

necessarily because we agree with his views, but because it shows what one section of the Chinese students are thinking of the Fascist movement in general, and of the application of Fascism to China in particular.

The article on Mongolia written by a student of a local university is also worthy of notice, because it embodies his observations made on a trip to Mongolia. That students such as he should seek to know the conditions of the country by travel proves definitely the accusation that the best of them are only bookworms is quite unfounded.

Both Mr. Liu and Mr. Zia have written on what they think of their life work, and what they have said ought to give our educationalists much food for thought. We

are especially impressed by what Mr. Zia said in the concluding paragraph of his article that "the great truth of today is that there will be no particular favor shown to the individual, although there is every hope for the rising generation as a whole." In other words, as Mr. Zia said, "when the nation is being built the citizens have to sacrifice themselves" and so long as we are willing to do that—so long as we are unselfish—we would "remain young". A "great truth" indeed!—but how many of us realize it and act accordingly? The trouble with most of us is that we are growing old. We have lost our ideals, and no longer look beyond the horizon. It is time therefore that we let the young speak for themselves.

Complaints Of A College Graduate

By E. E. LIU (柳陸祺)

SOME days ago, I called upon one of my old chums in school time and had a very pleasant talk with him about our life after graduation. We found ourselves in perfect sympathy with each other. It had never occurred to me before that a man like him who was in every respect one of the celebrated students in our university should also find himself so out of tune with society as I am. Besides one or two points which may be considered as entirely personal, nearly all what he said rang true and realistic to me as something which had long been a weight upon my mind but for which I had not been able to find an outlet. Upon returning home after our tête-à-tête, I sat alone for one hour or so to pore over all what had been just exchanged between us. It suddenly dawned upon me that that something we hit upon regarding our life and experience after leaving our alma mater may not be just a lament of two peevish young men poured on each other to while away their dull hours, but should be of universal interest to hundreds and thousands of young men and women whose stream of life runs the same course as ours. Thereupon, I determined to write it down and have it published somewhere. In this poorly eventful age of our history when people are now engaged in tackling with all big and perplexing problems of vital and fundamental importance, I must be singularly sanguine indeed in hoping anybody's lending an ear to the complaints of just a college graduate. However, I can count on another hope to compensate me. That is, if these complaints ever reach the ear of those who are now college students or were once college students and stir up an echo in the bottom of their hearts, I think my purpose in writing this article will be more than fulfilled.

After a solemn and impressive ceremony known by the name of Commencement in the social hall of my alma mater, I took off the cumbersome cape and gown which I had hired with five dollars just for the occasion and stepped out from the shelter of an institution, where-in I had known peace and comfort for four good years, with nothing but a diploma in hand to "commence" my

career in that wild and unknown world outside which goes by the vague name of society. The first thing I could possibly do was certainly to return home where I intended to take a short rest after all the buzz and fuss of my graduation, and then I would embark in full readiness on my life adventure with that bit of knowledge and wisdom that I believed to be in me. You might be curious to know what knowledge or wisdom do I here refer to. To this, I may reply that I was a student majored in English literature and had duly swallowed up a good part of the undying works of such illustrious names as Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Scott, Dickens, Thackeray and many others that my school library could boast of. I was never sure whether all what I had learned from the above masters were of any worldly value and would prove of much use to me in cutting for myself a figure in this world. The thought had hitherto never entered my head. But since I breathed for so many years in such sanctified atmosphere amid this constellation of great men who constitute the chief glory of England, and was even once or twice hinted at by my professor that there was actually something in me which might be turned into good account if I knew only how to take good care of it, I was naturally imbibed with a sense of self-respect and complacency, and was determined to do something unusual and formidable for my country, although I did not know exactly what. However, either because I failed to find out that something for me to do, or because that something would not have anything to do with me, which meant no difference to me, my stay at home which was intended to be only a short rest for refreshing my spirits threatened to extend into an infinite length of dull and monotonous home life with no prospect of change whatsoever to cheer my future. I waited and waited in sheer bewilderment as you might suppose; but, in vain. Friends wrote me letters first upbraiding me for my inaction and retirement, and then reminding me of the importance of having an employment by a young man like me; and even some of my near relatives began to wonder what a college graduate was capable of doing after all. But the greatest pity was that after months of disappointment, I saw

myself helplessly sink into insignificance, if not humiliation, and my life career, or adventure, or whatever I might have called it, dwindled down and reduced into the simple and dire necessity of "looking for a job!" And presently, a job I did find, thanks to the help of a professor who has never failed to show me kindness both before and after my graduation. But here the real tragedy begins!

The job I earned is a nice one, stable and paying me handsomely, such as a moderate college graduate today would not even dare to expect. The work assigned to me is simple and easy to handle, being a few translations of Chinese documents into English every day and some other routines which, I believe, may well be entrusted to a child about thirteen once he be taught with the trick. However, it is precisely in this that I begin to realize how disqualified I am even to do such a simple job like mine.

Being a student of English literature, and naturally more or less acquainted with such prose styles as those of Lamb, Hazlitt and Stevenson, I was certainly conscious of the importance of cultivating a good personal style. I never wrote anything but with some of the great masters in mind as my model. And when in school, I do flatter myself to acknowledge, I was even much encouraged by my tutors. However, in applying my personal style to the translation of documents, I made the greatest blunder in the world. I remember when my first translation was handed in, my chief instantly sent me into his room, and asking me to stand beside him, he proceeded to perform what I choose to call a relentless massacre right before my eyes by dotting off whole passages which contained undoubtedly the flower of my imagination, mangling some of my choicest expressions and words and making most of my periodical sentences loose, and then returned the whole thing to me for re-writing with every sentence on it bleeding in silent agony and my very heart not far from it. That an office clerk should translate an official despatch with such ease and freedom like an essayist is now even to myself a broad joke. Being little used, as I then was, to the ways of living outside of my school boundary and eventually much in the dark about all worldly things, I could not bear the brunt of the whole thing with equanimity. But, I was by no means a slow man, as you might call me, and therefore lost no time in digging up the old files in my office in order to learn for myself what "office English" should read like. The thing, as I found out, was quite simple and flat. If I be allowed to use here a metaphor, in which I seldomly indulge now, the secret is just to discard the gorgeous and fancy adornments of a literati and satisfy myself with the humble and plain clothing of an office clerk. The process was quite simple; and through which I was bound to go, however reluctant I may be. Now, my chief is quite contented with my translations; but God knows how much I have sacrificed for that! The names of Shakespeare, Milton, etc. are no more to me. All what I care about is the

documentary style with its handful of indispensable terms and formalities which are as dry as dust. There is no allowance for any diversion or digression that might be prompted by my personal whims; but there are a set of rules and by-laws to which I must give precedence. I must feed on the same vocabulary, the same rhetoric and almost the same subject matter for hundreds and thousands of times over without allowing the least modification in my diet. And naturally he who feeds on the same foods for hundreds and thousands of times over without change kills his appetite, if not his dear life. I am sure that that "something" in me which my professor alluded to and which has ever been looked upon by myself as a cause for self-importance will surely die of starvation. If I lay the whole truth before you, it is something like this: this formal and stereotyped "office English" to which I am recently addicted has taken so much possession of me that I am pretty certain that the day is not far when I shall hardly be able to converse or write a single sentence without the danger of slipping into this dry and jejune course of documentary style.

The next thing I want to dwell on here is the boredom of office routine. I believe no one can have a fair, accurate notion of what an office routine is like without running through the gauntlet himself. An office routine is bound to be simple and direct, and yet, (though it may sound paratological to say so), it is precisely on the simple and direct that we so often tumble ourselves. A simple and direct thing needs no brain. That is the worst point. If you arouse every tissue in your brain to tackle with a mathematical problem or to scan an obscure stanza of Browning, you might either find the disappointment in failure or be rewarded with the pleasure of a success. Both are good stimulus and incentive to a sane-minded person. But in doing office routine, you get none of that. If you wade through it safe and sound, you know the thing is simple and flat, and every fool can do that as good as yourself; and if you suffer a slip ever and anon, you tell yourself it is entirely due to your carelessness but has nothing to do with your ability. All day long, you find yourself in a mental stupor and a peculiar impersonal mood such as we usually have during the long and drowsy summer afternoons while our senses are hovering between sleep and waking. I personally have always this peculiar belief that strictly speaking office routine should belong to the realm of manual labour instead of brain work. A competent and efficient office clerk should, in my opinion, handle his routines with dexterity and precision in motion and nothing else. Take, for instance, the case of a professional typist. There is certainly no need of thinking or reasoning, but just following the quick and in promptu dictates of his habit, the fingers of a typist work wonders with the same facility and precision like a piece of machinery. Some brain work is undoubtedly needed in learning to use the different parts of the typewriter, just as much is needed by a carpenter in learning how to wield his hammer and

saw; and yet once he has undergone this elementary training, off, he goes full-fledged like any typist in the world. The only formula to guide an office clerk is patience plus constant practice. You do the same thing in the same way and with the same good humour for hundred and thousand times over, and then you acquire a sort of habit by such constant practice that your body and soul become, so to speak, immersed with the desk routine, and ultimately your work become part of you and you part of your work. Then, and only then, you are an out-and-out office clerk! One of my colleagues who can boast of twenty years of office experience once told me his trick in doing office work. "Suppose," he said, "my work is to make an entry of account at three books A, B, and C. The first thing I do is to set up an order in making these entries which I shall follow as a rule with an iron will. I'll go first from book A, second to book B and then third to book C; and I know no other way about it. I stick to my rule with such stubbornness that I simply won't talk, won't drink and won't eat until I am through with it in the right order safely and happily. Then after months or years of training, I'll close my eyes and yet work as unmistakably as a machine. A new hand might think it disgraceful to reduce himself to the status of machinery, and might think it not incompatible to allow himself a little indulgence within possible bounds. He'll say: 'I'll follow the order A.B.C. on Monday, and then change it to B.A.C. on Tuesday, and again to C.A.B. on Wednesday and so on. So long I don't slip over any of these books, you may leave me free to play acrobats with the trio in as many forms as I care.' Now, look here, in nine cases out of ten, this man is sure to commit errors either from negligence or sheer forgetfulness." And then he added with an ugly leer: "The truth is this: while a man so often commits mistakes, a machine never does." How deep does this sally cut into my heart! And what a poor picture does this make of me who fail to become a competent clerk just because I refuse to reduce myself to a machine!

Now, I have laid before you the whole case. The points raised here are certainly too commonplace to arouse anybody's interest. The general unfitness of one's learning to one's employment is just such little ironies of life that no one is likely to be much concerned about it in this queer world of ours. A student of economics who can quote at random from Adam Smith, Ricardo and Karl Marx is called upon to keep a ledger and balance the credit and debt. A master of science, who has gone through the most advanced courses of mathematics where the subtle relations of figures are said to be evaporating

into abstract philosophy, is planted to a desk to make endless blunders in simple addition and subtraction. The thing which puzzles me is the diametrically opposed views of life held by people in school and those outside of it. In one place, we are taught with theories, "isms" and all abstract reasonings that savor of profound learning and scholarship; while in the other, we are hurled headlong into the quagmire of everyday trivialities and a thousand and one odds and ends which we look down upon. The greatest as well as the most difficult task confronting a college graduate after leaving his school is how to adapt himself to the new surroundings in order to fulfill the new demands for which he is not well-prepared. I personally have heard many people complain, as though they can not understand why, that a college graduate often proves to be no match to an average clerk of middle school education or even of no school education at all in doing clerical works. I think there is nothing to be wondered at. It is because the college students are never prepared for clerical work, although almost one out of three goes to office after graduation. Then, is the college graduate to blame for that? Of course not. Then, is college education itself to blame? I think not. Then, is society generally to blame? I think not either. Then, after all, who is to blame? I think that would be too complicated a problem for me to solve. Now, to return to my case, I can assure you that I shall soon go on nicely with my job and have even now such ambition as to become someday a third-rate or fourth-rate office clerk. Since I know something about Darwin's theory of the "survival of the fittest", and since my lot is to be condemned to "the drudgery of the desk's dead wood", to borrow a phrase from Lamb if I remember it correctly, I shall pluck up my spirit and stick to my desk body and soul in order to keep at least on level with, if not luckily outrival, those of my colleagues who have the advantage of not having received any college education.

Last but not least, I beg to harbour my sincere regret to my dear readers for laying bare my trouble to you and doing nothing else. You might have the right to demand an answer as to what can be the purpose of my making these complaints to you. To this, I reply as follows. I hope those of you who are already well along in office life will find something here to laugh at, although nothing to learn; and those who are just fresh from school as I am will bear your present plight with better humour on account of my company; and those who are still in school will profit from my experience and know how to get yourselves better prepared.

Thoughts Of An Undergraduate

By ZIA YEE CHEN (謝貽珍)

AS an undergraduate and "at the threshold of life", I have spent a good deal of my time inquiring about this question of my future. It is next to impossible to

note down the diverse feelings which have arisen in me the many times I have looked into the years ahead of me: hopes and doubts, illusions and fears—oh, if only I