

black with dirt and dampness—sometimes of large square red earthen tiles. The furniture consists of a table about four feet long and two wide, with two drawers in it for each two of the scholars, at which they sit on high benches without backs, like milking-stools with long legs. Tables and stools are provided by the pupils, and are their personal property, to be taken with them if they should be removed to another school. It is perhaps a significant fact that the drawers in which the pupils' books and stationery are kept, are almost always provided with locks. The teacher's table and stool differ only from the pupils' in being larger and generally of a little finer manufacture. The walls, which are rough-plastered, are ornamented with long strips of gaily coloured paper—about five feet long by a foot wide—pasted up or mounted on rollers like our wall-maps, and hung up, on which are written in free running hand (almost unintelligible to any one who does not know what the sentence is) wise saws and auspicious sayings from the ancient Chinese classics, very much as school-room walls here are decorated with mottoes and texts of Scripture. The ceiling is of bare rafters, and the strips of pine about three inches wide and four or five inches apart, on which the tiles are laid on the outside, may be seen if the whole has not been blackened by the smoke and dust of years. Most school-rooms are dark, damp and dirty, but not in these respects much worse than the homes from which the children come, and are often a good deal better.

The teacher is not so easily described, there being so many varieties of the species. It is hard to select an average one, though you can easily distinguish him from all other kinds of men. He has a lazier and more swaggering air than the merchant, but not so lofty a swing as the petty official.

He wears stockings and shoes *always*, which distinguishes him from the farmer and labouring men and most mechanics, who wear them only on occasion. Over all his other clothes, good or bad, the long paticoat-like coat which comes down almost to the ankles, and which is nearly always made of fine grey cotton or shirting dyed blue. On his head is a little skull cap, with the appearance of which everybody is familiar from pictures, and in summer when he ventures out of doors, which is seldom if the sun is shining or rain falling, he sports a gay umbrella. If at all up in years, whether he needs them or not, he usually wears spectacles, and almost invariably smokes a brass pipe, so constructed that the smoke is drawn through a compartment filled with water before it reaches the mouth. Smoking by the teacher is not out of order in school hours. The teachers are for the most part men who are preparing for the Government examinations, or who have already failed once or twice, or several times, in passing them. It is no unusual thing for a student in China to be "plucked" at his final. Success, indeed, on the first trial, is rather the exception than the rule.

The pupils are even a more miscellaneous lot than the teachers. Urchins of all sizes and shapes, but all with clean shaven heads and the inevitable queue. Nothing is to be seen of them all day, but early in the morning shortly after sunrise, and late in the day just as the sun is going down, they are to be met everywhere on their way to and from school, with their books and copy-books stuck in their belts, which are made of a long band of blue cotton simply wound once or twice round their persons and the ends tucked in, for though their hours are so long in school they are still supposed to burn the "midnight oil" at home. They are all boys (*no girls ever attend school*), but it