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STANFORD UNIVERSITY TROUBLE EXPLAINED

Characteristic Letter From One of the Students Who Was Suspended By the Irrational Action of the Clark Committee

A letter from James W. Mott of Stanford university to his father, Dr. Mott of this city, gives a very clear idea of the beginning of the whole recent trouble at Stanford university and shows that the policy which, if persued by Doctor Jordan and his committees, will be an everlasting detriment to that university. The letter reads as follows:

James Mott's Letter.

"I intended to mention the parade in my last letter, but didn't think it of sufficient news imporjance when I wrote. Neither did the Daily Palo Alto, the daily student paper. No mention of the parade was made in the issue of the following day. Since then, of course, the student affairs committee have by their action made it notorious, and I thought I would await the outcome before giving you the story. The whole situation has been so greatly exaggerated by the newspapers that I suppose you have no adequate idea of the matter.

In the first place, parades are a recognized, traditional form of amusement at Stanford, and occur whenever there is the least provocation, on any and all sorts of occasions. The faculty up until this time have never objected to such a demonstration. That is why it was passed up without comment at the time by students and student publications. I was not surprised to get your letter. A number of the fellows have received similar letters from their parents today.

"The whole matter has come about as a result of Jordan's fanatical utterances on what he calls "student drunkenness." As a matter of fact it has been conclusively proved that there is less drinking at Stanford than at any other large college in the world. The fraternities have always had beer brought into their houses when they wanted it, and no one has heretofore questioned the propriety in doing so. However, the students here are not of the boozing variety, and beer is not "kept" in the houses, but is ordered for special occasions, such as initiations, football celebrations, etc. When beer is ordered it is delivered in daylight, and no bones are made about it.

"The old student affairs committee understood the situation exactly and considered it nonsense to prohibit decent beer drinking on the campus. Dr. Jordan, who is a monomaniac on temperance, demanded that the committee put a sudden stop to drinking. This was about a month ago. The committee couldn't see it his way, so Jordan politely forced Prof. Durrand, the chairman, to resign, and the other professors on the committee followed suit. Jordan then appointed a new committee consisting of fanatics like himself, with Prof. Clark, the prohibition mayor of Mayfield, as chairman.

"Now for a month before this there had been no occasion for a "beer bust," and none has occurred as far as I know. I mention these things simply to show that all this newspaper howl started over nothing at all. Personally I don't care whether students are allowed to drink on the campus or not.

"I am frank to say, however, although you will probably not agree with me, that a Stanford "beer bust" is not a bad thing. It is always given on some occasion that warrants a jollification, and it is a custom as old as the university. The beer is served by the freshmen, who are not allowed to drink while the celebration is going on. The cheese, crackers and "hot dogs," as the wienerwurst is called, are placed on a big table in the middle of the room. The college songs and yells are given, and toasts to suit the occasion are drunk. On another table is a big jar of tobacco and enough corn cob pipes for everybody present.

"On the night of the big game there was a beer bust in every fraternity house on the campus except D U, of which Jordan is a member. The day before the game Chairman Durran dof the old committee called a meeting of the fraternities. He told them that a beer bust on the following night was evident, and that he did not object to the noise, but that he hoped they would cut it out at midnight and also be careful of the language they used.

"So much for the drinking situation. Now when Clark with the committee he selected replaced Durrand's committee he began firing everybody whom he could prove was ever drunk. He succeeded in finding two prominent seniors whom he gave a five-minute hearing and then fired out of college for being "noticeably under the influence of liquor." Nobody protested against this action, and the victims simply said it was hard luck that they had to go up against a man like Clark.

"Clark's next move happened a week ago Thursday. Thursday morning he issued a proclamation prohibiting beer busts and declaring that if a student took a drink of beer any place he did so at his peril. A copy of this edict was mailed to each fraternity and was received late in the afternoon.

"Of course a protest was in order and the regular form of informal protest is a parade. There were 256 in the parade. It was practically a fraternity parade, as nothing but the fraternities were seriously affected by the proclamation. There are only 300 fraternity men in college so you can see how unanimous the sentiment was. Those who were not in it were out because they couldn't help it. The parade was spontaneous and there was nothing unusual about it. It happens whenever the fellows take a notion to get together and do a little yelling. As I said before the Daily Palo Alto didn't even mention it.

"About 7 o'clock, as soon as dinner was over, the fellows over at the S A E house began to yell 'parade! parade!' the cry was taken up all along the row. In five minutes more the band had assembled and was playing, "To Hell With the Gold and Blue." Everybody who played an instrument hurried up to get a place in the band.

"There were no 'ring leaders' as the papers have stated. Nobody had any idea where we were going and nobody cared particularly. Someone suggested that we march down to Clark's house and see if he would make a speech. So the band started for Clark's and we all followed. Clark wasn't home. I think he got wind of the parade and skipped out. His wife came to the door and said, 'I suppose this is for the benefit of Prof. Clark, but he isn't at home.' We then sang 'Hail Stanford Hall," and marched back much disappointed. Two or three fools in the crowd showed their lack of breeding by talking back to Mrs. Clark with such remarks as, 'Can't you phone for him?' 'Tell him we'll call again,' etc. They were promptly called down by the rest of the paraders and I have no doubt they were heartily ashamed of themselves. We then marched back to the Quad, through the Library, and wound up at the Memorial Court, where after listening to the reading of the proclamation and giving three cheers for the old committee we quietly disbanded.

"This is all there was to it. It lasted about an hour, and the students went home and got to work. It was no different from dozens of other parades and no one thought anything more about it. I know a dozen fellows in the parade who never drank a quart of beer in their lives. Two of the fellows, H. C. Green and a fellow named Boyd are members of the student temperance society and Green is president of that organization. Both of these men signed the petition. Knight Jordan, President Jordan's son, was also in the parade and was one of the signers, in fact everybody in the parade signed the petition declaring that they were just as blameworthy as the 12 who were fired. The 12 were not leaders, because there were no regular leaders. Everybody follows the band, which generally goes wherever it takes a notion.

"The action of the committee nearly knocked the student body off its feet. They didn't know what to make of it. To fire anybody for taking part in a parade at Stanford was unheard of and unthinkable. We stood around with out mouths open, wondering if another earthquake was coming. The parade occurred on Thursday and the committee took action on the following Tuesday. The parade had been practically forgotten.

"The wording in Clark's announcement, such as 'rowdyism,' and 'insulting conduct' made the whole student body furious. For a while everybody was in favor of striking.

"On Wednesday President Murphy of the student body called a meeting which was attended by nearly the whole male contingent of the university. All those who were in the parade signed the petition I have mentioned and all the rest of the men, about 600, handed in another petition demanding the re-instatement of the 12 suspended men (whom the committee claimed were the only ones they were able to identify) and declaring that they would stand by the 12 men and the rest of those in the parade, no matter what the action of the committee might be. In other words nearly the whole student body (men) have pledged themselves to leave the university if the man are not re-instated.

"I don't think anybody will be fired. Nearly all the paraders have been before the committee in the last two days, asked if the signatures were theirs and if we took part in the parade, and excused. No one can tell what the result will be, but I think it will be all right To fire 250 men for no offense at all is simply preposterous.

"It looks on the face of it as if the students have backed down, but they have not. Many were for striking at once, but the saner element have insisted that a strike will do no good, and that it is better to offer an apology even if it is not due.

"We have now made our last move. It is up to Clark to come through or there will be the greatest bunch of trouble that ever happened in any university. Clark is wrong and he knows it. Public sentiment and the San Francisco newspapers are all on our side. Even the Examiner, which yellow sheet has never missed a chance heretofore to shoot it into the students here, is for us since Clark and Jordan have made themselves ridiculous and obnoxious.

"If Clark doesn't do the square thing the alumnae will probably step in and make things hot for him. The whole student body is fighting for a principle and they are right. We are going to fight it out. For myself, although my degree is only six weeks distant, I am perfectly willing to leave the university if the 12 men are not taken back whether they fire me or not.

'JAMES W. MOTT."

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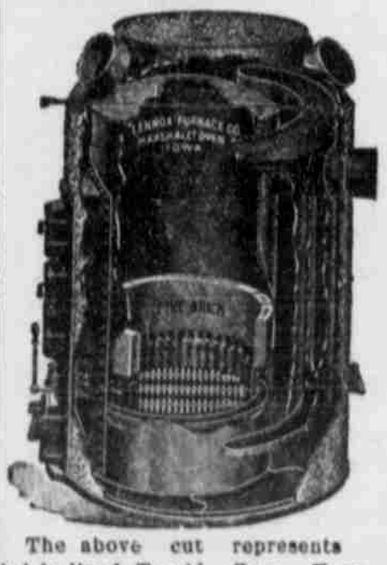

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