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Letter to Professor H.A. Morgan from C.E. Brehm

C.E. Brehm

University of Tennessee - Knoxville

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Professor H. A. Morgan,
University of Tennessee
Knoxville, Tennessee

Dear Professor Morgan:

I am sending you herewith a copy of a letter from Mr. E. E. Miller which is self-explanatory, also copy of my reply to him. It might be wise for you to write Mr. Miller.

Very truly yours,

C. E. Brehm,
Acting Director.

Enclosure.
Prof. C.A. Keffer,  
Knoxville, Tennessee

June 7, 1923

Dear Professor:

Will you not tell me confidentially, just what is happening at the University? I must confess that the situation there has me all up in the air. I suppose it is none of my business except insofar as it is a State institution and I am a citizen of the State, but I have a boy whom I fancied I was bringing up with the idea of going right on through his schools to the University in his mind all along, and I am beginning to wonder if I want him ever to have such an idea.

When Prof. Sprowles was fired, I took it calmly enough. I could not believe that Prof. Morgan fired him simply because he had liberal religious views. I was amazed that any University president or professor would object to such a really fine book as "The Mind in the Making", but I took it for granted that there was more than the newspapers told. But now comes Garrett's address over there.

Surely the University is not going to become the leader in the fight to put the schools and the courses of study under the direction of Billy Sunday, Billy Bryan, and the rest of them. I cannot understand how it can afford even to let anyone get the idea that it is standing for such ideas and such policies. The universities elsewhere have been the first line of defense against this attempt to put science on a theological basis.

Please tell me just what the situation is.

Sincerely yours,

(SIGNED) E.E. Miller
Mr. E.E. Miller, Editor,
Southern Agriculturist,
Nashville, Tennessee

Dear Mr. Miller:

I have your letter of June 7th written to Professor Keffer asking for confidential information as to what is happening at the University and particularly this business about Sprowles and also the evolution agitation.

This is merely a "tempest in the teapot" and this evolution business is simply so much dust kicked up by Sprowles and others associated with him who is desirous of hiding the real issue. The real issue is this: Sprowles was hired sometime ago to succeed Professor Harry Clark, who as you know did considerable educational work over the state with schools. Sprowles failed to measure up to this job and was told so about a year ago by Dr. Morgan himself.

Furthermore, Sprowles is a very arbitrary individual and hard for anyone to get along with and Professor Morgan told Sprowles sometime back that he would have to correct some of these traits of his. Consequently Dr. Thackston, Head of the Educational Department recommended at the end of this year that Sprowles be dropped. Dr. Morgan had no other alternative than to abide by this recommendation, and consequently notified him that he would not be re-appointed. It was then that Sprowles said something along this line as being the cause, and being splendid publicity material was caught up by certain papers and given wide publicity. This is the kind of news as you know, that the papers are looking for. Throughout this whole issue Dr. Morgan has shown the high type of man that he is. He has kept quiet and said nothing which was logically the thing to do, rather than define his position and reasons to the parties concerned.

Furthermore, there is a group over here in the University who have developed some extreme socialist principles. These people took hold of this issue and made a lot of capital out of it, simply bringing about certain concessions from Dr. Morgan on other principles of a decided socialist tendency and which no self-respecting executive could consider. You may rest assured that Dr. Morgan is going to develop this Institution along right and proper channels and that right thinking individuals in the faculty over here are behind him to a man. A couple of radicals are responsible for all of this fuss and publicity over the state.

I am referring your letter to Dr. Morgan asking that he reply to it himself and he can give you the straight of this proposition.

Very truly yours,

C.E. Brehm,

Acting Director.