

The Essential Function of A University

By Fletcher McCord

"At five or six o'clock each morning the great cathedral bell would ring out the summons to work. From the neighboring houses of the nobles, from the cottages of the poor folk, from the taverns, and hostels and boarding-houses, the streams of the industrious would pour into the enclosure beside the cathedral. The master's beadle, who levied a precarious tax on the mob, would strew the floor of the lecture hall with hay or straw, according to the season, bring the master's text-book, with the notes of the lecture between lines or on the margin, to the solitary desk, and then retire to secure silence in the adjoining street. Sitting on their haunches in the hay, the right knee raised to serve as a desk for the waxed tablets, the scholars would take notes during the long hours of lecture (about six or seven), then hurry home—if they were industrious—to commit them to parchment while the light lasted."

This paragraph, copied from a biography of Abelard, one of the early humanists, paints a picture of the industry and zeal for learning showed by the medieval student that is appalling when compared to the earnestness of the average modern student. This was in the days before electric lights and steam heat for early risers and seven hour lectures, we feel, would draw few scholars.

This was at the time when a renewed love for the study of the humanities was being reborn in Europe, and we marvel at the eager flame that burned in the breasts of those students.

Students Human Then

But we learn that students, and professors, and institutions were human then, even as they are now. Jaques de Vitry, writing at the beginning of the thirteenth century, says of the contemporary scholars: "Almost all the students at Paris, foreigners and natives, did absolutely nothing except learn or hear something new. Some studied merely to acquire knowledge, which is curiosity; others to acquire fame, which is vanity; still others for the sake of gain, which is cupidity and the vice of simony. Very few studied for their own edification or that of others." And Abelard himself says of Anselm, one of the most famous scholasticists: "I accordingly betook myself of this old man, but found that he owed his name rather to mere tradition than to any special amity. If one applied to him, uncertain as to some question, one left him still more uncertain. He was marvelous in the eyes of those who merely listened, but contemptible to those who asked questions. He enjoyed an astonishing facility in words but was despicable in his understanding and fatuous in his reasoning—When I discovered that he was like a tree full of leaves but without fruit, I did not spend many days lying idle in his shade."

Education Not Drama

A consideration of these extracts leads us attempt to formulate in a few words the essential function of a university, and it seems to us that F. C. S. Schiller was very close to such a formula when he said that they were institution "designed for the purpose of preserving and promoting the highest and most advanced knowledge hitherto attained." And as we interpret this, education is not a matter of scholastic dogma to be crammed down the mouth of students, but of an active interplay between professors and students—not for the purpose of imparting "truths" to the latter, but for developing in them instruments and tools to be used in the search for truth.

It is human for students to emphasize the value of the pleasant extra-curricula activities, and even to hide under the phrase that "Extra-curricula activities are the most valuable parts of college life." And it is also human for the professor to wish to become more unassailable and more authoritative, and so hide be-

"Such popularity must be deserved!"



To an outsider, the time and trouble taken to produce a Chesterfield might seem as unnecessary as the sabre-scars so proudly worn by students of pre-war Heidelberg. But popularity is much the same the world over—you don't get it for nothing.

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hind technicalities, and the dog-Latin jargon of his subject. But on the other hand there is the conception of the function of a university as an institution "designed for the purpose of preserving and promoting the highest and most advanced knowledge hitherto attained," which, even if it be not a true or complete definition, is at least one worthy of some thought.

STUDENTS GIVEN THEATER COUPON

Students and members of the faculty will find on this page of The Cluster a coupon good for one admission to the Rialto theater. This will admit two persons if the coupon is accompanied by one paid ticket. This offer is made to Mercer students through the courtesy of Manager Monty Salmon, who recently returned to Macon to manage the Publix theaters. Beginning today the coupon is good through next Friday, Feb. 15, enabling Mercerians to see and hear three Vitaphone pictures.

"I am making this offer to Mercer students because I want to show my good will," said Mr. Salmon, "and I wish to let them know that I am their friend. With this coupon they can see Able's Irish Rose, playing today and tomorrow, and two other attractions, coming next week.

"The Doctor's Secret, which shows at the Rialto theater Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, Feb. 11, 12 and 13, features Ruth Chatterton, H. B. Warner and John Loder in the lead-

Carpenter Bidding For S. I. A. A. Berth

Mercer Guard is "Jumping Genius" of Basketball Court

Clyde Carpenter, Bear's jumping genius," has justly earned the cognomen in Mercer's basketball games this season. Clyde's jumping ability and adeptness in intercepting the opponent's shots from the backboard, have contributed much to the Bear victories thus far, and made his services as a standing guard invaluable.

Unlike most of the Mercer athletes who have gained renown in high and prep schools as basketball players, Carpenter did not indulge in the five man game until after his entrance in Mercer. He did not make a regular berth on the team until last year, and no one has been able to capably fill his shoes since.

The standing guard's playing last week-end was sensational, form the report of the sports editors of the Charleston News and Courier. Clyde would invariably spring up from a mass of squirming and struggling players to grab the opponent's shots when they banded form the backboard, pass the ball out of enemy territory, and this usually resulted in a score

ing roles. The story is one of London society, of a wealthy self-made man who regards his bought-and-paid for aristocratic wife with no little contempt. The story has to do with her plans to find happiness with "the other man" and what takes place when carefully laid plans go wrong."

of Mercer, because the Bears are equally good on offensive.

His bear-like defensive work and his playing throughout the season. He enters every game with a dogged determination to see his team crowned with victory and the foe ignobly trampled in defeat. Clyde, like the rest of his teammates, is imbued with the spirit of a fighting bear, who is only appeased by victory. If he keeps up his present calibre of playing, he stands a good chance to make a fair bid for an All-S. I. A. A. berth, or else give somebody the fight of his

life. His activities have not only centered on the court, but he has taken part in student and campus activities, being a member of the Pi Kapa Alpha fraternity, Blue Key fraternity, and vice president of the Senior class.

He is a senior this year and it is likewise his last year on the Mercer quints, but long after Clyde has sung "the Swan Song" of his athletic career his ability as a "jumping genius" will be remembered by Macon sport fans who admire the five-man game.

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Issued for the benefit of readers of the "MERCER CLUSTER" and to introduce to all students and faculty of MERCER UNIVERSITY, the high-class Talking and Singing Pictures now being shown at the Rialto.