

## LETTER FROM GRADUATE

(Continued from page 54.)

ten-horse-power engine, or to close the switch and bring a five horse-power motor up to speed, but a boy who has never done it feels more confidence in his ability as an electrical engineer after one such experience than he does after a week of reading instruments and plotting curves. This fact seemed to me to be appreciated by the electrical authorities and in all of the laboratories under their charge the students had practically the entire handling of the apparatus with which they were working. I believe that this feature makes Course VI one of the strongest courses which the Institute offers.

A serious fault, which seems to be common to the engineering courses of practically all technical colleges, is that not nearly enough attention is given to teaching those fundamental methods of carrying on business, which the students should know if seeking employment in any of the commercial departments of technical industries or even to enable them to manage properly their own personal affairs. Probably three-fourths of the college graduates who enter the Engineering Apprenticeship Course of the electrical manufacturing company with which I am connected, find, at the end of their course, positions in the commercial rather than the engineering branches of electrical work. All of these men are seriously handicapped by the lack of even the most elementary knowledge of ordinary business forms. Perhaps half of them may have heard of a "Sight Draft" or a "Bill of Lading"; fewer still would have any idea how to find the credit rating of a customer; and to find one in fifty who could write a creditable business letter more than half a page in length, would be unusual. On this account, many of these men, after four years at college, and two years in the shop, must still take lessons in certain branches from the office boy.

Even to those who take up strictly engineering work, a training in such matters as the above would be exceedingly valuable. It is generally conceded that a scientifically trained business man has a far-reaching advantage over his non-technical competitors, and my own observations would indicate that the commercially trained engineer has an equal advantage over his less sophisticated brethren.

The curriculum of Course VI, as I knew it, included a brief course on the "Economics of Corporations." This I found most valuable, and although I believe it should be greatly extended to include business forms, elements of commercial law, accounting, etc., I would have given up any other subject in the entire four years' course, to which an equal number of hours was devoted, rather than have missed "Economics of Corporations."

No matter how excellent a college training a young man may have had, or how much he may have profited by it, should he enter the apprenticeship course of one of the large manufacturing companies, his first few days at work are likely to prove one of the most discouraging experiences of his life. Coming from a college, where several years of

attendance have made him familiar with every detail of the surroundings, he finds himself almost lost in the vastness of a large factory. It was difficult enough for him to begin recitations at nine o'clock, but now he must report for work at seven. The subjects which he has been pursuing for the past four years seem absolutely useless in his new surroundings, and entirely different standards seem to prevail. And, somewhat like the Irishman, who visited France and was greatly surprised to find even the little children on the streets speaking French fluently, while he, a grown man, was entirely ignorant of it, so our erstwhile lordly Senior finds that apparently he alone, of the thousands of working men, women and children around him, seems not to know what tasks are expected of him or how to perform them. This feeling soon wears off, however, and he begins to be interested in his work and to realize the possibilities for learning which are within his grasp.

With reference to the value of such courses, and the advisability of entering one of them at a salary of about \$40.00 per month, rather than taking a regular position, if one can be obtained, at \$50.00 or \$60.00, I would certainly advise the former for all young graduates who can possibly arrange for it. I did not feel this way at the time of my own graduation, but experience sometimes causes us to change our ideas on many points.

To the man in a hurry to place himself on a dividend-paying basis, I would say that the taking of such a course is in the nature of waiting a few hours for a train to take one on a journey of a hundred miles, or so, rather than impatiently starting out at once to walk. One is often inclined to feel that in so large a plant, an individual is lost sight of, and finds it difficult to advance. This is really not the case at all, however, and it is surprising how soon a capable apprentice is heard of by department heads. Even if one does not expect to remain with the manufacturing company, the training offered by such a course forms a most excellent basis for securing good positions elsewhere.

My own experience with college men has not been extensive enough to permit me to make any comparisons between graduates of the Institute and those of other colleges, which would not be comparisons of individuals, rather than of the training afforded by the various institutions. For several years, however, I did have as an assistant an '05 Institute graduate whom I found exceedingly capable. He was able to grasp new ideas readily, to carry out the work assigned to him with a minimum of detailed instructions, and to write good letters and intelligent reports. As an instance of my regard for such qualities, I may say that I put up a stiff fight in order to take him with me when I was transferred to a new line of work about a year after he came to me, and that I was very sorry to lose him a year or so afterwards, when he was assigned to another section, in order that he might be given a better all-around training.

To this specific instance I may add, that each and every Tech man of whom I have ever heard at our works, has been well thought of by his superiors, and has been a credit to himself and to the Institute.

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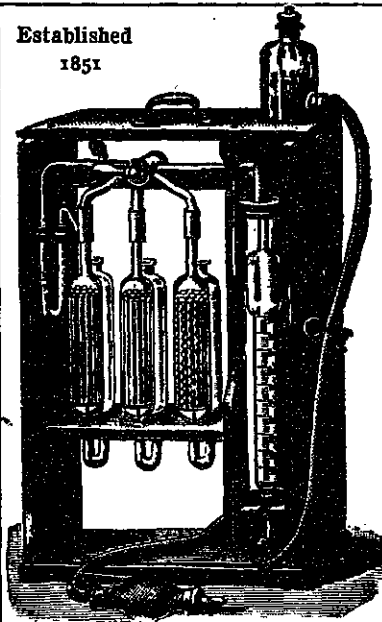
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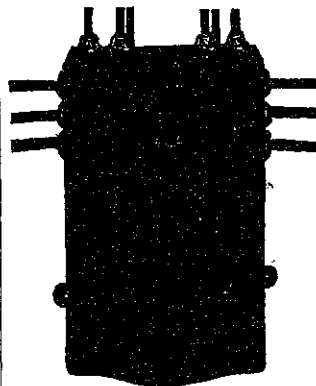
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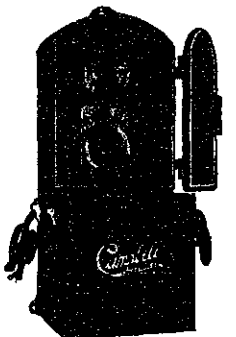
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