

My Favorite Instructor

Ross Copeland

WHenever I think of my favorite instructor, I think of laboratories and experiments. I remember test tubes and Bunsen burners, precipitates and burettes, the strange, interesting, vile odors concocted by a beginning class in chemistry—all the things that made up the world in which I knew him. It is strange, but I cannot remember ever once having come in close contact with him outside of this little world of his. On his free periods he never had time to enjoy a cigarette or a "Coke" in the teacher's lounge; he never had time to join the other men teachers in watching the football practice; he was always too busy in the laboratory or his office helping a student finish a difficult experiment or grasp a complicated equation. He came to school in the morning with one thing in mind, to give himself for the entire day to his students.

There was something completely refreshing about his classes. Perhaps this was caused by the fact that there was something new to be learned every day. His lectures on new topics were always so perfectly composed that it was almost impossible for a student who paid attention not to understand them immediately. Although it was common knowledge that he was not an easy grader, students clamored to get into his classes, for all pupils who had ever had him for an instructor praised his teaching methods. He taught not only from the text but also (as all good teachers should) from personal experience. Every discussion period was well punctuated by one or more of his stories of his own amusing or not so amusing experiences in the laboratory.

And was he a learned or distinguished looking man? I think people in general would have said that he was nice-looking, and that is all. He was of medium height and build; he had wide set eyes which matched his sandy-grey hair, and I remember that his silver rimmed glasses always seemed to look a little too small for his full face. The only thing distinguished looking about the man was his shirts. He always wore a "lab jacket" that was full of holes from acid burns and filthy from the workbench tops that rubbed off black on one's sleeves, but beneath the old jacket there was always a dazzlingly white shirt. I often wondered how he kept his shirts so clean, and when I asked him how he did it, he told me, "No chemist in the world can keep his hands clean, but only a sloppy chemist ever soils his cuffs." And once again he had turned a common experience into an object lesson.

He died one November morning last year. It is hard for us, his former students, to visit the laboratory that had been his for nearly a score of Novembers. It seems to us to have a solemn look about it, as though it were capable of feeling sorry to be delivered into the hands of a stranger. He is gone, it is true, but much of him remains. Above the front blackboard there hangs the simple sign he placed there. Its capital letters say to every student, "THINK," and when we see it, we realize that he did not so much teach us to know chemistry, as he taught us to teach ourselves.

On Attending College and Living at Home

Sherry A. Rash

ATTENDING COLLEGE while living at home is a challenge to anyone. I speak not through ignorance but through personal experience.

While I am on the campus, I constantly hear of young coeds having difficulty in finding enough time in the day to engage in recreation, to fulfill all assignments of instructors, to present themselves properly at such functions as Wednesday night spreads at their sorority houses or to stay for the nightly group gatherings commonly called hen parties. I hesitate to mention more since my knowledge of campus life is so limited. All these I miss. Yet for human interest's sake, let me describe the seldom heard of routine belonging to the individuals who are, fortunately or unfortunately, living at home, particularly on a farm, while attending college.

Morning hours begin all the way from four o'clock to six o'clock. In my particular case, I manage to roll out of slumberland around six-fifteen. For efficiency it should be five-thirty, certainly not later than six, but I always lie in bed a few moments in order to pity myself for existing before I reluctantly rise to begin another day.

Because of the late start, I omit the daily morning trip to the cowstables. Instead, I stuff a slice of dry toast into my mouth and attempt to wash it down with black coffee or fruit juice. Thus is a breakfast completed in five minutes—a breakfast that would truly shock my home economics teacher.

My schedule is a close and very tiring one. I leave home economics class twenty minutes early to board a bus for John Herron