Students in Japan

Great Strides in the Public School System-Harder Worked Than Here-Scholars of Exceptional Capacity May Secure Promotion Before the School Year Ends-Many Reforms Are Proposed.

special interest to as many as are interested in the progress of nations. The educational system is specially interesting. Starting with the demand for an improved civilization which came with the Restoration, or Meiji, only twenty-eight years ago, education in Japan has made remarkable progress. Here are some facts in relation to student life, course of study and systems in vogue.

Prior to the Meiji period the school system of Japan was at best a haphazard one. Education was not compulsory, and even when taught was kept within rigid lines, and not at all adapted to the needs of every day life. To the higher nobles, for instance, the rules of arithmetic were a dead letter, and even among the Samural it was considered infra dig. to understand the working of the abacus (soroban), or counting machine-a most simple yet excellent Babbidge in embryo. I have had the opportunity of seeing a noble



GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL BOY.

of princely rank engaged in taking a lesson in arithmetic. Though an excellent writer and poet of ne small skill, he appeared unable to grasp the simplest problem in addition and subtraction. And this at the age of twenty-three, with a bloomnig wife and two sturdy children to bear his name! It would almost seem that the sense of calculation had been eradicated or hopelessly enfeebled by centuries of contemptous neglect. In the nobles' school at the present day, I am told, the same dislike for numbers is apparent, though in a much less degree; while the young scholars are otherwise very quick in acquiring languages and fond of abstruse argument.

Similarly, geography, in the sense in which we understand it, was practically unknown, although the topography of the Empire was most carefully taught. Nor was there any proper instruction in the mother tongue; no available dictionaries; absolutely no grammar. The place of these indispensable books was taken by the Chinese classics, a knowledge of which was thought necessary to every student. Female education was wholly ignored. It was considered quite sufficient if a woman, even of high rank, could write with the simpre kana, or syllabic alphabet. Poetry was taught, but after a very halting fashion. On the other hand, the greatest possible weight was laid on athletic exercises and the development of the physique. Fencing was taught to mere youngsters of six or seven and onward until they reached the age of manhood. Archery, the use of the spear and halberd, equestrianism, jujutsu, and a score of similar exercises helped to strengthen the muscles and harden the frame. The Japanese of thirty years ago were physically a far finer race than the present generation. Moreover, the relations between teachers and those taught were of a very different nature then from what they are now. Sensei (literally "teacher") was a complimentary style of address. This is derived from the modern Chinese custom, where, to be polite and elegant, it is good form to address any one as lao slen-sheng("old teacher"). To the present day sensel is a title of respect in Japan, but holds not the exalted position of yore. Then the instructor ranked next, after the pupil's own father and mother. His word was law; his wishes desires of magnitude. He must be humbly approached, his name venerated, his virtues extolled. And so the teachers were, as a rule, men of profound learning in the style then prevalent; of modest mien, yet high virtue and sober life; men, in a word, who understood that their example and precept had as prefound an effect on their pupils as the science they tried to instil into their brains.

are for the better, but not a few also for the worse. Every two or three years sees alterations of importance-some of vital importance-take place in the plans of the Educational Department. The present Minister of Education, Marquis Salouji, the youngest Cabinet member, has pronounced views of his own, which he is desirous of seeing adopted before the next turn of the wheel will see him landed in the Privy Council or in possession of some other less congenial portfolio, Last year, for instance, a very great change was inaugurated. Higher middle schools-of which more anon-were given the rank and style of high schools, wherein the student may, if he so desires, acquire fully sufficient knowledge for all puproses of practical life, or may graduate as an agricultural expert, an engineer, a manufacturer, sericulturistin a word, as a well trained professor of a number of sciences peculiarly adapted to the everyday needs of the people. This was a great step in the right direction, the success of which was mainly attributable to the indefatigable labors of Mr. Tsuji Shinji, ex-Vice Minister of Education, and President of the Educational Society of Japan.

All this has changed. Many things

The modern school years of the Japanese, as will be seen from the following. are far too long. The University is a goal which can be reached by few. The schools are divided thus:

Primary School-Course of four years. Higher Primary School-Course of

four years.

Middle School—Course of five years. Higher Middle School-Course of three

Pears.
University—Course of four to five

**** Japan continues to be a country of the system now in vogue a student must study twenty to twenty-one years before he can hope to obtain the diploma of the Imperial University. This means, moreover, that he has to begin school at the age of six, never fail in any examination nor be absent for a period of any length on account of ill-health—almost an impossibility. The term, however, is usually shortened by permitting graduates of higher primary schools, upon standing an additional examination, to enter the second year class of the middle schools, thus abridging the scholastic period of the latter by one year. Further, scholars of exceptional ability can pass from one class to another in six months instead of one year, if they show themselves up to the required standard. Again, pupils can enter any class of any school, without having certificates from other establishments, if they are able to stand the entrance examination for such a class. And it is for these reasons that there are such numbers of private schools in every city and town-schools devoted to a sort of forcing system in English and other modern languages (German or French), mathematics and physics, bookkeeping and the principles of law and political economy. Most of these private establishments, if not devoted to the teaching of one or two special subjects, are of middle class rank, though there are numbers of private primary schools scattered throughout the country as well. School fees are payable at the beginning of each month in both Government and private schools, the price of tuition ranging from about 25 sen to 1 yen 50 sen per mensem (12½ cents to 75 cents gold). Most schools charge entrance fees, now termed nyugaku-kin, "entering school money," al-though under the old system this was known as the sokushu, or "present made to the master," a much prettier style. School hygiene and sanitation are still in their infancy, though in Government establishments little is left to be desired in these respects. Students on entering the school building must change their wooden clogs or spattens for noiseless straw sandals, although many walk barefoot all day long. The desks and benches are, even in class private establishments, of a rough and coarse description. No attempt is made to keep the young backs straight or prevent the young shoulders from

> In Government schools most students are required to wear a uniform-coat and trousers of foreign cut, with a forage cap bearing in front the school insignia, two gilt pens, a flag, a chrysanthemum, a white and gold band, etc. There are no half holidays. Each day has its five to six and even seven hours of instruction. Between classes there is a recess of five minutes, with half an hour at noon for lunch. Japanese schoolboys are much more sedate in their bearing than their colleagues abroad. Games in the open air are not much in favor, although n parti lar, are gradually becoming popular. Every Government and private school of note or pretension has twice a year an open air athletic meeting, or picnic, where foot races, leaping, wrestling, etc, are practised with enthusiasm. Still the university record for leaping, running, etc., falls far short of the records of America or Europe. The long jump averages 17 feet; the pole jump 91/2 feet; high running jump, 5 feet 3 inches at the maximum. Boat races are in favor among the pupils of middle schools and the students of the university, but boats of a very clumsy build are used-mere gigs, without outriggers or sliding seats. Still the young rowers drive these crafts at an excellent pace through the water. and the annual regatta of the Imperial University and Higher Middle School of Tokyo is attended by many prominent men, the Prince Imperial generally being present as an interested speciator. The honors almost invariably fall to the law

rounding.

The great objection to the system of education at present in vogue in Japan is that it requires far too much of the



GOVERNMENT MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT.

students. They are expected to acquire all the isms and clogies of Western schools, and have in addition to spend from three to four years in the acquisition of the Chinese ideographs-over four thousand, often six or seven thousand, of most complicated and difficult signs. This graphic system, wonderfully developed though it undoubtedly is, and of remarkable flexibility, is the bane of Japanese school life. It is to this that the too great length of the curriculum is solely attributable. It is owing to this that the best students quickly age, and that consumption and brain disease are becoming typical maladies of learned men. The latest statistics show that there is a marked annual increase in the number of short-sighted students, and that the wearing of spectacles is becoming universal among graduates of higher middle schools. Moreover, statistics show with equally sad distinctness that there is a steady decrease in strength and stature, that the students of to-day are physically vastly inferior to their fathers or grandfathers of half a century ago. This truly deplorable state of affairs has, it need not be said, engaged the active attention of the Government, and the introduction of semi-military drill in Government schools, triweekly symmetries not to speak of the

favor shown to jujutsu, fencing and other similar exercises, has done much to impede the course of the evil. Still, no stroke has as yet been made at the root of the trouble, for, from mistaken patriotic motives, the Japanese believe that the abolition of the Chinese graphic system, now wholly Japanicized, would be equivalent to injuring the very virility of the language, and causing the mother tongue to become gradually forgotten or fall into disuse. There are very few in favor of the adoption of Reman letters, and, from what I everywhere hear, there a little chance of this graphic system ever becoming adopted. On the other hand the partisans of the kana, or Japanese syllabic alphabet of forty-eight signs, are grewing in strength and numbers. At all events, something must be done, and that quickly, or the future generation will be far more degenerate than the present. Until quite recently-that is, within

the last five or six years-education of a more than primary grade was not obtain. able except in the larger cities. Of higher middle schools there are, even at present, hardly more than half a dozen, principally in Tokyo, Osaka and Sendal, the others being of comparatively small repute.
This necessitates the leaving of their homes and the travelling to a distance on the part of thousands of students. In Tokyo, in the Kanda district alone, it is estimated that more than thirty thousand students are lodging, while an almost equal number is to be found in Hongo district, where are the Imperial University and First Higher Middle School. These young men, of ages ranging all the way between fourteen and twenty-six, manage to live and pay for their schooling on a monthly average stipend of eight yen, for this, or a little less, is the average income of students in the metropolis. For board and lodging the student must pay from four to five and one-half yen or so, from \$2 to \$2.75 gold. For bathing and sundries he expends, say, one yen monthly, the residue being absorbed by school fees. For these \$2 or \$2.75 he can get a room of three to four and one-half mats in size (one mat measuring two and one-half by five and one-half feet), and food, but of a very inadequate description. A scanty allowance of fresh fish once a day, no beef whatever, perhaps an egg once or twice a week, salt fish every other day, and pickled vegetables and rice. This is his whole bill of fare, summer and winter, and it falls decidedly short of the necessary dietary standard. The want of nitrogenous food is shown in the very great prevalence of that curious disease, kakke, the beriberi of the Malayan peninsula, or Polynuritis endemaccording to Professor Dr. Baelz, The acute form of this endemic malady carries the sufferer off in less than twenty-four hours. How can this be obviated? is a question which has sorely vexed the Educational Department. The only remedy seems to lie in an increase in the number of middle schools and the heightening of the standard of those already in existence. This done, the student need not travel so far from home in search of knowledge. And, lest it sound incredible that pretty decent food and lodging may be obtained for a minimum of \$2 in gold in Tokyo, let me cite the fact that in Tosa and other southern provinces students obtain much better

board and lodging for \$1.25 or even \$1 gold per mensem! It very frequently occurs that the Japanese student's source of income fails before his studies are completed, either by lack of busines at home, a bad harvest, death, or similar causes. In this case the young man is suddenly thrown on his own resources, yet without having gone far enough to fit himself for any particular career. Some devoted students actually spend the nights pulling jinrikisha or doing other no less fatiguing work in order to keep up their studies by day. But by far the majority join the soshi faction-a far spreading coterie of political rowdies and bravadoes that is a disgrace to Japan. Of late years, or, rather, within the past twenty months, the soshi have decreased in numerical strength, owing to stringent regulations issued by the Government as well as the popular disfavor with which they are viewed. Nevertheless there are thousands of young men in Tokyo to-day who are no better than vagabonds-young men who came from the provinces and failed as students. From this element of discontent came the ruffian who attempted to assassinate the aged Chinese Peace Ambassador last spring. I am assured that Marquis Saiouji, Minister of Education, has under consideration many valuable proposed reforms in the Japanese school system. While it is an azing and admirable in many respects, and of the highest character, all things considered, it is, nevertheless, capable of much intellligent reformation, I am convinced.

WAY THEY ARE CALLED TUMBLERS

Origin of the Name of a Common Article of Tableware.

Every day we drink out of a tumbler. Why is the large glass that holds our milk and water so called? Years ago Professor Max Muller was giving a luncheon at All Souls' College, Oxford, to the Princess Alice, the wife of the Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt, and the second daughter of Queen Victoria. There was not a dozen guests besides the princess and her husband, and a very agreeable luncheon we had, with talk on all kinds of interesting

subjects. But what excited the curiosity of all strangers present was a set of little round bowls of silver, about the size of a large orange. They were brought round filled to the brim with the famous ale brewed in the college. These, we are told, were tumblers, and we were speedily shown how they came by their names—a fitting lesson for the guests of a philologist. When one of these little bowls was empty it was placed upon the table mouth downward. Instantly, so perfect was its balance, it flew back to its proper position as if asking to be filled again. No matter how it was treated-trundled along the floors, balanced carefully on its side, dropped suddenly upon the soft, thick carpet, up it rolled again and settled itself with a few gentle shakings and swayings into its

place like one of those India rubber tumbling dolls babies delight in. This, then, was the origin of our word tumbler, at first made of silver, as were all these All Souls' tumblers. Then, when glass became common, the round glasses that stood on a flat base superseded the exquisitely balanced silver spheres and stole their names so successfully that you have to go to All Souls' to see the real thing.— Jewelers' Circular.

There are so many cough medicines in the market, that it is sometimes difficult to tell which to buy; but if we had a cough, a cold or any affliction of the throat or lungs, we would try Bickle's Anti-Consumptive Syrup. Those who have used it think it is far ahead of all other preparations recommended for such complaints. The little folks like it as it is as pleasant as syrup. Oyster shells were used by the Romans to make tooth powder.

SOCIABILITY OF INDIANS.

They are Fond of Paying Social Visits Indians, contrary to widely received opinions, are of a social nature, and fond of paying friendly visits, the etiquette of which would make a chapter of itself. Not much attention is given to the order of their going while in the dust of travel, but when arrived within a short distance of their destination a halt is called, the ponies are relieved of their burdens, the rawhide packs are opened, and gala dresses and fine ornaments come to light.

The two young men selected to be the bearers of gifts of tobacco deck themselves for their mission and ride on in advance. A surprise party is not in the Indian's list of amusements; he takes his enemy unawares, but not his friend The young men return with messages of welcome; sometimes members of the family to be visited come with them personally to conduct the party.

Meanwhile, all have been busy prinking; brushing and braiding their locks, painting their faces, and donning their best gear, the wide prairie their dressing room, their mirror each other's eyes. When the visiting party is again en route, there is not a man or woman who is not gorgeous with color and the glitter of shell or feather finery. Even the children have daubs of fresh paint on their plump little cheeks, while the dudes are wonderful to behold, resplendent in necklaces, embroidered leggings, and shirts, and with ornaments innumerable braided into their scalp-locks. The visit over, the Indians go back to their homes pleased and contented, happy if they find, as may not always be the case, that the enemy have not been at work in their absence.-"Tribal Life Among the Omahas," by Alice C. Fletcher, in the January Century.

HOW TO CANDLE EGGS.

It Requires Considerable Practice to Excel

in This Operation. Have a room as dark as you can or use box 12 by 16 inches in size painted black inside. Stand on its end and open one side 8 inches from the bottom. All above 8 inches closed, set box with this open side towards you and set the light in it. Nail a piece to bottom, under front edge, with the top of box back, this will enable you to see better. This box can be used in any place, though it is better in a dark place. Take such light as you have; the best candlers use common candles. Take two or three eggs in left hand and the eggs you candle in right hand, and hold sideways between you and the light, as close to the light as you can, and let it rub against one of the eggs in left hand; some are quite particular about this, as the eggs reflect the light through each other; turn the egg round until you are satisfied you have tested it. Take a strictly fresh egg as a standard to judge by. If place like the vacuum in a mason's spirit level appears on the upper side as you turn the egg, it is not strictly fresh; though if this vacuum is small and the egg is all right otherwise it may be comparatively fresh. A dark or black spot indicates a poor egg: the white of stale eggs also looks thin and watery. Remember dark-shelled eggs are thicker shelled and do not candle as easily as white ones. You can only learn by breaking suspicious ones, and it requires much practice to excel.—Charles W. McQueen, in Farm

Many of the evils that confront us behind us were we to strike a few vigorous blows and walk on.

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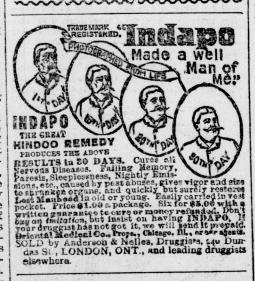
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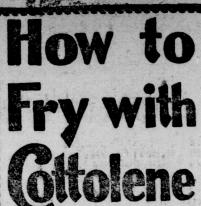
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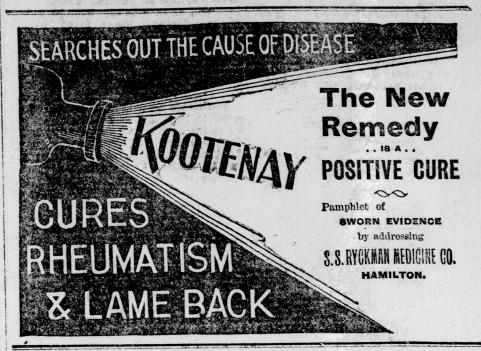
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