
For this one afternoon I'm my own prof. I'll do the teaching. I'll run my own university out in God's good fresh air. But first, a moment of relaxation. (I take a deep breath. I blink at the bright burning hole in the azure sky. I consider a few stray thoughts before my serious thinking begins.) How good my sun-tanned face will look to the folks in June. Imagine Bessie staring into my bronze complexion as we take our first stroll down at entrancing, old Coney. For the first time since the Easter vacation I feel unfettered. Freedom is the basic need for my education. The rules and studies sure cramp my style around Notre Dame.

(I clasp my hands behind my neck. I prop up my head. Now I can settle down to think very clearly.) This is my first experiment in a real fresh-air course.

What did I come here for but to drink in wisdom? Yet all I remember from this semester is the silly chatter of South Bend boys. I came here to learn how to use my mind, and I don't know space from an atom.

I need a thinking mind, a mind free to roam through the libraries, to read when, where and as I will. I must look into other men's minds--the minds of men who have thought things out for themselves and the world.

I'm convinced the Religious Bulletin is too thin-skinned. Those critics referred to last night are correct. I should be reading Newman, Dawson, Belloc and Guardini along with a host of other big men. Understanding contact with the first-rate Catholic minds down the years is the way for me to develop my personal Catholic culture. Nor should I disdain the pagan classics nor the best in the secular arts and sciences. These things will add to my Catholic culture, not stain it.

I can go to two-fifteens from now till the day of judgment, turn in one ninety after another in all my exams. If that is all I do, what have I besides a typical American education? Where's my culture? My gentlemanly finesse? How far am I from becoming the university man Cardinal Newman outlined!

So it isn't passing this two-fifteen class that counts (and I'm glad that I cut it this afternoon, for cutting it made me think); it isn't stuffing a business degree into my wallet that counts. Whatever makes me a fully developed man is what counts, whatever makes me (now I grant the Bulletin is absolutely unimpeachable here) the most perfect and healthy cell I can be in the Mystical Body of Christ is what counts.

My culture is up to me. It shall be what I make myself in virtue of the opportunities God has given me. Full Catholic culture shall be mine only if I begin from now on to know and love my life, my dignity (as a man and as a Son of God), my destiny and my possible influence for good in the world.

TAYLOR: 26th anniversary of mother of Dan Boyle '38; friend of Ben Saell (Dilly); aunt of Harriet (Cass), (Tomorrow, 1st anniv. of father of John Gilbert (Bro).)