

From these traits of Confucius and of his system we can explain very much that is so characteristic of China and the Chinese to-day. Reference has been made to the lack of progress. Equally characteristic is the materialism, or secularism, of the people. Their life has no high ideal, they are not carried away by enthusiasm, they are not chivalrous; they are essentially commonplace. Kind in their family relations, very industrious, temperate and reasonably honest, they are of the earth earthy; incapable of any great self-sacrifice and careless of the sufferings of others. Enjoying life while it lasts, they are quite willing to lay it down with unconcern—yes, to stake it on games of chance. For them, "Nostar of hope shines 'mid the mists and clouds of earth, to beckon them to higher things beyond."

J. H. LONG,

Hamilton, Ont.

HIGHER EDUCATION.

Any other subject which had undergone such discussion, pruning and addition, as has fallen to the lot of education within the last decade, would have been discussed out of its existence; but while we have the growing mind of youth with us we must also have an intense desire to direct the growth of that mind aright. The system of public education as devised and carried out by the Ontario Government, has, justly, given rise to so much controversy that it may be allowed to us to add our contribution to the wail of the ratepayer.

What, then, is this higher education. We sometimes try to get a fairly accurate answer to the question by taking the result of an examination. This latter ordeal (which, on Richter's principle that "everything educates," must be counted as a great educator), tests our practical acquaintance with a subject. People often say, "I know it, but I can't express it." With all deference to them we would say, that, as they cannot express it, they don't know it. Every thought of any value can be expressed, and any thought which cannot be expressed with a degree of intelligibility has no value. Nebulous impressions which cannot be turned into clear English are worthless at examination time. That an examination on a given subject should arouse our emotional nature far more than the subject itself ever did is probably caused by the fact that we are to be tested on our knowledge of it; it has become part of our personality, and our heartbeats keep time with the rushing thoughts. Passing a successful examination acts upon the student who cares, as a powerful stimulant; and he decides that he will not be content in future to "pass," but that he will attain the highest excellence. He looks with disdain on the manner in which he has hitherto mastered some branches, skirting here and there to get the chief points and "cramming judiciously" to avoid awkward places, so that in some way, by any devious path, the inexorable examiner may be appeased. All his Latin crowds itself into mottoes expressive of future amendment; and he arrives at the conclusion and resolve that, at the next time of test, he will be satisfied with nothing less than *summa cum laude*.

But all this is from the student who cares, and who regards education as higher. Every contestant at an examination does not prove that he cares; and higher education is no longer regarded only as a process of storing the mind with facts, nor is the

number of facts in possession taken as a test of mental calibre. One infallible test of education is acknowledged to be the man that it forms; and, as teaching is the greatest thing under heaven, seeing that Christ was a teacher, it may also, for aught we know, be the greatest thing in heaven. The ideal teacher is not so much a man as an influence; an influence which enters into the pupils, shaping their lives, bringing light to the eye and hope into the heart, purpose to the will and aspiration to the soul; an influence that makes life seem larger, duty clearer, and God nearer. But if, in the schools of our country, this ideal teacher may be found, the man or woman possessing the desired attributes is sadly handicapped.

Some affirm that education should "fit its use," and be a direct preparation for the student's after life-work. In other words, these people gauge the value of mental training by the corresponding measure of its practical utility, and consequently attack collegiate methods on the ground that a student, under them, acquires much knowledge which cannot be applied. The conservative thinkers—conservative in this if in nothing else—contend against such utilitarian ideas. Practical application as an ulterior motive is well enough; but the chief motive should not be the immediate preparation for a selected field of future activity. According to our aforesaid thinkers, the central and all-pervading purpose of education is *to train the mind to think*. To them, education is a vital thing, for it means power; it is a word which is not one but many-sided, and which means "everything of something and something of everything." The cramming process which is being brought to a scientific point has much to do with disgusting the mass of people, who, being lay figures if rate-payers, see that the above motto in many cases is brought to read "everything almost and nothing quite."

If, then, an examination tests our practical acquaintance with a subject, and that acquaintance is chiefly gained by a carefully devised system of cramming, of what use in after life is "the mined trained to think," when circumstances in the struggle for standing-room force the man whose "mind was trained to think" to use his hands, allowed to develop incapable muscles, in manual labor. The dignity of labor is an idea long since exploded in the public schools, where the word labor is held to apply chiefly to hedging and ditching. The professions are over-crowded; occupations whose requirements are commensurate with the ideas of gentility of the applicants have an untold number of applications for one possible vacancy; the Grand Army of the unemployed is daily swelling in numbers and becoming one of the graver economic questions to be dealt with by Government; and our schools still impart, without discrimination, an indefinite and frequently useless amount of first ideas on every subject from psychology up and down. We may mention that "the art of speaking the English language correctly" is omitted.

If power depends on ability to join with others—to "lock arms with men"—then are we fast becoming a powerless race. The Government schools, as they stand, seem to aim at breeding little but a maximum number of book-keepers and ologists. These two classes are necessary in a community; but the book-keeper trained by public instruction alone finds that he has to attend a business college before his government school education is willingly accepted by an

employer; and the embryo ologist, on leaving Mr. Ross's protection, finds himself like the young bear, with all his troubles before him. To know any subject well, we must be master of its details; but Mr. Ross evidently prefers a glorified skeleton.

Then, again, is education to be confined to abstractions, mathematics and languages, or should the hands keep pace with the mind. We hear much of the philosophy of history, of the morals of art; but the majesty of tools is a theme which, outside of Germany, is dilated upon too little and too feebly. Tools represent the steps of human progress. In architecture, from the mud hut and adapted cave to the modern mansion and colossal cathedral; in agriculture, from the pointed stick to the steam plough; in ship-building, from the raft to the ocean flyer; in fabrics, from the matted fleece and primeval figleaf to the shawls, lace and brocade of a present-day belle; in pottery, from the uneven lines of the first Egyptian cup to the marvels of Wedgwood and Doulton; all contribute to man's comfort and pleasure, to the general progress and well-being of the world; and the development of each has been promoted or kept back in direct proportion to the goodness or badness of the tools and the dexterity in the use thereof. The head and the hand must work together; and the education which will bring about results beneficial to the individual and to the world at large, will, in general, combine manual with intellectual training.

When I assert that the dignity of labor is an unknown quantity in our public schools I base the assertion upon such facts as the following, obtained from masters. One of the latter describes a series of questions and answers between himself and an advanced class, resulting in this last query from him: "What, then, is your conception of the *raison d'être* of education; what is the *object* of education?" A consultation was held between the thinkers of the class, and in a few moments a hand was held up. "That we may have to work less." If the hand is the agent of intelligence, how much intelligent work is the world to receive from the hands guided by those heads? Sound practice is sound theory unconscious of itself, and as our present style of training the tender mind how to shoot is one vast system of forcing self-consciousness, the growler has, on all counts, much the best of the argument with the willing-to-be optimist. True, the times and the schools aid in sharpening the intellect, but it is a sharpening which partakes of the character of vivisection. It is a time when every schoolboy loves to cut and anatomize with the knife of intelligence. He questions and he criticizes. "Let me probe and find out by the keen edge of my intelligence whether that is true or not." And it is not only the actual truth that he is after, but his dearest desire is to prove how close he can cut. One *bona fide* student of anatomy became so in love with his study that he delighted to cut into nerve, artery, vein and muscle, enjoying it so much that no person however strange, no friend however dear, could he meet without thinking how beautifully they would "cut up." That is much the spirit of our schools. It is possibly true that the critic who blows out the torches of others will not make his own shine any brighter or add anything to the general illumination, but the humble ratepayer, who is long-suffering and vaunteth not himself, is, after all, human, and it may not be long before