

Article ★ Story



Essay ★ Poetry

Nick chose an education before college

Professors should make some allowances for those students who have to work their way

By Billie Suing.

"I Feel So Sorry For Myself." I heard that song and I'm sure that is what got me started on this attempt to tell you how I feel about those people who make no allowances for students who are compelled to work for their college education.

Everyone knows that one mark of an educated person is that he makes preparations for the future, but how can he, without proper funds to give himself that education? It is because of this that so many students wish to earn their way thru college. Some do it by selling, and not always magazines or by working long hours during the summer months, or perhaps by working part of the day, or half of the night during the school year.

Did you know that 50 percent of the men and 33 percent of the women students in this university are employed in some office, shop, store or university office? That makes 41 percent, almost half, of the total enrollment who are part-time employees, yet a great many of the professors continue to run their classes, conferences and quiz sections according to their own conveniences, and seldom making any changes to accommodate the working student.

Work vs. college.

Some people have said very sarcastically that if the working students didn't like the way the school was run, why didn't they go somewhere else. Perhaps they would if they could afford it.

If you should subtract this large percentage of students from the total number in the university, which is 6,779, there would be approximately 4,000 students left. Just where would Nebraska stand as a state university if there were so few enrolled? Well, I think there are very few professors who care about anyone's standing but their own.

It seems to me that their main objective is to get through with classes and the grading of papers as soon as possible and go home. At least that is the way I have found it. Please don't misunderstand me, and think that I mean all of the teachers, but I'm just airing a pet peeve. Perhaps other part-time employees haven't found it difficult to arrange their classes and conferences nor found as many injustices as I have.

Individual problems.

There are thousands of problems for each student. I know, but I believe that Dick's case is unique. Dick's father had said that neither of his sons were going to waste his money by attending college. Both of the boys thought that he would change his mind and let them go. But Mr. — held to his first idea and refused to send the boys.

Furthermore, he refused to let them go, even if they did earn their own way, and since the boys had no mother, there was no one to take their part. Mr. — was stubborn, and when the boys showed a definite desire to enter college, he told them they could go, but they need not come back home again. The boys left, and they have not gone back.

Dick's problem.

Now Dick works from twelve midnight to eight in the morning, goes to school all morning, reads papers for a while, then tries to get a little sleep so that he can stay awake all night. Fortunately, he has a few hours at night when he does his studying. Perhaps you can't see why I'm telling this little incident. Why? Well, Dick was late for an eight o'clock class several mornings in one week. The professor, even after knowing Dick's reasons for his tardiness, refused to excuse him, and required him to read three hundred extra pages with a detailed out-

line each six weeks, to make up for his tardies. Justice? I wonder.

Then there is the professor who just couldn't arrange a quiz section at eight in the morning or after four in the afternoon every other week, so that several students who had to work all afternoon could be included. It was suggested that we drop the course, or come to the other scheduled quiz sections. Professor — said that it was too much to expect his reader to come at eight or stay until five, and it was certain that he didn't expect to. I cut nine classes to go to the scheduled quiz sections. What the others did, I don't know.

I want to throw things.

I guess it is because that I'm disappointed with all the things that I fail to praise anything, but when an instructor says that we don't have anything to do, that we don't know what real work is, I want to throw things at him. After spending a quarter of the class period telling how he had worked in stock companies all one winter, getting about four good nights of sleep a week, working and rehearsing from morning until night, I wanted to ask him if he had to worry about expenses, whether he had enough to buy the clothes and other necessities he needed, whether he had to pay more than half his check for board and room, and a good many other questions that we working students have to answer for ourselves.

More nervous strain.

I'll wager he could even save a little, instead of wondering where he could get another loan. Maybe he spent more hours awake than we do, but I don't think he went through as much nervous strain and worry as do the students who are going to school on just what they earn by working part time; and I believe there are a good many who don't have any other source of income than what they get from their part time jobs.

I feel sure that this professor has never had to work his way thru school, or he couldn't have possibly said we didn't know what work was.

Grades didn't measure his ability

By Frances Cash.

The clock struck ten. Nick Held swung his feet off the desk, banging the front legs of his chair to the floor. Replacing "The Interpretation of the Atom" beside "Specific and General Theories of Relativity" in the book ends, he snatched up some scattered papers and turned to go.

The door of the room burst open. A boy with a bush of mahogany-colored hair plunged over the foot of the bed and lay grinning up at Nick. The grin changed to a look of comic concern.

"For Gosh sakes, Einstein!" he yelled. "Are you skipping class again?"

"I was just leaving, Red. Forgot what time it was."

"You're going to catch it, Chum."

"Don't I know! Old Potts—Young ladies and gentlemen, the late Mr. Held. Your name is Held, is it not sir? I sometimes forget a face if I don't see it regularly," he mimicked. "Aw, what's the use?"

Nick slammed his books across the desk and slumped on a chair, his head between his hands.

No "F" minuses.

"Two percent off grade," Red suggested cheerfully.

"So what? They don't give 'F' minuses."

"Who said anything about F's?"

"A little slip in my mail."

"Incomplete."

"F!"

"Hell! You could bluff that World History with your eyes shut. Quote Potts a little from your friend Aristotle and tell him your theory of the fall of Rome. What's the matter with you?"

"There's a notebook—three references to an assignment, outlined in full. Busy work! I've got more important things—Hah! To hear me sputter you'd think I had brains enough to pass this high school stuff."

Take a drink.

"What you need, my son, is a big shot of fire-water. Einstein has been disagreeing with you again."

"You can hardly expect a moron to digest him."

"No, but you seem to manage."

"Me? I can't even pass in fresh-

man chemistry. I'm ready to go back to the plow."

"For one down-slip? Nuts!" Red flopped over and faced the wall. "Maybe you better go."

"One? Three?"

"Three?" The other sat up. "Now you're kidding. Not even college profs could be that dumb. Or could they?"

"Not, but I am. History, freshman comp, and chemistry."

Red screwed up his face and stared, then tried again. "You never study those things, Nick. It's always Einstein or some other heavy stuff you don't get credit for."

"I came here for an education! Since the school won't give it to me, I've got to get it for myself."

I'm too good.

"Now understand, Chum," said Red grinning wryly. "I don't object if you want to go and get an education, but you don't want to let it interfere with getting your degree."

Nick suppressed a smile. "I'm serious, Mug. Look here. In high school I got A's in chemistry. All summer I read and experimented on my own. I know this elementary material. I'm ready to take analytic and organic chemistry, but where does it get me? The registrar is kind. He excused me from taking five hours of work over the same ground. I only have to waste my time on three. I got good grades in English, and I like to read. You can't take everything in college, but I thought I'd like a course in modern literature. No go. All that I can get this year is freshman composition—required."

Too busy to read.

"I earned my A's in history and in Ec and Poli Sci. I used to keep up on the news until I got too busy writing outlines and doing silly themes; so I tried to take Political and Economic Backgrounds of the World War. Nothing doing. Pre-requisite, twelve hours in social sciences, restricted to majors and minors in the field. And they were right. That's what gets me. I can't even pass their prerequisite courses, much less the ones I want to take."

"The hell you say! If you'd just work a little at them—"

"Do you mean a little or all night and day? Well, I won't have

this to gripe about for long. I'm only waiting for the registrar to "Recommend" that I be suspended from my job. Then—no two ways about it—I'll have to pull for home."

Don't give up.

"Good Lord! You can't give up like that—a smart guy like you. You got to rattle round and make up your work. Don't think you're the only rat in this trap. You must happen to bigger. We all have to play along with the system. There isn't any other way. A fellow can't get any place without graduating, and They," he gestured vaguely toward the campus, "are the ones to say who gets the skins."

"Oh, I may as well go in and see them—while I wait. The chemistry is just an incomplete, and I might even be able to strike a deal with Carter about the English if I didn't decide to smear his pudgy puss. It would be too bad," Nick mused, "for them to flunk me out of here without ever knowing which of the sea of stupid faces belonged to Nicholas Held."

Nick Held pushed open the door. A soft little man was seated at the desk. The boy approached him.

"You wish to see me?" ventured Professor Carter.

"Yes, sir, about a down-slip."

"Oh, a down-slip." He straightened some papers at the side of his desk and eyed a pigeonhole full of grade books. "Well, in which courses?"

"Freshman composition, sir. The one-o'clock class."

Prof. Carter opened one of the books and looked up questioningly.

"Nick Held," said Nick.

"Held? Held?" He looked at the cover. "There is no Held. You are sure it is the one-o'clock section."

"Quite sure. You've been calling me 'Helm.'"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Helm. Here it is. I turned in a D for you."

The professor accused him over his glasses. "Your attitude is not good, Mr. Helm. Here are two, three, five assignments for which we have no record. Why is this?"

"Three of them were rejected, and two I never wrote."

"You were expected to rewrite all rejected papers."

"I rewrote two and got them back again."

"I do not suppose you have the papers."

He didn't understand.

"As a matter of fact, I brought two with me," said Nick, handing them to the older man.

Carter frowned at the titles. "For what assignments were these written?"

"The one on the structure of the atom was for a free choice of subjects; the other was supposed to be an account of an exciting experience during the summer."

"It looks like a scientific treatise to me."

"It's about an experiment I performed in—"

"An experiment! This was supposed to have been an exercise in narrative writing, Mr. Helm. How do you expect me to give you a grade on a chemistry paper? As for this other, the structure of the atom! You have obviously failed to grasp the first principle of our work, that written expression is intended to be read. Who, outside of a science class, cares to read about the structure of the atom?"

Nick stood in silence, clenching and unclenching his fists, his jaws clamped shut.

Too busy for him.

The little man looked at him a moment and turned to his desk. "I am extremely busy, Mr. Helm. I think you understand your difficulty now. You may come in if you have any questions. If not, I shall expect to see you when you have

(See COLLEGE, page 6)

The Saturday Letter To one I do not love

When I, a stranger, came
Within the town
To live,
You were the first
To call
Because you had a pumpkin
For sale
And, I, a salary.

You were the first
To look me up
When news leaked out
That I might need
A peek of potatoes,
But you did not come
When I was taken
Ill at night
And nearly died
Before the antibiotic
Worked.

And, you did not come
When there was rumor
That I might be
Fired because I did
Not put a certain
Scheming politician
On the back.

You did not come
When banks were closing doors
And all I had was
Flicked away
Before I had a chance
To pay my honest debts.

So,—
Don't spend ten cents
To buy a flower for me
When I am stretched out flat
Upon some slab,
With pups within my cheeks

To make some undergarment
Proud of all his handiwork.

Don't spend ten cents
To show the townspeople
How much you loved me,
Because I shall be
Watching you put on
Your hypocritical act
And I shall be
Remembering the twenty years

We two have lived within the
Corporate limits
Of the town
And that never in that time
You cared enough to come
Within my home
For a visit in the parlor
Or a friendly game of bridge
Upon the porch.

Save your dime
And buy a flower
For some poor guy
Who may think more
Of your publicity stunt
Or use it to buy
Yourself a drink
Or an imported cigar
Or a couple of chances
On the slot machine.

Save your dime
Because I am going
To look down upon you
And laugh at the
Pretentiousness of your
Cheap flourish.

There are some folks
Within the line
Drawn around this

Geographical spot
Upon one of the
Planets in the
Solar System
Who wept with me
In my sorrow
And laughed with me
In my joy
And who will have
A lonesome feeling
When I give up my
Citizenship.

And, these will not
Be spending dimes
For pretty flowers
To impress the passing throng
But will instead
Be lifting up my burdens
And giving strength to
My unfinished projects.

No,—
Don't spend ten cents
To buy a flower
To show the people
On the street
How sad you feel,
Because I'll haunt
You in the night
And walk with heavy step
Across the attic floor
Just to help you remember
That you are a
Mean, selfish, cruel
Little dried up shrimp.

Save your dime and buy
Some ghost insurance!

Very truly,
Raymond E. Manchester.