

The BELLES OF SAINT MARY'S

Published every two weeks by the student body of Saint Mary's School

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REFLECTIONS: I. THE HONOR SYSTEM

Below is a summary of remarks gleaned from interviews with students and from discussions among them, regarding the success of the honor system.

The student body has yet to fix permanently the status of the honor system, except by actions. The usual reply to the question of its success is a meditative, "Well, in a way it is; and, then again, it isn't." No old girl has the heart to say the government she has struggled hard to preserve is a failure; no new student has the audacity to condemn an ideal that is as vital to the old girls, but neither of them can say it has entirely fulfilled expectations.

They agree that, if anything can, it will eliminate major offenses. One new girl remarked that a friend of hers, who came to Saint Mary's several years ago, said she was able to get by with almost anything she wanted to, even smoking. The new student replied that she had tried smoking here once, but that she would never, under the present system, be foolish enough to try it again. And an old girl added that whether or not she had any scruples about honor, she would not try smoking here now, although she did smoke last year.

Nearly everyone agrees that the ultimate success of the honor system will come with the control of petty offenses. Students argue that some members of the faculty don't encourage complete self-government on the halls. They feel that hall teachers do not positively trust students to report themselves; and so continue to remind them about hall regulations. This is a disagreeable duty that hall presidents should perform.

Then, some students are dubious about the success of the honor system because they do not think the student body has captured the spirit behind it, *i.e.*, students may be conscientious in reporting themselves but they fail to understand the basic principles underlying regulations. The cardinal point here is the observance of regulations. Reporting violations is merely a poor substitute for observing regulations. They are not made without a reason. If breaking them made no differ-

ence, they would not have been drawn up. Therefore, students are on their honor to abide by rules and to keep others from breaking them.

This presents a rather gloomy aspect, but regardless of the honor system's imperfections, every old girl here, and most of the new girls, will fight to keep it rather than return to the proctor system.

"JUDGE NOT, LEST YE BE JUDGED" (VIRGINIA INTERMONT CAULDRON)

Virginia Intermont is such a grand place that it seems a shame to undermine some of its finest ideals by indulging so freely in a dormitory sport as useless and harmful as "catting." We raise insurmountable barriers by our intolerance; by our refusal to overlook others' mistakes. We apparently don't realize that when we "cat," "bull," and gossip we are just "sticking our necks out," for we, too, are apt to make mistakes, and what is to prevent our being the subject of a "bull session"?

Each one of us would yell herself hoarse at our hockey games, but are we big enough to refuse to add a juicy bit the next time a bull session gets under way? We don't have to be nasty about it—there are more ways than one of being nice.

What else on earth can be as destructive as a roomful of catty femmes? Sure—"everybody does it," but who is "everybody"? You and I are everybody, and if we don't eat, why, then, no one will!

IN DEFENSE OF FAILURE

Monthly test week has come and gone with its inevitable outcome. A few students have made high grades, the majority have passed with a fair mark, and some have failed.

Those students who have failed in spite of hard work are apt to be ready to stop trying and leave themselves classed with the persistent "flunkers." They have no cause for such discouragement. There are reasons for their failure, *i.e.*, incorrect study habits and physical exhaustion or nervous strain.

Correct study habits are exceedingly important. A student can sit for an hour pouring over one paragraph and not be able to remember a word of it two hours later. She can say to herself, however, "Well, I just don't understand why I don't know it; I studied hard." Study requires concentration. If a student is disturbed by noise, she should find a quiet place for study. If her mind continues to wander, she should force herself to pay attention to her work.

Physical exhaustion from insufficient sleep, or nervous strain, is dangerous at test time. If possible, work should be prepared early to eliminate the necessity of staying up late or rising early to study. It is often preferable to get a good night's rest and come to a test with a clear head to use the facts one does know than to sit up half the night cramming, and wake up with a lot of muddled ideas in a tired brain.

A student has not completely failed until she stops trying to succeed! If she has failed once, she knows that her work has to be improved, but she need not despair. She will succeed with soberness and determination.