

## THE PYRAMID OF STUDIES

THE chief reason for the apparently irreconcilable conflict of opinions as to the relative values of subjects of school instruction lies in the ambiguity of the term *value* itself. No two persons who write letters to the *Times* about education seem to be agreed to use this very troublesome word in the same sense. The like difficulty was perceived by political economists long ago, and they have striven, more or less successfully, at all events to "mask" the battery in their operations; but controversy over educational economy is still thrown into almost hopeless confusion by it. This, no doubt, arises largely from the greater relative instability of the facts with which education deals; the economics of education lend themselves even less than the economics of industry to anything like abstract treatment. The subject is almost as much immersed in matter as life itself.

We all agree that education is a *preparation*; and most people would say that it is a preparation for *life*. It follows, then, that an inquiry into educational values appraises the pursuits which profess to prepare men and women to make life most effective, to get most out of it. It would seem to be proved, then, that the value of such pursuits ("studies" amongst the number, but not "studies" exclusively) is relative to the largest area of human activity. Those gymnastics and acquirements which affect most favourably the largest number of the things that men *do*, these are the pursuits of highest "value" in education.