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December 16, 1967

In my later years as a teacher my students often asked me about what the students in older times were like. That is not easy to answer. Statistics are among the deadest things known. First, we were much older than present-day students. That meant, for the most part, that we were likely to be a little more serious. But outwardly we were probably more full of fun than any similar group today. We teased each other all the time, we played practical jokes, and there was in every group some inimitable mimic, who could do imitations of Colonel Guilliams, Dr. Mutchler, Dr. Kinnaman, President Cherry, R. P. Green, and any odd students. The chapel that was put on every year as a take-off on the faculty was nearly always good-humored and normally quite like the teachers, exaggerated, of course. If Professor Gilbert stroked his chin once in an hour, the fellow who represented him stroked his chin a dozen times in five minutes. If Uncle Billy Craig, not then called Uncle Billy, scratched himself, the fellow who did him scratched many times and sometimes not very smoothly. If Dr. Kinnaman batted his eyes, the fellow who acted him made his eyes fairly flit. And you should have seen the President Cherrys for several years. One of them, a brother of Dr. Drake of Bowling Green, really put on a show. The old auditorium was sometimes as cold as the outside. The morning President Cherry came to chapel in his overcoat gave Drake his chance; when the Mock Chapel came, Drake had on a gray overcoat and made all President Cherry's typical gestures and intonations. No, we were not in any sense too serious; we enjoyed our type of fun, which, fortunately, rarely had any bite to it.

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In the second place, we were dog-poor, but we did not let that interfere too much with our having a well-rounded life. When we had to buy our tickets to the Lecture Series, a boy would deny himself everything except food to raise the necessary cash for a ticket, or two, usually, for girls were around then, too. Our big events, like the Boat Trip and the Chestnut Hunt, did not cost much, and, again, we saved up our nickels and dimes to pay for the transportation of ourselves and our girls. The girls, by common consent, provided the lunches. And how good that all tasted in the bright spring weather, at Sally's Rock or Woodbury, and in the fall, out on the Cherry Farm! Not very many students felt able to go on the camping trip to Mammoth Cave at the end of the spring term, but many of us did manage to make the annual trip by trains--L. and N. to Glasgow Junction and Mammoth Cave Railroad the rest of the way. When picture-shows came in, we somehow got to one sometimes, with our girls, and then to an ice-cream parlor down town. But we walked to and from such dates; we had no cars, and the street cars did not run in the right directions.

In the third place, we were all taking the same type of courses and could understand the typical jokes told about such things as Grammar 2 and History 2. We had been raised on the same textbooks and could quickly understand any sly reference to some poem or essay that all of us had read in the McGuffey Readers or to some famous problem in Ray's Third-part Arithmetic. And older students who had done passed grammar, for instance, were in demand to help drill younger or newer ones who were struggling with parsing and diagramming.

In general, we were quite democratic, though some students in every year regarded themselves as far above the ordinary levels. Some of the faculty and their wives, too, never seemed to fit in. They were just too nice for the ordinary mortals that had been

hired to teach in this little God-forsaken school. Fortunately, some of these, but not all, faded away like General McArthur's old soldiers. Some of the poorest students, financially speaking, put on the grandest airs; they rarely fooled anybody except themselves and their kind.

Green, if by that term you mean lacking in sophistication, we were. But we rarely gloated because of this, as I have seen even mature people do. We sometimes came to school looking very shabby or tacky; in a few weeks some of the rattiest-looking boys I knew would get haircuts, get their clothes pressed, and quit slumping over when they sat down in class. It was an education to watch them develop. There was not as much standardization in dress then as there is now, and it was possible to see remains of other styles side by side with some things that we called rushing the style. You could count on some fellows to be the first with a new-fangled collar or a new-style hat or a flashy pair of shoes. But most of us were conservative in dress. Not many of us had been many miles from home and thus could not brag about having been about. The one or two in a group who had been 300 miles from home usually lost no time to remind us of their adventures.

Frankly, we were slightly comic, with all our seriousness. We were grown in body but often pretty child-minded. We sometimes stuck to some ancient practices just because they were ancient; we reluctantly accepted other customs and beliefs. The good fellowship of the dormitory and the dining room broke down many a barrier in politics, ancestry, religion, and geography.