another step in the progress of the university.

Some, of course, will laugh at such a statement, pointing out that the visit of any such body is more or less for form's sake. To those who must judge only by material growth, this opinion is justified. Yet if one could be present at a meeting of the Board of Trustees he would be slower to censor their apparent shortcomings.

Such men undoubtedly stand for progress but their hands are so tied by lack of funds that they are forced to see hopeful plans filter away.

Apparently money will always be the deciding factor in the history of higher education. The South seems more afflicted with this malady than any section. Dr. Kirkland, in his address to the Georgia Press institute, brought this out in stronger and clearer terms than anyone has done in many years; and his position in the schools of the South bring to his words a peculiar force.

He showed that while the colleges and universities of our section have been making steady progress for the past fifty years, and which is especially noticeable, in the last five years, they are silently slipping farther and farther in the rear of those in the North. He likened our institutions to the man who had to run like the mischief to keep in the game place.

In discussing financing, he told the institute that it had taken Vanderbilt university years to secure \$5,000,000 the amount set in its drive. But what is more significant: only \$800,000 was contributed by Southerners. Think of it, the South letting the North contribute the bulk of a fund for one of our greatest and oldest universities!

So, one sees, the men responsible for the welfare of any Southern school are beset by many worries; Mercer's trustees are assuredly not exempt.

The Cluster offers one suggestion which is the sentiment of the student body. It is that the money which does come to the university be used equitably; that each school receive its just share. At present the Law school is in the worst predicament. It is squeezed into a corner of a dormitory, and in its sparse equipment there can be found little inspiration for Georgia's incipient lawyers. That it is worthy is proved by the "A" rating awarded two years ago.

DR. MONTAGUE

The worthwhile executive of a successful organization is that man who, without compromising his own convictions, conciliates difficulties of management and relations of the various parts of the organization with courage and tact.

Dr. Montague fits that mold. Although himself a gentleman of the old school, he understands and sympathizes with modern, iconoclastic youth. He understands, too, Mercer's ultra-conservative faculty.

Dr. Montague reminds one of the Southerner of tradition: He is conservative, courteous, eloquent, cultured. His love of the fine old Southern folk-songs is an indication of these qualities.

Those students who come into trouble with the university administration know that they have a friend and a champion in the president of Mercer. In settling differences between students and the faculty, Dr. Montague always upholds and defends the undergraduate as far as possible. The student body should appreciate its president.

The Cluster believes that the students' gratitude to their president should be more fully manifested. Recently chapel service was given over to old Southern folk-songs in honor of Dr. Montague. His deep appreciation of this recognition was touching. Why not make it a regular event? Why not set aside one day every two weeks, say, for chapel programs in honor of Mercer's president?

WHY NOT?

It has once been said that salesmanship is the selling of goods "that won't come back to customers who will." This true that Mercer has no merchandise to offer, but here the principle holds true nevertheless.

According to registration figures, the student body has lost seventy-five of its previous members since the Christmas holidays. This loss may not have been entirely due to financial conditions. Forty new students have matriculated, which shows the institution has lost thirty-five students in the transaction. But why not have the forty newcomers and retain the seventy-five departees, also?

Financial resources are usually at a low ebb after the Christmas holidays which results in the failure of students to return. This year, more than ever, money has been scarce over the state. Consequently, many students on registering have approached university officials with the hope of being freed from the burden of paying "all cash." The students in turn have realized the goal of the officials, whose purpose it is to conserve the university funds. Yet at times they have remarked at the methods with which they were greeted.

There are few persons who are able to produce at once the entire amount necessary for registration. This is no disgrace nor surprise for ninety-five per cent of the world's business is done on credit. When students "throw their cards on the table"—so to speak, when they show the university officials all that they have to offer, when they give evidence of sincere co-operation, they should not be made alumni for want of a few dollars.

Seventy-five students at a general average of \$100 per man would have placed \$7,500 in the coffers of the university ere the winter term ended had not the institution lost these students. The equipment has been placed here, the teachers have been hired, the buildings are already here, why not have the students?

THE NEWEST SPORT

Armed with rifles, air guns and sling shots, intrepid huntmen have been risking their lives and proving their unexcelled marksmanship by shooting and stoning defenseless robins.

It was about last Friday that thousands of red-breasted birds descended upon Macon. They favored Tattall Square and the Mercer campus by covering our trees as thick as leaves.

THE NEW SCHOOL

An educational system purports to present a series of concepts which the student is expected to absorb. Especially in arts colleges is the synthetic method applied. The basis of such teaching rests upon the idea that directors and instructors have distilled valuable generalities from life and think them sound as precepts of thought and conduct.

One hesitates in drawing conclusions, but must insist that he has never met a generality on the street. Evidently, universals are very rare, and according to the empiricist, extinct. Certainly an approach to truth changes with each generation. Do not then the instructors in the perpetual academe of youth saddle themselves with a tremendous responsibility? What if their concepts are incorrect or inadequate in preparing one for the life of the future? If they are correct, the benefits are mutual and stupendous; if incorrect, a lifetime may be consumed in overcoming the ideas gained during the most impressionable intellectual period.

The practical man gains little value from an acquaintance with the arts. His only benefits are superfluous. The business man absorbs him, and concepts have little bearing on the price of wheat in Chicago. The scholar, teacher, minister, advanced professional man, or dabbler in the science and application of thought is our principal concern. Wide reading and concentrated thought will develop him into an individual whose brain is recompense for financial obscurity. He will not retain one per cent of the rote knowledge gained at school but these ideas will condition practically every brain process of his later life. He will stagger wearily toward the mirage of deductive logic and fall under the weight of his own prejudices.

The opposite method is still damp with the moisture of its foetal stage, and has not been widely accepted as an educational method. One cannot claim that it is entirely empiricist; rather it is the lesser of two evils in that it allows the formation of fewer preconceptions. Practically, it would consist in the presentation of facts and the refusal to draw conclusions. Of course, established pedagogy would crumble; an instructor would become the subject of a new dialectic through his own promptings. The omnipotent professional attitude would be impossible but the advantages to the student are obvious. The instructor's conclusions would possess the advantage of more facts than those of his student's but his word would no longer be unquestionable. Several professors have adopted this method and have thereby awakened sleeping classes. The student realizes that he shall be allowed to think; that creative learning is an actuality and that rote knowledge is not the supreme end of college training. These innovators at Mercer also enjoy, as a by-product of the system, a dignified companionship with their students and are able to stimulate their charges still further.

The products of the inductive educational method are more sensitive to the heterogeneous aspects of life; a fresh interest revives daily; college men become fit citizens of a more or less thinking world. Freed early in the university from the subjugation which usually exists in the home, they will experience the true intellectual birth which accompanies the attainment of adult status. They will know life as a varied and compelling business which changes even within their supposed grasp. Unhampered by expectations of a ready-made existence; trained to question and to observe rather than to state; they can approach closer the Dionysian joy which springs from an open mind and a healthy psyche.

Certainly it takes courage and remarkable skill to shoot robins when they are so plentiful. As soon as they are slaughtered, the birds are thrown away—proving that the hunting of them is merely for sport.

But what infantile sport it is! The winners of the hunt should be decorated with medals—of tin.

COLLEGE PRESS IN RETROSPECT

Florida's prom — Carnival spirit — Parental education

All the girls at Florida State went mad over the Junior-Senior prom, which was held in Tallahassee last Saturday. The Flambeau, college newspaper, put out a "Courtin' Number," this being Leap Year. Instructions in etiquette and love-making were given.

An advance story in The Flambeau says of the prom:

"The two ideas running through all the plans are the Valentine motif and the leap-year idea. The former is to be carried out attractively in the decorations, which are to be red and white and specialized into hearts . . .

"The leap-year idea will be carried out in arrangements for girl breaks on the encores . . .

"We hear rumors of turkey and of angel food cakes iced with red. Surely there will be red mints. We remember, somewhat nervously, that hearts are undeniably red and are relieved to reflect that by no stretch of imagination can carrots be called either red or white . . .

Advocating "Finishing Schools for Men," The Yellow Jacket Weekly (Randolph-Macon college) goes on to say:

"Such a school should place special attention upon orientation courses, and it might go so far as to teach a man that Spinoza is not a vegetable and that 'The Saturday Evening Post' is not the highest thing in the way of periodicals. When the graduate emerges in all the glory of ignorant familiarity, he might either enter as a freshman in a real college or settle down to a life of abstaining from eating green peas with knives and of reading Harold Bell Wright in the privacy of his chamber."

A carnival spirit is in the collegiate air.

Rollins college is planning a "Crew Night Carnival." There will be peanuts, dancing, lemonade, fortune tellers from the Far East, and the Rollins Dixie Rouges orchestra.

Agnes Scott had what The Agonistic terms the "Most Original Entertainment of School Year," when muffs and bustles rustled in a festival called "The Follies of 1903." One girl wore a checked coat, a derby and "Dr. McCain's old pants." Others were costumed in the manner of the sportswomen, the bicycle and croquet players of the early nineteen-hundreds.

Circus is coming to L. S. U. Animals and acrobats and everything will entertain at the annual circus of W. A. A., according to The Reveille, the university paper.

A Parental Education institute was held in Raleigh, N. C., Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Many prominent men spoke. Among them were: Dr. George E. Vincent, president of the Rockefeller Foundation, New York; Governor A. W. McLean, of North Carolina; Francis P. Gaines, president of Wake Forest; and presidents of several state colleges.

The purpose of the institute was to clear the problem of the inadequacy of the trial and error method in dealing with children. Meetings were open to the public.

NOTES: Agnes Scott has survived a "Health Week" and The Agonistic reports that straight backs are in evidence on the campus as a result of the therapeutic campaign. . . The Emory Wheel is still waging its apparently futile war for intercollegiate athletics. Eight reasons for such sports are listed in the current issue. . . Tommy Hueston, world's pocket billiard champion, is to give an exhibition of his skill in Tusculooosa, Ala., Friday afternoon, reports The Crimson White, journal of the University of Alabama. It is expected that the cultured students of that institution will flock in attendance.

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