

What Junior High School Did For Us

by Josephine Feldmark, 9B9

When we look upon our schooling, we realize that there are three steps to the process of education: elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school. We have already gone two steps of the way, the two steps that prepare us for the senior high school.

Elementary school was actually a workroom to which we were sent to learn the three 'r's and to gain that fundamental knowledge necessary to all learning. Besides giving us an outlet for our active minds, it was the artist that began molding the clay of our characters. We soon learned that we were one of a group, and must sometimes give up our own whims to satisfy the desires of other boys and girls, who were, perhaps, as selfish as we. We heard the opinions and ideas of others, developed better tastes, and grew more broadminded. In the higher grades, some of us were given special positions on the safety patrol, and told that we must set a good example for the younger children.

When we were about to graduate, fantastic stories regarding the new school of which we were to be students, reached us. Much was told of strange happenings and of heavy new responsibilities to be placed upon our inexperienced shoulders. We came to regard our future life with fear and bewilderment. "it was," we thought, "like passing from a beautiful flowered meadow into a dark endless tunnel, with nothing but hard work ahead of us."

Fortunately, we soon discovered, the tunnel had an end, and the fields and meadows were far more fascinating than those we had left behind.

At first, we were awed at the beauty and size of the new building, and stood regarding it with a feeling of respect and reverence. When we entered the school, this feeling grew as we silently admired the beautiful marble stairway and large auditorium. Many of us momentarily forgot the fears that had lately been possessing us. What astonished us mostly was the ease and poise with which the older pupils conducted themselves. Was it possible that we, also, were to become so carefree? One week, however, sufficed to prove to us that this was so. The new freedoms and not-too-heavy responsibilities bestowed upon us gave us a feeling of importance that greatly pleased us. A great new world of art, music, literature, science, and languages was slowly presented to us. There was plenty to interest everybody. Each new pupil found himself a Columbus with the school as his America. With satisfaction in his heart, he began to grasp the contents of the new world slowly opening before him. Each one selected his favorite subjects and looked forward to these with pleasure and anticipation. Then, also, there were the new friendships with teachers and other students which added greatly to the pleasant school life.

Before long we were looking at everything through different eyes, in a more sensible and serious way. We developed a pride and loyalty toward school, and found ourselves missing elementary school less. We chose our friends with more consideration and care, and by the time the first term was over, every trace of fear had vanished. With confidence we looked to the future. We were in a whirlpool of pleasure and interest from which we had no desire to escape.

In 7B, clubs were introduced. These gave each student a chance to choose fifteen fields of activity which would help him decide upon a vocation of aid him in selecting a course.

About this time a remarkable change came over the behavior of the majority of students. Loud voices were controlled, consideration and tolerance became eminent. With new zeal they put themselves into their work, and competed with each other in a friendly rivalry. Now the question was, "How much can I learn?" The desire for knowledge had begun. It soon became apparent that other changes were taking place. Some of us grew up suddenly, others slowly, yet all soon found themselves with too much energy. In most cases, the many activities of the school offered an appropriate outlet. Some of the students found it in the after-school gym groups; others by expressing themselves in public; still others found their classmates a sounding board for their ever-changing ideas. Some vented their childish anger on annoyed pupils, and felt a certain self-satisfaction in doing so. Thanks, however, to the patient, experienced teachers of the faculty, these sudden outbursts were curbed in a wise, understanding manner.

Thus, we have passed through junior high school, through those sunny meadows which we had so feared to enter. Of course, there have been rainstorms as well as cheerful sunshine, but these have been beneficial experiences. Now we have reached the end of our junior high school years. We are now 9B's and have, added to our responsibilities, one which the oldest students of a school must always carry: to set a good example to the younger pupils, who all look up to us. We do our best to treat the 7A's with as much consideration as possible, remembering our own plight when we were in the same position.

We look forward, on this occasion, with hope and expectation to the new life before us. We realize that this advancement in our education will be slightly different from junior high school days. It will bring us one step closer to a time when we will be the law-abiding, self-respecting, independent citizens of America.