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From The Mailbag

"Dear Father:

"We know that Notre Dame fosters high spiritual ideals. But why doesn't the school encourage good manners? Why don't you try to develop Christian gentlemen?

"An instance in point was the loud, uncouth group returning from the city, last night, and disturbing myself and other guests at the Morris Inn -- possibly even others in the residential halls. Perhaps my experience was unusual, but it prompts me to write this note. You should be interested in these things."

-- Mrs. J. A. \_\_\_\_\_

We Might Have Replied:

"Dear Lady:

"You're lucky nothing worse happened! We're a rugged, outdoor type; nothing namby-pamby about us, as at other schools we could mention by the dozens! No skull-caps here; no socrosanct fraternities; no supercilious Upperclassmen, and all that fol-de-rol! The Ivy league may regard this as a proper introduction to alleged culture. But what emerges? Probably a snob -- nothing more. We avoid that sort of thing here. We're diamonds in the rough, perhaps; but still genuine diamonds. Don't let a little noise disturb your opinion of us, even though you might have heard a little profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity, too. Evidently, you refer to the "owl car" which gathers all the "characters" anyway."

But We Didn't ...

because a snob and a gentleman are not the same people at all. Furthermore, even campus "characters" have an obligation to uphold the good name of the school. Come to think of it -- these offensive manners backfire not only at Notre Dame but also at the parents who deserve richer returns for all their sacrifices to keep you at Notre Dame. Some lightheaded individual may applaud these and similar antics as clever. It must surely be obvious to you that he is out of step with Christian culture. Occasionally, a sobering element is injected into this picture when the poor parents receive a letter reluctantly mailed from the University admitting that:

"Your boy gives every indication of being out of place here at Notre Dame. His crude speech, uncouth manners, petty dishonesty, lack of Catholic decency found in every clean-minded individual, his vulgar remarks stealthily hurled at young women in South Bend -- and even on the campus -- all these things make it impossible for him to remain at this school of Our Lady ..."

Now is the time to weigh the grief you visit on the family with this sort of letter! It is hardly the dividend they deserve for all their efforts in your behalf. Nor are you being fair to them by creating the impression that your homelife nurtured this conduct. Nor are you being fair to N.D. Alumni who by hard work have built an enviable reputation for you to wear through the length and breadth of this land.

We'll have many visitors on campus tomorrow, and every weekend until Commencement. Don't let a few mis-represent the many of you. Don't belittle yourselves, or your parents, or Our Lady! A good host is a gentleman always.

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Sunday's 9 o'clock Mass: Middle-aisle seats reserved for Juniors and parents.

Tonight, 6:45: Novena Devotions to the Sorrowful Mother in Sacred Heart Church.