

while the range of thought, power of expression and of self-control that it has engendered into the mental training of the many participants in the labour of its sphere, are gratefully recalled by numbers who have tested the usefulness of these high qualities. We are loath to believe that in the face of these really great achievements and the field of usefulness that yet lies before it, this society will pass out of its life and work, but so it must be unless a rally be made to its support. Our appeal would not be simply for the sake of preserving the existence of a society that once was great: we urge its claims only in view of the good that may be accomplished to the individual benefit of its supporters. Time and space do not permit us to dwell on the requirements that may be learned and fostered within its patronage, but it cannot be out of place to note the lack of opportunity in our City and University for the cultivation of the eminently useful and befitting faculty of expression. Words are the order of the day, and in vastly too many instances words only will be found: surely now is not the time to lose the opportunity to cultivate thought and expression in one. Older members of the Society are now giving it its greatest measure of support: newer and younger life and energy are necessary to its continuance, and in the light of its own advantage we trust that younger life and energy will find its way to meet the necessity.

Contributors.

EDUCATIONAL WORK IN JAPAN.

In the attainment of our modern civilization are involved many centuries of patient toil. In this article we consider one phase in the development of a nation which, while yet comparatively barbarian, incorporated into its national life the acquirements of the most highly cultured countries. To better understand Educational Work in Japan, we briefly review some of the characteristics of its people.

Unlike their neighbors, the Chinese, they are not hindered by a false national pride from learning of their superiors. Upon the opening of their doors to commerce and to Christianity, students, either of their own accord or by governmental appointment, sought among the nations of the West, the Arts and Sciences of a higher civilization. Yet the element of originality is not wanting, for they nearly always improve on what they borrow. Of this their *Materia Medica*, taken from China, is a good illustration. Their future religion may come from Christian lands, but an united church is the idea of the Japanese.

Then, again, as a people they are exceedingly eager to learn. Apropos of this, we may mention an incident which occurred during the visit of Lord Elgin. The question arising as to what tongue should be made

the medium of diplomacy, one of the commissioners remarked: "Oh, you had better make English the official language. There is no telling how long it will be before you'll be able to write a despatch in Japanese; but give us five years and we shall be quite competent to correspond with you in English."

Further we notice that the position occupied by children is almost the reverse of that held by them in our own land. Parents will do anything reasonable, if it will add to their pleasure. Travellers tell us that the men make a practice of submitting their quarrels to their decision. Japanese mothers are especially remarkable for the care and minuteness with which they supply their intellectual wants. "Even the children of our own race are not better instructed in the literature and history of their native land."

Having noticed briefly a few characteristics of the people, we pass on to the consideration of their educational system. The revolution of 1866 may be fitly taken as the grand turning point in Japanese history. Then was ended the dual government of the spiritual and the temporal emperors. Without unnecessary digression, it may be said that practically the temporal emperor stood in about the same relation to the spiritual (so-called because of his mythical descent from the gods) as the Mayors of the Palace to the last of the Merovingian kings. The rebellion resulted in the restoration of the spiritual emperor, the Mikado, and the downfall of superstition, ignorance, and despotism. Since then the growth of the country has been marvellous. As soon as the business incurred by the restoration would allow, the Mikado commenced a vigorous policy for the enlightenment of the people and the development of the national resources. The new educational system was planned in 1873 by an ordinance which divided the empire into seven school districts, giving one school to every 600 inhabitants. It is based upon elementary schools, and ascends through Middle and Normal to Foreign language schools and colleges for special sciences. The educational reports for 1877 give 25,451 elementary schools with twice as many teachers, and over 2,000,000 scholars, three-fourths of whom are boys. The cost of tuition in these establishments is fixed at a rate within the means of the poorest classes. In the most remote villages, the schoolhouse is now the most conspicuous building. In these schools the older pupils are taught the Chinese characters, also Geography and Arithmetic. A peculiar feature of their training, and one which is becoming very popular, is the giving of object lessons to the younger pupils. A great craze exists over the English language, and Roman characters are fast coming into use. The text books are chiefly foreign, and frequently imperfectly translated. In these Elementary schools a teacher's salary averages only about 50 dollars a year; but it must be remembered that the cost of living is comparatively very low.

In order to understand the work done in these schools, a brief enquiry into the nature of the language is necessary. Tradition attributes the introduction of written characters, among other sources to the Koreans, during the 2nd century B. C. While the Chinese is monosyllabic, the Japanese language is