

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
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The Publicity Racket.

"The football ballyhoo has made Notre Dame a by-product to football. Thinking Notre Dame alumni are not pleased with this. They would like to see their school talked of as the intellectual and cultural center of the Middle West. I note that West Point is always careful to see that as many stories pertaining to the fact that the Academy is a training school for United States Army officers get into the papers as stories about their football heroes. You can always find a story about the educational advantages of Yale, Princeton, Illinois and Columbia..."

This comment is from the stale-bread reporter of a certain strap-hangers' gazette who lost his temper recently when his reading public rebuked him for picking Notre Dame to lose the Penn Game. Since we are interested neither in him nor in his paper, we would allow the matter to pass were it not that his censure is sometimes passed locally.

The New York Times Index for 1930 lists 8 1/2 columns of items of stories about Columbia (exclusive of football stories), Princeton gets 6 1/2 columns, Yale 5 1/2, Harvard 4 1/2, New York University 6, C.C.N.Y. 4, Cornell and West Point, 2 columns each. Turning to the Middle West we find that Chicago gets 2/3 of a column, Michigan 1/2, Wisconsin 1/2, Notre Dame 1/4, and Illinois 1/5.

We just happen to know that the budget of one of the institutions listed above provides \$250,000 a year for publicity, and does so because it regards publicity as an asset to endowment; in other words, it is a money-making proposition. Comparing Notre Dame's modest outlay for this same purpose with the quarter-million investment of this other institution we find that the results, so far as Notre Dame are concerned, are extremely favorable: Notre Dame appears to receive about three times as much educational publicity per dollar as this other institution, and five times as much favorable educational publicity.

Of the eighteen items listed for the University of Wisconsin, eight refer to the ill-starred Experimental College and to the experiments which succeeded it; two more items refer to the dispute about accepting Rockefeller gifts; one is Judge Allegretti's denunciation of Wisconsin as a "hotbed of radicalism."

Much of the publicity accorded the universities in New York and vicinity is, of course, purely local in character; some of it is "educational" only by courtesy. Among the Columbia items, for instance, we find the following: "Sophomores break through skylight on freshmen at Villa Restaurant;" "Sophomores bind rivals;" "Villa Restaurant sues for \$51,000 damages;" "Experiment to provide special study for athletes found successful;" "Spectator poll shows average man thinks college student is loafer;" "Dinner of War Babies class;" "Third student expelled for throwing things from windows;" "Fifteen undergraduates picked for Memphis Pharaoh ballet;" and so forth.

The novel, the bizarre, the freakish in professorial utterances and in student life make good copy for the hungry reporter and the hectic headliner; the sober truth about spiritual achievement is seldom news. There is a Book of Deeds that records Notre Dame's major achievements. It tells of the sacrifices that have bound her bricks together, of the occasional burst of generosity which has supplemented her efforts in the fields of art and science, and of the prayer with which she begs God's blessing on every day's work. But above all these things that book tells of broken characters made whole again, of little souls inspired to greatness, and of great souls stimulated to even braver deeds of self-conquest. As long as Notre Dame men give their Alma Mater good publicity in heaven she will not care if their names and deeds never sell a paper on the corner. If they cease to be honest men and good husbands and fathers she will close her doors.