

### Harvard Episodes.\*

The following is simply one undergraduate's opinion of some sketches from Harvard life which he has been asked to review and is, of course submitted to the courtesy of the reader.

Charles Macomb Flandrau, in one modest sentence, dedicates *Harvard Episodes* in this manner: "Dear W. A. I have written about a very little corner of a very great place; but one that we knew very well and together."

That which most urges this tasty little volume to the reader's attention is the undisputable fact that the author has attempted nothing but which he thoroughly knows and feels.

Flandrau has, in these sketches, studied his student-subjects with the instinct of an embryologist. His results rather impress one that college life, at its best, is a life in embryo; yet a life which, stripped of a harmless artificiality, rings true.

There is something drifting through these *Episodes* which may be classified in the author's own words, "The stimulative spirit that so triumphantly inhibits Harvard from becoming a mere place of learning." From the glimmer of Harvard life we see through Flandrau's eyes, we can know to some extent the animus which gives a Harvard man the surety of knowing that the Harvard Spirit lives and will thrive without being nursed on enthusiasm of the tin horn and lung-stretching quality. We are made to feel, though, that the tin horns are not lacking, if occasion demands.

The omnipresent sense of self-acquired Ego which Flandrau's undergraduates show is sublime in its callous honesty; and one almost doubts if it could flourish in a college atmosphere less than two hundred years old.

From seven bold-stroked sketches, two stand forth and refuse to be forgotten, while a third bears you along "pleasant paths of frivolity" and makes you wish the leaves of the book had been cut when you picked it up.

*Wolcott the Magnificent* and *Wellington* almost merge into choice short stories; and *The Class Day Idyl* gives us a most refreshing picture of a badgered senior in the clutches of an ecstatic college widow.

Sears Wolcott—*The Magnificent*, is a bear, a boor, or a lion as the mood suits him. He

is magnificent in strong action, more so in repose, but simply brutal at all other times. Wolcott sees starving McGaw through the financial difficulties of his college course, and some highly entertaining complications are woven by McGaw's ignorance of the source of the welcome dollars, although he has been praying fervently for the soul of the man who pulled him out of his poverty-hole.

Wolcott would never have given McGaw a dollar if he had not been coaxed into the game by Haydock, much as an engineer coaxes speed from a locomotive.

Haydock is the one purposeful gentleman among all the men. Anything from an unknown dog to a football hero or a prize orator could bring his troubles to Haydock; yet to use a word of his, he does not "drool" over the things he cares the most for.

In the story of *Wellington*, the boy who died unknown to his class mates, Haydock is supreme and the incidents arising from taking his mother to the *Memorial* gives some very pretty effects. There is some very delicate workmanship in *Wellington* and a pathos that is beautiful.

To sum up, I would say the book is well worth reading, if for no other reason than to meet *Wolcott The Magnificent* and to listen to Haydock talk to his mother in *Wellington*.

The style of the writer is clean, with but few tricks. He gives you the usual clouds of tobacco smoke and meerschaum pipes, mixed with cigarettes, supposed by some to be artistically necessary to the Yale and Harvard man who is in good form.

He gives you, also, a few vivid pictures of sporty freshman who get drunk with great gusto.

At the worst, however, his Harvard men are never anything more disagreeable than naughty boys; and they are usually clean and wholesome.

Even most of those who are damned into the class of the hopelessly mediocre are clean fellows who will some day be clean men.

We feel when we have finished the book, that it is distinctly a Yankee production.

J. A. SARGENT.

\**Harvard Episodes*, by Charles Macomb Flandrau, Price \$1.25. Copeland & Day, Publishers, Boston.