

WILLIAMS COLLEGE ARCHIVES
SOUTHWORTH APT. #3
96 SCHOOL STREET
WILLIAMSTOWN, MA 01267

PP, HAG, GC, Bx 21

October 30, 1924.

Mrs. Alfred B. Phillips,
Care of Mrs. C.D. Baker,
Chateau Apartments,
Jackson Heights, L.I., N.Y.

My dear Mrs. Phillips:

Through Mr. Alden I learn that you are seriously concerned because of reports that have come to you to the effect that Williams is a "rich man's college" and that the students here lead a "very fast life". I can well understand the anxiety that report of this kind must bring to parents who have entered their sons, as you have done, at Williams. Concerning false report it has always been my rule to remain silent, appreciating the utter uselessness of attempting to deny that which is asserted through envy or any other unworthy motive and believing that the surest answer is found in practising the virtues denied. Moreover, denial is something in the nature of an intrusion unless one's opinion is asked. Nevertheless, I am led by Mr. Alden's ~~letter~~ to write you directly concerning certain matters which may enable you to get at the facts about Williams. If you have not already seen it, let me commend to your attention an article in the September Atlantic entitled "Ferguson Rex by '90". While I have not been definitely so informed by the author I am quite sure that it was written by a member of the class of '90 who spent several weeks here last year and in the sketch clearly intends to point to Williams in spite of certain superficial appearances to the contrary, probably thrown in to conceal the identity of the place. It is a fair picture of the character of Williams today as contrasted with the Williams of '81-'85 when I knew it as an undergraduate. A novel much read nowadays by undergraduates, "The Plastic Age" is as far as possible from portraying life at Williams. The most that can be said

for "The Plastic Age" as a picture is that it touches the low spots and is not characteristic.

I have often had opportunity to contrast life at Williams today and in former times with classmates who like myself have sent their sons to Williams and we are agreed that Williams is in every respect a better place than it was forty years ago -- and we thought it excellent then. It may help you to know that our three sons, graduating from Williams in the classes of '11, '13, and '17 at the same allowance that my brother James and I had in the '80s. Since the War the average has doubtless gone up, although the scale of living is the same. A week or two ago a student called upon me for assistance. His father is dead, his mother is supporting herself, and is able to give him about \$300. a year. He has a scholarship and works during his vacation periods, taking also such work as he can secure here. In response to my inquiry he told me that he spent all told about \$700. during the college year. This, I presume, would represent about the low end of the scale of expenses, the average being from \$1200. to \$1500. In each of our fraternities are members earning their way through in whole or in part. Several years ago I made a personal inquiry and found that the number varied from one up to eight so working their way through in each of the fraternities.

Another indication of how the matter stands is reflected in our scholarship funds. Gifts for scholarships have been generous. We have an income from all sources applicable to scholarships amounting to about \$10,000, including prizes. There was a period before the War when we did not need all of the scholarship funds but since the War we have regularly run over the amount and now spend about \$6000. more on account of scholarships than we receive.

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College problems are many and serious but at Williams I am satisfied that the questions above referred to are among the least of our difficulties. You may find it of assistance to see the administrative number of our Bulletin which has just come to hand and which I am sending under separate cover.

Trusting that my letter will not appear to you to be an intrusion, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

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