THE COLLEGE YEAR
A melodrama in two semesters

LOOKING BACK
FOLLOW THE CROWDS

In figuring up his expenses for the first semester of this school year, a freshman was heard to remark that his board bill was the least of his expenditures for the first three months of his sojourn at the State University.

To one who has been denied the privilege of studying college life at close range, this remark would seem entirely erroneous. It does appear highly ridiculous that a matter of three meals each day for a period of twelve weeks should be the least item of expense for a healthy athlete whose appetite consisted of several pounds of the H.C.L. every day. But, let us not be too quick to elect the unthinking "frosh" to the Ananias club.

Let the memory of any college student carry him back to the first few months of the school year when the bashful freshman was waylaid at every turn and confronted with extended hands and invitation to join the festice board at the "house." At first the shy recruit was somewhat stunned by the abundant hospitality and no doubt spent many sleepless nights wondering if he had not been mistaken for a relative of John D. or Henry Ford.

But it is a simple child indeed who does not quickly learn the gastronomic delights of the lollypop. So the freshman, after depositing the "check from home" in the bank, suddenly realized fraternity meant meals. Having settled this question and also his pocketbook, he proceeds to meeting the fellows one and all, and with a host of companions made the rounds.

In the meantime, for there is always a meantime, the "brothers" continued to extend their hands and menu cards while in the chapter meeting they were using every scheme of parliamentary rules, known and unknown, to extort the necessary funds. Result: Special assessments and a fast decreasing bank account. At times brotherly love slipped out the door while animosity rubbed elbows all around—but the invitations went out and the freshmen in.

All this was unknown to the welcome "frosh," but at the same time there was something else unknown to the hosts. After the first few weeks there was hardly a freshman who did not know what bunch he liked the best and would have the privilege of decorating his coat lapel. Like the child with the lollypop, the graft was too good to let loose. So he stayed close to all of them.

Thus the fraternities played the leads while the sororities groaned out a symphonious accompaniment and the freshmen acted the part of the audience with complimentary tickets.
IN ALL MODERN COLLEGES, a fund is set aside (donated by the students and kept by the college business manager) for the advancement of, and the promoting of basketball. An institution which, if left entirely alone, could exist on a diet of rah! rahs! and songs.

From the day school opens, until the dark and gloomy gowns appear, the campus is one glorious round of ———! ———! and songs, except of course during the Christmas vacation when nearly everybody lays off to give the vocal chords a rest. And it was during this restful period, a new page in “amitchur” athletics was dedicated.

The vacation was going too slow—something had to be done to liven things up a bit. Someone suggested burning the Science Hall, another, more conservative soul, motioned that a few sticks of dynamite would tear a nice big hole in the library, when the raving minds of the collegians were turned from arson by one youth’s happy thought—they would have a basketball game with some high school. Great idea—Jerry was gone and nobody was around to gum the deal. After a fair and impartial discussion of the relative merits of the various high schools of the state—Helena was selected as the victim. The wires were burned to the capital city. Half an hour later, five grinning athletes boarded the train for Helena, and such expressions as “pretty soft,” “pickings,” and “nothing to it,” floated through the car windows as the train pulled out.

The next night they returned quite crestfallen and gloomy. The score was—well, everybody knows how the figures stood. It is sufficient to say that the outlaw quintet had the small end of it and Jerry’s wrath was terrible to behold.

A meeting of the athletic committee was held just before vacation was over and the youth with the happy thought and the two who seconded the motion witnessed the basketball games of the season from the top row of seats at the south end of the gym.
THE HIGH COST OF FUSSING

FUSSING is defined by Noah Webster as “unnecessary or irritating activity, especially in small matters”.

Fussing is defined by the collegian as “necessary and highly pleasing activity, and it’s no small matter either”.

The activity known as “fussing” is part of the college curriculum. It is not taught in the class-room, but in the field of experience—and on the library steps.

The freshman comes to school full of paternal and maternal advice. He brings his pennants and his tennis racket, and a picture of his high school football team when he was a smashing half-back.

Three months in college and the pennants and pictures are forgotten. He doesn’t stay in the room long enough to look at them, for he spends his waking hours “fussing”. He meets her after class on the library steps, and they stroll about the campus until time for the next class, after which he escorts her home, and makes a “date” for the movie that evening, and for Pantages on Thursday night, which causes the old folks at home to wonder why Johnny has to buy a new book every week.

The next year he is wiser; he leaves his pennants at home, and hires a hall bedroom that has all the advantages of the higher priced hostelry of his freshman days—that is to say, it contains a bed, a bureau, and running water—which runs when he tips the dainty enamelled pitcher. The proprietor of his former boarding house suffers too—he quits her cold, and haunts the merchant lunch counters, the minute lunch counters, and several other kinds of counters where one can get a bowl of soup with a side dish of beans at a very small price.

This economy leaves him the plump sum of $10.00 a month for “fussing” purposes, and he smiles complacently as he draws his belt in two more holes and hurries to the phone to arrange a date for the Athletic Ball.

This function is a formal affair, and requires still greater economy on the part of our hero, but he arises to the emergency and postpones breakfast for ten days, which enables him to purchase a dress tie and collar and a pair of silk socks. He knows a retired waiter on the north side who owns a dress suit, and he borrows the pumps and shirt from a long-suffering friend from the old home town.

The evening of the dance arrives and he treats the girl of his dreams to a taxicab ride with his last dollar. As he pays the fare a confidential and subdued conversation is held with the
driver. “Listen old man”, he whispers, “regardless of what I yell to you later, don’t come back. Get me? Don’t come back!” The driver nods his head and grins—he’s not so stupid as he looks.

Then loudly—this time for the benefit of the girls, our hero bellows, “Hey, driver! Be sure to return for us after the dance”. Again the cabby nods his head.

The ball is over and the couple pace the gymnasium porch, and he asks her if she didn’t hear him distinctly tell that driver to be on hand when the dance was over. She answers yes, but she would enjoy walking home in that cool night air. As they part at the gate she tells him to be sure to call Sunday evening, and bring his ukulele.

As he crawls into bed the pillow-case is informed that the man who said “fussing” is a small matter is all wrong—all wrong.
ONCE UPON A TIME—before our time—a man embarked into a new business. He founded an institution dependent entirely upon the support of a liberal pocket-book, and called it a co-educational college.

For the housing of the student body it became necessary to erect a building suitable for the nightly confinement of the female of the species, so he built a dormitory, and called it the bird's nest.

Then came the task of filling the dorm. Small job this, for according to a treaty made in the year of 1650 with Pocahontas or Sitting Bull or somebody, all girls between the ages of eighteen and fifty are compelled to live in a dormitory.

The inside working of the plant is as follows: Each girl pays the required board—in advance—and retires to a room that has the torture chamber of the early Spanish Inquisition backed off the map. After spending an hour or two wondering why she left home to come to a place like this, some leather-lunged individual bellows through the hall that lunch is being served in the subway. She follows her guide through various halls and devious passages—used in escaping the Indians in the good old
days—and finally arrives in the mess-room below decks, where she joins a horde of strange beings in skirts who are devouring a combination of pork and hash and stew and stuff, served in a finger bowl.

After a day or two, the dear things become accustomed to the atmosphere of a submarine and drop into discussions of the horrid men on the campus. No man has been successfully graduated from college until his pedigree has had a thorough discussion at the dormitory tables. They count on their fingers the number of dollars he has spent on that girl who works for a living, or wonder how long his money will last, after which the girl who "knows" informs the assemblage that he just takes her out here for a pastime—he's really engaged to a girl in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. At this stage of the game the house mother throws a cast iron glance over said table, which is the cue to exit.

They then saunter gaily to the parlor, where they rehearse the latest steps. No particular reason is given for this form of amusement. When this method of cutting down weight proves ineffective, they spend their time sliding down the bannister, which is another relic of pioneer days, and it sways perilously as some of them come catapulting down.

As dusk falls, the men arrive on the scene. Those few who are in good with the house mother are admitted into the sanctum. The less fortunate must wait outside in the shadow of the trees, from where they make their wants known by a code of mysterious whistles. Anyway, the same youths who were raked over so mercilessly at the dinner table are now sweetly smiled upon as the maidens prepare to accompany them over the bridge to spend their hard-earned cash.

At 9:30 o'clock curfew is rung, and Heaven help the poor girl who is caught without the portals after that time. She is "campused", and no wild cries or tearful pleas can melt the heart of the dorm warden.

At 10 o'clock the lights begin to go out. A half hour later the building is enveloped in darkness, and what goes on after that, remains a mystery.
SURROUNDED as it is by a top and four walls, on which appear epigrams from Plato, Aristotle and a few more old-timers whose names are more than Greek to most people, we enter upon the gym floor.

To begin with, no student is successfully matriculated until he or she has graduated in all the latest dancing steps. Secondly, a fund out of the home allowance must be laid aside for the further mastering of these steps, the same to be paid into the treasury of one of the numerous classes or societies about the campus.

In order to start the year off right, the faculty put on a formal dress and give the first dance at the gym. This is done so that each student has an even chance to pick a dancing partner for the remainder of the year. If the floor is too crowded to dance, which usually is the case, and man or maid has not had an equal chance to discover the quality of dancing displayed by the other, the manager of the Sentinel announces a hop for the following Friday night, proceeds to pay for the ink it takes to print the book; admission $1.00.

Unlike every other event on the campus where a time is set for a beginning, the dance is advertised for 9, and begins promptly at eight fifty-five.
The programs are filled out by the male escorts who crowd at the south end of the hall and choose the girls they will dance with the remainder of the evening. If they are fraternity men, chances are the programs were filled out at the dinner table earlier in the evening.

At the other end of the hall, the girls are clustered, holding guessing games with one another. The object is to guess, if possible, who she shall draw for the sixth fox trot or the second extra. The girl who guesses right twice out of a possible twenty, wins the contest.

Any couple coming in late will have to dance a straight program unless, of course, they can leave each other’s company long enough to crave the boon of a dance with a chaperon.

Enter the fancy steppers. “And Solomon in all his glory was not envied as one of these”. They skid to the most prominent part of the arena and there perform as clever a bit of dancing as could be seen on any vaudeville stage. Given time enough, they will command the whole hall.

No dance at our gym is complete until some fellow has mixed his ticket. This always creates a scene, until the girl involved gallantly moves up and announces her willingness to sit out a dance. In nine cases out of nine she would rather sit it out anyhow.

At 11:59½ p. m. the orchestra plays that time-worn “Home, Sweet Home,” which in this case, happens to be “sweet dorm,” and the dancers all go out. When the hall is entirely empty, the chaperons lock up and go home.
WE WONDER as we go through four years of college life, why students crave the desire to become actors. In many, the interest becomes so aroused that they "day dream" of their names appearing on the large electric signs in front of the theater. What ever other ambitions they may have, are buried.

At least once or twice a year, some one suggests putting on a play. Immediately, a hundred of the most finished artists apply for the leading role. But playwrights have been unjust in their compositions and have provided but one of these "stage center" parts, so ninety-nine drop out and fifty more step up for the next best parts.

After spending a week or two choosing the minor characters, we form an A No. 1 company. The college paper says, "the best talent on the campus".
Each is given a part to memorize, which they don’t always do. It is much more convenient to have the manuscript in the hands while re-hearsing, as that part of the amateur’s anatomy is always in the way. At the end of six weeks they bring all the clothes they have of their own and all they can borrow, to some kind professor’s room, who loans it out for a dressing room. It is announced that the curtain will go up at 8, so the people start crowding in about 9. After the orchestra has played three or four overtures twice each, the play begins.

Now the gymnastics begin. It would seem funny to see a college play where the actors were not putting their hands in their pockets, or behind their backs, or swaying the body back and forth. This for the men. With the girls it is quite the opposite. How natural it looks for them to be resting the hands on the hips, or pulling a necklace out of shape, or taking the ring off the finger and putting it on again. This simple amusement never wears out, except of course if she doesn’t happen to own a ring. In that case, the hands wander to a nice clean handkerchief which gets rougher treatment before the first act is over, than the severest critic in the audience.

When the first act is over, and it always lasts an hour, a few of the most ardent admirers from down in front, flock back to the stage and pull something like this, “Why waste your time here dear; if I had your talent, etc., etc.”, or “You’re doing great old man, keep it up.” This is a good line of stuff, for if you notice, the second act always gets the bigger “hand.” The audience uses this means for hurrying the last curtain, which usually comes down after some announcer says, “that the last car leaves the outer gate at 12:00 a.m.”

The next day the play is the talk of the campus, and the now self-ordained “professional” struts around like a conquering hero, until he receives a slip which invites him to an audience with the head of the scholarship committee.