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**1938 NFBSS Handbook**

# The Happy Student

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Students connected with a trade such as our own may be divided into four main groups.

- A. Those who want to know just enough about their job to enable them to avoid the sack.
- B. Those who want to know everything about the trade in order that they may qualify for the best positions it affords.
- C. Those who want to know everything about the trade for no other reason than the acquisition of knowledge.
- D. Those who find life in general, and their trade in particular, so interesting, that they want to know all they possibly can.

It is obvious that members of class A will not be members of a Students' Society, and will not be readers of this book. All that needs to be said about them is that wherever they are met, their conversation to a better frame of mind should be attempted.

Those who belong to class B do not need converting, but they do need to be reminded that the ideal student should not be selfish, nor circumscribed in his manner of life. Personal ambition is a worthy thing but should not blind a man to the fact that he has social duties, that he has no right to expect to receive everything and give nothing to his trade and the community.

Those who belong to class C are to be pitted as well as blamed. Often they are priggish, they only join in general conversation to air their encyclopaedic knowledge; they are more fond of making experiments than of settling down to a steady job of work, often they are unable to give practical and commercial application to their theoretical knowledge, and they cause very nasty thoughts to arise in the mind of those with whom they

come in contact. Doubtless they deserve kicking, but they are as much to be pitied as blamed, for as they grow older they have a very thin time, they are interested only in one thing and can talk about nothing else, and because of this they are condemned to a narrow, miserable, existence.

D is the class in which every student should try to find a place. The class D student is similar in one respect to the class B student in that he is ambitious and seeks, by further knowledge and its practical application, to better his own position, but he does not use his knowledge for advancement in his trade alone. He is so interested in life generally and his trade in particular that he seeks to know all that he possibly can. Such a one in the baking trade is a happy student., for the baking trade is an admirable gateway to many of the greater interests in life.

A bakery students who learns all he needs to learn to practise his craft efficiently in these days, has of necessity received such an introduction to the realm of chemistry and physics, mechanics and art, that he finds it much easier to take an intelligent interest in the wider spheres of science, mechanics and art, than is the case with practitioners in many other callings.

It is worth our while to remember this. Life is a big thing if we only live it and not be content with a mere existence. The greater our knowledge the richer our will be our experiences. There is no room in an article like this to enter into overmuch detail, but consider two realms of fuller life into which a student may enter by way of his trade—literature and art. I mention these two rather than science and mechanics because their possibilities are not at first so easily apparent.

A certain knowledge of good English is required, how absurd it is for a student having travelled so far on an interesting road to stop there, when such delight awaits him if he will but proceed a little further. To know enough about the use of English to express oneself properly is to know enough to be able to appreciate what is good literature. Unfortunately, many of us jib at what is known as good literature. We want something that moves faster and has more appeal than style; sensation attracts more than wisdom., yet if we only read a little, every day if possible, of what we know to be good literature, we shall find ourselves gradually forming a taste for the best, and we shall be made free of what Keats termed, “The Realms of Gold.” We

shall then read the best literature with greater and deeper enjoyment than ever we can find in lesser books.

With art, our introduction may be even more rapid, because the rules that govern the proper decoration of a wedding cake are the rules that govern all art. If we are content simply to adopt a certain design because somebody else has pronounced it good we shall get nowhere, but once we have formed critical capacity and know why a certain design is good and another bad, then we can apply it to all forms of art and form our own judgement.

The last factor, the ability to form our own judgement, is the crux of the whole matter. R.L. Stevenson has said that, "To know what you prefer instead of humbly saying 'Amen' is what the word says you ought to prefer is to save your soul alive."

To have a live soul in a world containing so much worthy of appreciation, to have the ability to understand its marvels to some degree, to be able to share the thoughts and appreciate the work of the great men and women of all the centuries, this is to find happiness, and to fit oneself for a life of helpfulness, and is, in short, to be the happy student.