

The Mercer Cluster

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Endowment

Dr. Spright M. Dowell's plan to raise \$1,000,000 for Mercer University has been going along very well. Already over \$500,000 has been definitely assured.

The Administration deserves praise for making such a definite move to assure the economic stability of the institution. We sincerely hope that the campaign will be completely successful.

The fact that Mercer is now becoming fixed financially has started us thinking about the students, without which Mercer or any other school could never be successful.

Perhaps when Mercer's endowment has been definitely assured, the students will be given the opportunity to have the things they desire. Each one of them may be given the chance to have a voice in the student government. They may even be allowed to decide for themselves whether or not they should have dances on the campus, whether or not there should be a nickelodian in the Co-op, whether or not they should play cards in the Co-op, whether or not the girls should be allowed to smoke on the campus or in the Co-op.

It would be wrong for us to say that the students definitely want these privileges because we have not personally interviewed each one of them. However, we are sure that we are right when we say that the students should be given the right to determine these matters themselves. Each one of them should be allowed to participate in the decisions.

In order to be in keeping with the democracy of our native land, we should always be given the opportunity to practice that same democracy throughout our lives.

Basketball

Mercer's 1943-44 basketball season has come to a close. The team has not had an all winning year. Over the whole schedule the Bears have broken about even.

The number of games that were won and lost is not the most important fact. It is the fact that Mercer has returned to intercollegiate athletics. This is the first time that our school has met other colleges in athletics in several years.

We have seen what could be done under circumstances that were not completely favorable. The season was split up by Christmas Holidays. The team did not have nearly enough time to practice. The boys played their hearts out but even a casual observer could notice the superior teamwork of teams like Georgia Tech and Newberry, which had more favorable conditions.

The support by the student body was poor at first but later in the campaign the gym was packed. They showed that they are definitely willing to support athletic teams.

The basketball season is past, but athletics of an intercollegiate nature should not be abandoned. We have the material for track, baseball and swimming teams. We sincerely hope that plans for Mercer representation in these sports are begun soon.

The type of athletics that would definitely put Mercer on the map is football. We showed how other schools are returning to football in last week's CLUSTER. Mercer has everything to gain by having a football team. Steps should be taken at once by the Administration to have a team on the campus.

In Other Words

By Mike Warr

Dear Jim:

So you want to know what I think about drinking. Well, I'll tell you—straight from the shoulder.

You've probably been wondering what liquor is like. It's one of those things best learned about second-hand. You have never tasted the stuff, so you don't feel strongly about it one way or another.

Trouble is, if you ask some folk to give you the lowdown, you run the risk of getting an odd assortment of misinformation intended to build up the warning, "Don't drink." And it may have the opposite effect on you.

"Don't drink" is splendid advice. I can't imagine anyone advising you to the contrary. Even the most confirmed old soaks will tell you not to drink. But you are being exposed to more and more liquor. You see drinking scenes in the movies, you read attractive liquor ads, a well-known personality tells youth that they should learn how to hold their liquor and famous people hit the bottle quite frequently.

So you want your facts about drinking to be correct. And you are perfectly justified. Deep down in your heart, you may feel that some of the terrible things you have heard about alcohol simply do not check with your own observations.

Alcohol has plenty of human wreckage to its discredit, but we both know that some of the things we hear about it are pure bunk. If I told you that drinking was utterly devoid of dividends you could look around and gather enough evidence to confound me and ask, "Then why do so many people drink?"

A good many of them drink because they can't help it; they are drug addicts. But I'll come to that later. Most people drink because they like to.

You can have fun at a bar. People don't gather there because they are browbeaten. Conversation flows more readily. Drinking gives you release from tension. Of course there are assets in alcohol. But they all have to be paid for.

If all drinking were moderate drinking, alcohol would not have such a bad name. But you can never be sure that you will be a moderate drinker. Alcohol is a drug and therefore a habit. It is drunk for its effect—to get a kick, a wallop, a thrill; and dope is taken for the same reasons. As time goes on, you require more and more alcohol to give you the "lift" you seek from it.

You may be oversensitive to alcohol. Or you may not be. It is estimated that one person in fifty is allergic to alcohol. Suppose you picked up a revolver with fifty cartridge chambers in its cylinder. Only one chamber is loaded. If you spin the cylinder at random and press the muzzle against your temple, would you be perfectly willing to pull the trigger, knowing that you had forty-nine chances of dropping the hammer on an empty chamber?

Your life is bound to be a life of handicaps at best. Why add another one? As long as you haven't taken that first drink, you have the upper hand. It's the only time you ever will have, so don't be in a hurry about taking that first drink.

Love,
MIKE.

Madder Music

By Joe Harrison

"Is Mr. Bierstedt there, please?"
 "This is he."
 "Sir, this is Joe Harrison. I'm down at the Middle Georgia Hospital—about to become an uncle."
 "Is that so?"
 "Yes sir, so I'm told. I wonder if I might have extended liberty? It's twenty-one thirty now and . . ."
 "How late do you wish to stay?"
 "Well—sir, you know how these things are . . ."
 "Suppose you come in whenever you like, then."
 "Thank you very much, sir. Goodbye."
 This was at nine-thirty Thursday night. At two o'clock Friday morning things appeared to be definitely stalemated so I came in and had a little nap before reville.
 Friday afternoon I went over to the office.
 "Sir, are we going to muster this afternoon?"
 "Yes we are. Isn't that baby born yet?"
 "Well—no sir. This is one of the most long drawn-out situations I've ever been a party to. I wonder—I wonder if I might miss muster this afternoon."
 "I suppose so. Fill out a pass."
 "Thank you, sir."
 When I dashed into the waiting room at the hospital I knew it had happened. The Captain was about to bust the buttons on his blouse and the grandmothers were grinning.
 "It's a boy eight pounds one and one quarter ounces and an hour old!"—in unison and in one breath.
 "How's Mary Ellen?"
 "Resting nicely."
 "Well, I'll declare!"—and I grinned and threw out my chest. After all, this was the first grandchild and I was the only uncle.
 Norman went upstairs and was back in just a few minutes.
 "Mary Ellen wants to see you."
 "She's very pale," my mother warned, "don't stay long."
 I started up the stairs, trying to be deliberate, but couldn't help notice that I was going so fast I was forgetting to tiptoe. Well, my mother had remarked just the night before that I wasn't very good at tiptoeing, anyway.
 Man-like, almost tongue-tied, I said, "How do you feel?"
 "I'm tired."
 I thought: "What an exquisitely wrought sentence." There were many things I wanted to say. I said nothing.
 She spoke again. "You wanted a girl, didn't you?"
 "Oh—you know it really doesn't make any difference to me."
 "Next time I'm going to have a girl."
 I had to laugh. I couldn't imagine any mother of two hours standing, except Mary Ellen, saying that. It was so typical. I thought: "Daddy will enjoy this."
 The nurse gave me that "you should leave now" look. I said goodbye and went back downstairs.
 My mother said, "She's quite pale, isn't she?"
 And I answered, "I thought she was beautiful. I hope he has his mother's smile."

Strictly From Hunger

By Floyd Wade

For those of us who will soon be leaving the Mercer campus, never again to stroll over its well-worn paths, never again to grope for truth in its hallowed halls, one of the memorable activities associated with education in a church school has been the daily visit to the corner drug store. This little haven has provided needed respite for many whose hearts are heavy, and who therefore seek solace in the company of the vulgar mob. It, like so many of our American business institutions, provides relief for both body and soul. Though not to be numbered among our oldest professions, pill rolling has indeed gained and maintained for many years a unique place in our culture.

Prior to the war, the local druggist in most small towns acted as friend, doctor and mother-confessor to his clientele, and his establishment was the nucleus around which the protoplasm of the town nurtured and thrived. His conversation in most cases, was as brilliant as the barber's, his judgment as infallible as the preacher's and his conduct as trustworthy as the sheriff's. His decisions often shaped the destinies of whole families.

But his success lay not only in his own personal magnetism but in the care with which he selected the personnel of his firm, particularly his soda-jerks. They were infallibly the town wits. Their repartee set the pace for the younger set, and some of their brightest sayings were constantly on the lips of their admirers. They were seldom the favorites of the school teachers, being considered by them stupid and un-Christlike, but, nevertheless, their contributions to school mores were often more lasting than even the football players'. Though often tending toward the ribald, they were unquestionably very amusing. Doubtless most of these characters are now fighting our war, doggedly determined that no one shall ever tell them how the government wants all chocolate sundaes concocted.

The war has changed the whole complexion of drug stores. Raging, transient crowds have taken the place of the few steady customers, iced sherbets have taken the place of thick ice creams and pint-sized jerks have taken the place of the experienced soda-jerks. Then too, the druggist has been shoved into the dark oblivion of his medicine shelves, simply because he is incapable of knowing the case histories of vast multitudes. So in the face of the druggist today can be seen an expression which is both smiling and sad. He is smiling because of his increased income, but he is bleeding inwardly because of his lost position as poor man's George W. Truett.

Tattnall Square Pharmacy, playfully called "Tetanus Square" and "the apothecary," is typical of most small drug stores attempting to serve a people in the throes of war. During rush hours, its appearance is that of a hotel lobby full of American Legionnaires. All who pass through its portals undoubtedly have the war brought a little closer to home. For to secure a position at the soda fountain requires skill, determination and a dogged will to win. Countless members of the armed forces who nightly jockey for position sooner or later request overseas duty fired with zealous determination to end this thing as quickly as possible.

Many others who frequent the place seldom purchase anything. They sit around in clusters, talking much and saying little—"Who was that gal I seen you with?" etc. Occasionally, heated arguments arise, stimulated by the appearance of Wesleyan girls. One such skirmish started recently when one of the Wesleyan girls remarked, and not very tastefully, that Mercer is the only college in the country where a hair-lipped girl could enroll and never be noticed. Whereupon a loyal daughter immediately pointed out, and with a finesse and maidenly reserve that would have done Jesse's heart good, that Wesleyan girls look as if they are still trying to dress like Madame Chiang.

The establishment, however, is the very essence of democracy. All are treated alike. Money, social position, party affiliation, rank or rate, church preference—all are meaningless in the futile attempt to catch the eye of one of the junior commandos who circulate between the booths.

Memories such as these will probably stay with us. At any rate, they lend impetus to the cause. For indeed, these are times that try men's souls.