

patible with efficiency. Is it then, very difficult for us to estimate the efficiency of a professor who tries to teach three times this amount? There is at present a divergence of opinion on the matter of giving the students English textbooks, or merely lectures on all subjects by the teachers without any text in the hands of the students. In view of the students' poor comprehension of English, which seems weaker each year, coupled with their open reluctance to spend time in outside preparation, the balance is coming to favor the use of lectures only. Of course, the horrifying weaknesses and tragic results of this method are easily apparent; for obviously few if any college professors can present a subject as thoroughly, expansively and objectively as a textbook which may have been the result of years of research. . . . a feat rendered even more impossible for professors teaching thirty or more hours per week. Though, to be sure, textbooks are generally written for Western students and do not fit conditions as met in China without some adjustment such as can only be made by an intelligent and analytic teacher who has the time to devote to this important phase of his class work.

These are the facts that will greet any conscientious observer who will take the time and trouble to make inquiries. For the only one university in the Peiping area which is not liable for all or some of these major criticisms is one conducted on the plan of colleges in the West as it is maintained by Western money. All these are facts, which, if allowed to continue, cannot other than mark the death knell for all China's attempts to be able to throw off her shackles and take her place among the nations of the world. Viewed as such, the problem of righting conditions in our universities is paramount, one of the most crucial which confronts us; for in its solutions is bound irretrievably the unravelling of so many other difficulties.

The first essential, if we honestly would attempt to better conditions, would be to reduce the number of universities. It is sheer waste to have so many in one vicinity that a spirit of rivalry develops, as shown in Peiping. If there were fewer, it would be possible that they should all be supervised regularly and carefully by competent authorities, that those few could enjoy better plants, laboratories, libraries etc. This present basis of estimating education on a quantitative instead of a qualitative basis must be thrown in the discard. Higher standards must be demanded of teachers, with a satisfactory salary for those who qualify so that they will not be tempted toward outside work to increase their income. If necessary, a system of teachers' examinations might be installed if there is no other means of determining those who have the highest qualifications. Problems of student attendance, student load of subjects, preparation, fair grading should be regulated the same in all universities, and rules regarding the enforcement of these regulations should be strict and undeviating. In order to reach any degree of efficiency, universities must cut loose from all forms of local and national politics. What can any institution be expected

to achieve, when like weathercocks, its entire staff changes with all political winds?

If China would erase this scandal constituted by the conditions apparent in the universities, there must be allotted a definite university budget, in the bank instead of on paper, which can never be touched for any other purpose than that of higher education. Teachers and equipment must no longer be allowed to suffer when the government is in arrears for warfare or other types of expenditure.

The Second National Educational Conference which met in April of this year seemed vaguely to be aware of all the evils attendant upon the laxness of discipline and looseness of standards demanded by the universities. But they faced the situation with flowery words which had the effect of making one doubt the sincerity of their determination to eradicate these wrongs. Time alone will show how effective will be the twenty-year plan drawn up by this group and whether it will deal with the problems which are so apparently undermining the future of the nations. Let us not forget that conditions tend to grow better or worse in preference to remaining at a standstill; it is widely recognised that higher education has been on the downward grade for the past five or six years; this is a strong indictment and one which can only be relieved if we face the future with a determination that the youth of China shall not lag behind that of other nations in education for service.

THE LITTLE CRITIC

Edited by Lin Yutang

Mr. Chun Tseng-ku wrote an article on "Shanghai, the Terrible City," published in *The China Critic* some time ago. So far as I can remember, Mr. Chuan was making a rather detailed and learned comparison between Shanghai of today and Alexandria in the early centuries of the Christian era. I may be wrong in this, but I vaguely remember that Alexandria was born some time before Christ, and that once upon a time there was a Christian hermit who wanted to convert a pagan courtesan called Thais in Alexandria, but fought such a bad fight with the devil and the flesh that he died in the arms of Thais and outside the gate or gates (whichever it may be) of Heaven. So my chronology must be right: there was an Alexandria in the time of the early Christian hermits. Also, I must be right in thinking that Alexandria was situated somewhere in Egypt on the mouth of the Nile, as Shanghai is now situated on the dirty Whangpoo. There is some use of middle school teaching of geography after all.

But I must not digress. I wanted to write on the terrible city, of which Mr. Chuan speaks. Shanghai is terrible, very terrible. Shanghai is terrible in her strange mixture of eastern and western vulgarity, in her superficial refinements, in her naked and unmasked worship

of Mammon, in her emptiness, commonness, and bad taste. She is terrible in her denaturalized women, dehumanized coolies, devitalized newspapers, decapitalized banks, and denationalized creatures. She is terrible in her greatness as well in her weakness, terrible in her monstrosities, perversities and inanities, terrible in her joys and follies, and in her tears, bitterness and degradation, terrible in her vast immutable stone edifices that rear their heads high on the Bund and the abject huts of creatures subsisting on their discoveries from refuse cans. Mr. Chuan might have spared his historical learning in proving his ~~these~~: a glance at the stupid and vulgar faces gathered at a Majestic tea-dance would convince anybody.

In fact, one might sing a hymn to the Great Terrible City in the following fashion:—

O Great and Inscrutable City. Thrice praise to thy greatness and to thy inscrutability!

Thrice praise to the city renowned for her copper odour and her fat, oily bankers, with green-tinted skins and sticky fingers;

To the city of hugging flesh and dancing flesh, of flat-chested ladies fed on jin-sen soup and doves'-nest congee, and still looking anemic and weary of life, in spite of their jin-sen soup and doves'-nest congee;

To the city of eating flesh and sleeping flesh, of ladies with spring bamboo-shoot feet and willow waists, rougy faces and yellow teeth, cackling "He! he! he!" like monkeys from their cradles to their graves;

To the city of running flesh and kowtowing flesh, of hotel-boys with shining, slippery heads and slipperier manners, who minister to the fat, oily bankers with green-tinted skins and sticky fingers and to the hugging flesh and dancing flesh with rougy cheeks and yellow teeth;

Great and inscrutable art thou!

In the still hours of the night, one conjureth up a picture of thy monstrosities; in the muddy stream of human traffic on Nanking Road, muddier than the muddy fish of muddy Whangpoo; one thinketh of thy greatness also;

One thinketh of thy successful, pien-pien-bellied merchants, and forgeteth whether they are Italian, French, Russian, English or Chinese;

One thinketh of thy masseuses, naked dancers, Carlo Garcias, and thy Foochow Road sing-song houses;

Of thy retired tao-tai and tufei and magistrates and generals, with tortoise-shell spectacles and roof-shaped moustaches, trying to court sing-song girls with their loot, and find their love repulsed and their sexual hunger still unappeased after months of courtship;

Of the idiotic and half-witted sons of these retired tao-tai and generals, who help to rid them of their ill-begotten and sin-smelling wealth;

Of thy wealthy, degenerate opium-smokers who parade the streets in Packard eights, guarded by robust well-fed, uniformed Russians;

Of thy Whangpoo daily receiving its quota of would-be suicides, of thy dancing-girls and heart-broken young men mingling with the muddy Whangpoo fish;

Of thy Majestic tea-balls, where vulgarity gathers to meet vulgarity and see how vulgarity dresses;

Of thy dog-races, where white women in V-shaped evening dress mingle merrily and rub shoulders with yellow shop apprentices and grey dogs and pink-eyed rabbits;

Of thy nouveaux riches lost and giddy in the whirlpool of parties and rides, millionaires who order the hotel-boys about like lieutenant-colonels and eat their soup with their knives;

Of thy nouveaux modernes, intoxicated by a few phrases of yang-ching-pang pidgin and never letting an opportunity slip for saying "many thanks" and "excuse me" to you;

Of thy girl students perched astride their baggage on the rickshaws, with rolled socks and hats on which perch Robin Redbreasts and chrysanthemums of different colours;

Of thy haughty, ungentlemanly foreigners, so haughty and ungentlemanly that one knows where they belong in their own countries—men with a moderate head, but stiff boots and strong-calf-muscles, who also make good use of their stiff boots and strong calf-muscles—

Men who give large sized tips and complain of exorbitant prices, who feel legitimately aggrieved and insulted when people fail to understand their native language;

One thinketh and wondereth of these things and faileth to comprehend their whence or their whither.

O thou city that surpasseth our understanding! How impressive are thy emptiness and thy commonness and thy bad taste!

Thou city of retired brigands, officials and generals and cheats, infested with brigands, officials and generals, and cheats who have not yet made their fortunes!

O thou the safest place in China to live in, where even thy beggars are dishonest!