University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
November 9, 1932

Get to confession
before
Saturday morning

".... Nor Wants That Little Long."

A Catholic high school teacher has imposed a disagreeable task.   There are certain individuals, certain periodicals, certain books, which we prefer to treat with silent contempt.   We have seen many of them come and go in the short lifetime of the Bulletin (which is twelve years old) - skyrockets which flared for a moment and then fell - no one knew just where.   We passed them over in silence rather than give them the advertising they craved.

Clarence Cook Little was one of these.   He was president of the University of Michigan for a brief period - sandwiched in between two eminent scholars, Dr. Burton and Dr. Ruthven, he added the lustre of contrast to their achievements.   Patron of many "isms", he made himself especially obnoxious by his propaganda for birth control.   He was met on every issue by Catholics, especially by the Jesuit Fathers of Detroit University.   On the eve of suing his wife for divorce he tendered his resignation to the board of trustees of the University of Michigan - and passed from the spotlight.

With this preliminary word we pass to the consideration of the letter, which submits for explanation a statement from an essay by Little published in a volume called, "America as Americans See It," by F. J. Ringel.   The statement follows:

"Farthest removed from the freedom of unclassified and individual intellectual effort are the sectarian colleges and universities.   Here, the object seems to be to produce as many good Jesuits, Methodists, Baptists, and other sectarians as possible in a given time.   Such relics of Mediaevalism are of interest in any modern civilization. To thinkers they serve as grim reminders of the true value of freedom, as does a caged lion at a zoo.   They are the machine phase of higher education the object of which is the production of conformists.   There is little danger of their being a dominant factor in higher education in the United States unless we become a nation where higher education of the individual to a sense of independence and of the value of intellectual freedom ceases to be characteristic of the land.   In such an event the position of higher education will probably be simpler but sadder."

For a self-confessed "thinker" Dr. Little does a poor job of arching his heavy eyebrows at Catholic education.   That the sting of Jesuit darts is still in his flesh is evident.   He forgets that private interpretation was the grandfather of both the "conformism" of the Methodists and Baptists and his own "intellectual freedom."   And he has been around enough to have found out that no thinker has greater intellectual freedom in the true sense than the Catholic who is settled on the great essentials of life, and whose inquiring mind can attack the non-essentials of the physical world with the greatest ease and assurance.   One look at a list of noted Catholic scientists will convince anyone but a blind bigot of the truth of this statement.

Our correspondent goes on to say: "It is hard to understand how a man who has been President of the University of Michigan, President of Maine University, and affiliated with Harvard could be so ignorant."

That isn't hard to understand.   He became President of Michigan at a time when there was a flaire for college presidents who could get publicity - and coax endowment: that period is passing, in a way - there is less itch for men who bring unfavorable publicity.   There is a story that there was no wailing in Maine when he left there (there was certainly none in Michigan).   And as for Harvard - its "academic freedom" has let loose on the world some of the most profound ignorance the world has ever known. (It was the fool who said in his heart, "There is no God." - Psalm 13.)

PRAYERS: Deceased - a brother of Bro. Maurilius, C.S.C.; Jas. Griffin's grandmother; an uncle of Eddie Mahon, of Chemistry Hall. Bill Fromm's grandmother is ill. The father of Jack Adams, '26, is to undergo a second operation Saturday. 4 special intentions.