The Evolution of a College Student.

by

Phleba Plain McPartney.
The people who live in College towns and who are continually in contact with Colleges and with College people do not realize the troubles of a student coming from the decidedly rural districts. This student has not the advantages necessary for preparing him to enter College, and he is backward in his make-up, in his manners and in his general knowledge of the world. But under this outward appearance there is a true nature and an honest and uprightness character. The fact that this student has had but few advantages is not always due to lack of money, for in the entwining often comes from the homes of our wealthiest farmers. Then why
is it that he is not further advanced? In order to show this lack of training the better we will take the average student as an example: the one who comes right from the farm, without having had the advantages of the town school.

This home is in the prairie country where neighbors are few and the town probably ten miles away. The house is not modern but he has every thing necessary for his comfort. His parents are of the good old type, who never having had any chances themselves are saving every cent of their hard earned money, in order that they may send their son to college.
To them he is a hero, and perhaps he is, but at the same time there is a vast amount of room for improvement, and they little realize the enormity of the obstacles which he must confront upon entering College. To them he is perfect in every way. They have instilled in him an ardent respect for truth, they have taught him honest politeness without the usual polish, and unconsciously from their own refined natures they have imparted to him all the essentials necessary for an upright character, modest and unassuming.

The school he attends is the usual country school with no special advantages, and from which he finally obtains a diploma. From this
school he goes to work on the farm. His social advantages are few, an occasional spelling school, a debating society, and perhaps an apple supper. On Sundays he is allowed to spend the day with some friend. Tom is a long way off and he only goes when business demands it or when there is a circus or a celebration. He is a genuine country-boy subject to all the temporary vanities and cares of any youth of his age, but who is at heart a simply fellow and possesses a great strength of character.

His parents are determined to send him to school. He has often pictured himself at College, but is rather indifferent about going, and it is not until the plans are well made
that he really woke up to the fact that he is going to leave the farm and enter into a new career. So at eighteen years of age, we bore him an enormous, awkward country boy, with his hair cut short and his arms dangling from his coat-sleeves, like the Jaclain of "Rip Van Winkle."

The trip on the train was rather a novelty to him, he never having gone quite such a distance before, and he had plenty of time to investigate the window sheds and to find out just how the seats were manipulated.

He reaches the College town and as he alights from the train he feels somewhat bewildered at the number of people who seem to have come for
the express purpose of taking care of him. He soon gains his composure and orders his things, trunk and the big trunk which the porter had for him sent to the college, and he goes there also thinking his troubles are almost over, when in reality they have just begun. He reaches the college safely and finds his trunk deposited upon the campus. He is so annoyed at the enormity of the buildings that he does not notice, or if he notices, pays no attention to the anxious smile which greets him from the upper classes. Suddenly, the term “College” takes on a new meaning. Every thing is as strange, he knows no one, and he possibly feels that it is not just as he
had expected it to be, and he sees nothing but a cold welcome in the great stone buildings. He feels just a little homesick, but decides not to give way to the feeling and enters one of the buildings. Everything is new to him in noise and confusion, and he is bewildered by the number of students going this way and that and readily jostling him about. He knew just how to act when he entered the little old school house at home, but here everything was so different, so uncomfortably different, that his sense of politeness left him and he forgot to remove his hat. The thought of it with a start, clutched it from his hair, chased it under his arm and wondered if any one saw him.
By this time he was almost in the center of the building having been finished there by the rapid march of the students, who all seemed to have some place definite to go. He sees an old man standing by a flight of stairs directing the crowd. He immediately approaches him and asks if he is the President. The junior conceals a smile and directs our boy from the front to the President's office. He goes there but the President is absent. Tried and hopeless he decides to try it another day, so breaks away from the College and proceeds to look up a room. He finds one and before night is comfortably located. The next day he starts out again carrying with him his copy...
Secondly, deplora, of which he is indubitably proud, and feeling that it, in some way, will give him a greater air of importance.

The President is in his office, and it is with great awe and with trembling of the knees that our boy from the farm approaches the head of the institution. The President looks at him kindly and direct, brings to room 36, telling him that there he will find the professor whom he wishes to see.

Again the boy is confused and wonders aimlessly around, trying to find the room indicated upon the slip in his hand. He asks someone standing near, who, wanting a little fun, directs him in just the opposite direction from where he should go. He goes, but...
fails to find the place and thinks
the person was simply mistaken
not seeing the marking intended.
He asks another and this person,
remembering his experience of the
year before, shows him the building
and takes him to the office door.
This appreciation of this kindness
poorly expressed, showed forth in his
eyes and the strange person immedi-
ately became a friend to him. He
entered the room and there received
his first shock. The professor takes his
name and age and hands him a slip
of paper and directs him to another
office door close by, meanwhile taking
notice of that cherished diploma,
much envying if he had one. He goes
to the next professor and gets his
assignment without further trouble. The first day he has some trouble finding his classes, the second day he gets along pretty well and the third day his confidence is great and he begins to feel his importance. He walks around with an air of importance and wonders why he didn't always feel this way. Every thing looks bright to him and with great magnanimity offers to take some others around the buildings. He feels very proud as he marches down the halls pointing out different places of interest. He is very kind, even condescending and offers his services for the next day to help the stranger find his classes. The stranger declines with thanks.
suppresses a smile and again checks our unsuspecting freemason by telling him that he is a senior having been in College almost four years.

For the first few months of the freshman year, our boy from the farm does not change materially only that he gets a better hold of the general ways around the College. He stands in awe of the faculty and has a deep reverence for the seniors. He studies hard, joins the Y. M. C. A. and a literary society, and towards the end of the year begins to improve his dress and also to master the way, drees and manners of this fellow student. Before this he had been too shabby, his time had been taken up. As the end of the term he goes home to his
parents, looking about the same
but much wiser in some way.
He realizes what a necessity a
College education is and comes
back the second year to take up the
duties of the Sophomore. He studies
as hard as he did when a Freshman, but
there is some little difference in the
way he approaches himself. He uses his
knowledge to a better advantage. He likes
an interest in Athletics, enjoys the
football and is becoming imbued
with the College spirit. He is beginning
to take more interest in his class
meetings. His general appearance is
changing; his hair has become
manageable; he has clothes which
fit him and his manners are easier.
At the end of the Sophomore year the
lein "College" again takes on a new meaning to him and he finds that he is in love with the atmosphere about the school. He finds that College life is only imaginary but real and that there is a tie which draws him back to take up the work of the junior year. The sophomore has a warm feeling for the seniors.

As a junior he feels himself to be just a little bit better than his underclassmen and hardly knows just how to deal with the seniors. This is losing some of that care and reverence which he felt for the faculty, and begins to realize that they are merely men and women subject to their own individual inclinations. To his parents, to whom he writes two or three
times a week in his first year to
now write but seldom. Once or twice
he called his father “the Common”, a
sticker I claim on the “old man”, but was
heartily ashamed of it, and although
he didn’t let on to the boys, he decided
not to do it again. He rather neglects
his studies, paying just enough
attention to them to pass his
examinations and regards his dress
as a subject much more important.

As a rule, however, the juniors along
through the end of the year are
referred on to harder work by the fact that
they will soon be seniors. So it is
with our boy from the farm. He is
content to go home to his parents as a
full-pledged junior. He is more in
earnest now. Before this he had
almost succumbed to the "yellow-fever," but now he realizes that he must run no risks. This year he sees the seniors through, instead of making

home at the close of the examinations

he stays until the last function is

over. As the seniors receive their

diplomas and the last exercises are

passed, it is with a feeling of no little

importance that he walks forth from

the College Chapel. The words "At last"

clue themselves through his mind,

and again the term "College" takes on

a new meaning. The important feeling

doesn't leave him. His College life has

changed. Instead of the few easy going

years of the junior, comes the serious

existence of the senior, full of

responsibilities. He knows he must
His work must accomplish something for him. In the fall and winter he gets along very nicely, but in the spring there is an obstacle. He knows he has just as much to do but he has no inclination whatever to do it. As a Senior he knows all of the varieties which marked him as a Junior. He does feel rather proud and to others probably seems rather important as though he foresaw all the knowledge in the curriculum, but he alone realizes how little he does know. To him the truth is apparent, and he looks back in memory to the freshman year, it is the time when the Senior to him seemed to have unlimited knowledge. But this illusion left him. The end of
the rainbow is found but the cup of gold does not glitter and we never know that he has but to look ahead and learn. Commencement Day is at hand. Our boy from the four marches down the aisle and takes his place upon the platform. We hardly recognize in him the rugged boy of four years ago. College life has left its mark.

Instead of the rugged boy from the country we have a handsome, polished, selfpossessed young man. He has developed both physically and mentally. All the ideas of good which his parents had inculcated in him when a child have become fixed in his mind and his character shows forth in every line of his face. The society life, the contact on the athletic fields,
the steady contact with so many people; all these things have helped to broaden him. He laughs at the experiences of his freshman year. The first three years developed him physically, but this last the senior year has done more than all others to develop him mentally. He is glad to be through, but dislikes to think that he will not return again in the fall. As he receives his diploma, it is with a feeling similar to that of the experiences when he first entered the great stone buildings of the college. He receives the congratulations of his friends and classmates and the best wishes to them and his alma mater.