

Monday is the feast  
of the Annunciation.

University of Notre Dame  
Religious Bulletin  
March 23, 1935

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Initiative and Self-Reliance.

Life has been made too soft for many a college man. He has never felt those peculiarly hopeless hunger pains that come from empty pockets. The prospect of material comfort and success is not so much a matter of his own ingenuity and plugging as it is a worry to "the old man."

Good old dad has always been too good. And that has a freezing influence upon the wells of thought and action in any son.

Frequently the poor boy, like the rich, muffs his chance for a college education. After someone pays his board and lodging and tuition, he soon begins to slip along with the barest minimum of interest and effort.

Because it represents a mature kind of gratitude, the following letter merits close attention:

"Dear Uncle:

"I was certainly surprised and happy to get your letter this morning. It makes me feel great to know that I can now go on and get a real forester's education. You did a very wonderful good turn to me, and I can't thank you enough for your great kindness. I think that there are quite a few young people in this country who have you to thank for their success.

"This afternoon I wrote to the leading forestry schools asking them for their catalogs and whether I could enter as a sophomore. Just as soon as I hear from the respective deans and have made a thorough study of the situation, I will write you.

"I would certainly appreciate it a lot if you would get a few of the outstanding periodicals for me. The Journal of Forestry and American Forests and Forest Life are noted magazines. In order to save you as much trouble as possible I will order these. I am having the Forestry Digest sent to me now. This is a fine resume of forestry news throughout the country. In addition, I receive monthly a list of all new government bulletins; the ones on forestry I order. I am sending you a list of pamphlets and bulletins which I have collected during the last five years. The reading of these has been supplemented by newspapers, magazines and books which I do not own.

"I was very much interested in your mention of self-dependence. That is one thing that exceptionally few people try to acquire. As I go through life I hear thousands of people on all sides of me crying, 'Come and help me' or 'Why should I do that; I'm not supposed to do it!' If a person wants to learn and get along by himself, he can do so. I have been a lone wolf so to speak for many years, and I get lots of things done. I can do ten things alone while someone else is waiting for help on one thing. Lots of fellows at college condemn me because I don't loaf around the fraternity house wasting time playing cards or telling what they call jokes. But their shortsightedness doesn't bother me and never will.

"I am often reminded of what Edward Bok said in his autobiography. He made the statement that success was very easy to attain but that most people were too lazy to take it. I think there is a lot of truth in this statement.

"Thanking you again for your wonderful offer, I remain

"Very sincerely your nephew,  
R.E."

Appreciation shown by independent thinking and acting, by digging in--strange phenomenon! What percentage of college men gather material, read periodicals, in their chosen field? How many college seniors have learned to "do ten things alone while someone else is waiting for help on one thing"?