

Be Yourself This Year.

To the alumni, old students, neighbors, friends-of-the-family, and other guests from the wide-open spaces:

Yes, this is Notre Dame -- the Notre Dame of 1927 -- an unfolding and logical development of the Notre Dame of 1842. This is the school whose football teams are so popular; why, mothers hock their jewels and children go supperless to bed to see these teams in action. This is the school that has put entrancing teams before the public almost ever since football was; whether with fourteen men or fourteen hundred on the squad, Notre Dame teams have always had something nervy and life-size about them.

This is also the very mysterious school that writers guess about so much. It is primitive, and the primitive always intrigues; it is old-fashioned, and the old-fashioned is quite likely to cause wonderment; it is reactionary, and the reactionary excites the curiosity of the mob because it is unusual. And the school does not put out a lot of dope about itself. It has its secrets, and it is quite content to let the literary public guess at them. But today, for the edification of its guests and the protection of its students, it will make public a secret or two.

This university is so primitive that it believes in God, a personal God, in one Nature and Three Divine Persons -- and it retains that primitive belief and acts on it in spite of the learned Doctors of Science and Doctors of Philosophy, "deans and sub-dean (to quote a local authority), psychiatrists and gunmen who think or act to the contrary.

It is so old-fashioned that it still believes in the sacredness of womanhood, and it places the figure of a Woman, in the modest attire that becomes a Virgin and Mother, on the highest pedestal it can find. And it retains the belief in the sacredness of womanhood in spite of all the novelists and lecturers, judges and theatrical producers, biologists and boulevard hounds in the world -- yes, in spite of women themselves who stalk forth to claim for their sisters a right to debauch without responsibilities.

It is reactionary in that it still believes in God-given authority, whether that authority be vested in parents, in teachers, in governors of States, or in the Vicar of Christ on earth. It will not admit that the children should run the home, that students should boss their teachers, that citizens should defy the State or make their own laws with guns, that men should make their own religion.

Now when an institution like this lags so far behind the popular procession, it is but natural that it would have to use considerable moral force at times to put by the help of well-meaning but stupid people who would try to bring it up with the times. And since its students come with such widely-divergent training, it is natural that it should have a constant struggle to hold to old-fashioned principles. Its chief ally in this struggle is its cloister, the cloister which you enter today. It is the hope of this school that if it can cloister a boy for four years from the ways of the world and can give him a demonstration of the workability of its principles, it can send him out ready to pay his tribute to Caesar without losing his soul.

Each year we try to give the boys a principle to guide them and direct their efforts; this year it is the popular wise crack: "Be yourself." The great god Bluff is receiving much incense in these days when embezzlement is canonized and home-wrecking glorified. A very little study of human nature shows that a great number of boys and a very much greater number of girls go wrong each year because they want to appear more wicked than they really are. -- And if our guests today will keep this little motto in mind and simply be themselves, they can visit our cloister without violating it, and we will thank them from the bottom of our hearts for the edification they have given us.