

is dipped and the writing begins. The first copy-book has the "characters" printed on it in red ink. These the pupil traces carefully over. When he has had a few weeks, or months, of such practice as this, the teacher writes him a copy, which he places underneath a page of his copy book. The writing shows quite plainly through the semi-transparent paper, so that its outline is easily traced. When the boy's hand grows steady, and he comes to have some command of his pen, he is allowed to write from a copy as youngsters do in our schools. Some of them, in the course of time, learn to write very rapidly and really beautifully, for a page of Chinese "characters" well written, is by no means ugly. But some of the first attempts are frightful to behold, the writing being much more intricate than ours, and the blotting capabilities of a Chinese pen being about twice as great as those of a goose quill. If the fingers are slow or clumsy they get many a rap on the knuckles from the teacher's bamboo, for corporal punishment has not gone out of date yet in the "Flowery Kingdom." The remainder of the afternoon is spent in hearing the pupils read the lessons they have learned in the forenoon. The lesson has been committed to memory, in fact, and can be read as well without the book as with it. Indeed no pupil is supposed to know his lesson until he can repeat it word for word. Thus the memory is trained and developed. It is no uncommon thing to meet with young men who, years after leaving school, are able to repeat page after page of the books they had read. The other faculties of the mind are, however, left almost entirely without cultivation by this defective, and, in many respects, absurd system of education.

The school funds are raised entirely by those who employ the teacher. The rate of the pupil varies with his attain-

ments and the reputation of the teacher. The ordinary rate is about two dollars a year for each pupil, to begin with, in addition to which he *presents* the teacher with about two pecks of clean rice per annum, and a dollar in "cash" for pocket money, to buy paper, pens, ink, tobacco, and other luxuries. The average teacher will earn from sixty to eighty dollars a year, *cash*, in addition to the rice and other eatables he may receive as presents. A man of high qualifications, long experience, and good reputation, may charge higher fees, and will, perhaps, have twice that income, out of which, very likely, he will have to support himself and family. No one but a Chinaman would be equal to such a task, but he can manage it nicely and perhaps have something over.

Anyone who supposes himself qualified may open a school, but if he is ignorant or incompetent his career will be short. He will be *visited* in an informal sort of way, by two or three of his neighbour teachers, who will succeed in asking him so many questions that he cannot answer that he will become the laughing-stock of his school, and before long of the community. Unless he is pretty "well up," or can turn the tables on his visitors, he will have to move on and try again, or abandon the profession altogether. By this unique process the incapables are kept pretty well weeded out. Of course, the fewer the teachers the more pupils they each have, and that means more money and more rice, and Chinese teachers are human.

It is quite apparent that the educational system of China, though hoary with age, has reached but a very imperfect development. How long it may be before one arises among them to do for their schools what a Ryerson has done for the public schools of Ontario, who knows? May it soon be! There is much need.