What Does it Take to Make a Popular Student?

By EMILY ALLEN

When one thinks about the popularity of a high school student, he sets down formulas and tests that all students must stand—the students of college courses, the students of life. There may be a variety of opinions concerning the question, but everybody seems settled and agreed on the fact that he must be a thoroughbred sportsman. As our Mr. Mac would say, we speak collectively in masculine terms, because the brethren always embrace the sistern.

School is a game which must be played by the ambitious before he can reach that goal that beckons at him so enticingly. There are rules and regulations, penalties and rewards; there must be put into it the amount of labor equal to our expectations of gain; whether we play a sportsmanlike game or a poor, cheating game is entirely in our hands. Thus it happens that there are as many different degrees of sincerity and seriousness as there are students. The spirit in which each pupil advances is the true calculation of his popularity or unpopularity. One has yet to find a student who is judged popular who could, even if he would, cheat or do things to the detriment of the other students in the great play. The sporting blood will always bring the boy or girl in whose veins it flows, to the very front rank. Not necessarily, however, does the said student lead his class in achievements or accomplishments. The type and tenor of his ambitions lead the student body to choose him.

Aside from this fact, we must find some quality in our favored friend to rank him first in the esteem of the school. There is never so humble a quality which may not find its zenith in the makeup of some individual, combining and setting off his characteristics. Just as a large manufacturing company choses a slogan for its product, so a wise scholar will choose some worthy point of his personality and develop it, so that it may speak for his being liked.

Not always do we find a student unanimously liked. Perhaps the very reason for his popularity is the fact that he has a mind of his own, and does not deny the expressions of that mind in his personality. As one sage so aptly puts it:

"He never makes a friend who never makes a foe."

One rarely expects one's foe to advance one's standing, and surely should we not make great friendships, although we may incur the dislike of certain others, our sojourn with our associates throughout our school days would be just to that extent a failure. So we see that if we make loving friends, great, helpful friends, who are attracted by the best that's in us, we have no fear of the foes who see nothing to respect in our beings.

There has been an idea expressed that the student who fits well into his place, does the work that is expected of him, enjoys the privileges and obeys the rules of the school is the one to whom popularity comes. Yet, to my notion, no one is less noticed. He is always where he is wanted, is not always where he is not wanted—in fact he attracts so little attention that he does not arouse the feelings of his companions one way or the other. Just as a great genius is not noticed until he is missed among the ranks of his fellow-men, the student of that type escapes both kinds of criticism, yet does not enter irrevocably into the hearts and minds of all his friends.

On the other hand, a student who revels in conspicuous ostentations of his so-called clever antics, who is always at the bottom of "cute" doings, who demonstrates his powers with those who profess to admire him, is not one who cinches the popularity of the school, any more than the one who sits demurely in the corner of school life, envying and coveting the bravado and audacity of the former student. He must be moderate in his actions who hopes for success in the game.

There is even a difference between the "goodfellow" and the sportsman. Not a single student would really stand up for another of this type even if he himself has persuaded and dared him to do the things that do not go to make up respect and esteem from all people. There are some, even, who revel in the ruin of boys' chances in the game, deserting him in the midst of an act planned for them both, but liable to get them both into serious trouble.

Some author has said, "Never be the first to laugh nor the last." If one has good, estimable qualities they will be discovered and appreciated; if one has not, no amount of persuasion, no amount of "showing off", will bring the student body to the belief that he is the most popular student.

In conclusion, we decide that it is the one who is natural, simple and unostentatious in his dealings and habits, who has real sportsmanship and honorable qualities in his make-up, that cannot escape public notice, that is the perpetrator of popularity and respect.