

HONGKONG, JUNE 22ND, 1926.

KING'S COLLEGE, HONGKONG.

The completion of King's College near the University provides the Colony with one of the best school buildings in the Far East. However, buildings alone do not make a school, and it is fortunate that the first Headmaster, Mr. Morris, will take with him a full-grown and conspicuously successful organization. Sai Ying Pun School has been made by him from very small beginnings in twenty-one strenuous years, and it is safe to say that his flock would have followed him to any other District School during that time. It is following him now to King's College, and the old Sai Ying Pun becomes a Vernacular Middle School. Recent events in China and Hongkong have given pause to the advocates of Western Education for the Chinese. There are doubtless many of our readers who believe that it would be better not to attempt the task, but to leave the Chinese themselves to provide such instruction as they feel they need. But Western education is what they do feel they need, and the condition of Chinese controlled schools and colleges in China is even less hopeful than that of foreign ones. America, Japan, and Russia exert powerful influences of various qualities through the schools.

Without attempting to make our own schools centres of blatant pro-British propagandas, the obviousness of which would tend to defeat its own object.

We cannot refuse those under our government the opportunity of learning our language and something of our point of view.

For good or ill, Western education has followed Western trade. First, there is the informal education of mutual intercourse, and then the more formal study of language, which that intercourse renders necessary. This being so, it remains to see that the education which young China receives at our hands avoids certain pitfalls. The greatest of these is a precocious interest in practical politics, and the second is a tendency to be content with the appearance of learning. Nowhere is it truer than in China that "Knowledge puffeth up." Hence, there is a tendency to multiply "subjects" with the object of producing a feeling of importance in oneself and an impression of erudition among one's relations.

As far as the second point is concerned, the main business of schools like King's College is to teach English. Everything should be subsidiary to that aim,

and geography, history, and other literary subjects should merely supply the material, interesting as possible, for such linguistic studies. The one ability which should be inflexibly required of the scholar before he leaves is the ability to speak, read, write, and understand English. With that, he can add all the rest to himself if he will; without it, he can only blunder and misunderstand. For entrance to the University, mathematics and Chinese are also necessary, but no more should be asked, and in any case, it should not be forgotten that most scholars do not go on to the University. English plays the part for the modern Chinese which Greek played for the English at the Renaissance. It is their key to the new knowledge. No doubt the time will come when the Chinese vernacular will have taken that new knowledge into itself as English has absorbed the culture of Greece and Rome. For that purpose, vernacular studies and vernacular scholarship must be cultivated in the suitable schools and University departments, but in the meantime, at King's College, skill and ingenuity should be concentrated on the teaching of a real command of the English tongue.

As the new school will be the Model School and practicing ground for the teachers in training at the University, where Mr. Morris is the Master of Method, we have a right to expect that the very best technique for teaching English will be developed by the University and the school in collaboration. Sai Ying Pun has already contributed promising new methods to this, and we shall watch further progress with interest.

In political matters, it is to be hoped that the firm action of the Government a year ago has shown that it will not tolerate any interference by schoolboys in problems requiring above all things experience and self-control. But the enthusiasms and clannishness of schoolboys are nevertheless the materials out of which good citizenship is ultimately made. The Boy Scout Troop, the St. John's Ambulance Brigade, and the Sports Clubs are the proper politics of the young citizen, which prepare in him the fairness, firmness, and loyalty so sadly lacking in adult politics today. We are glad to know that these flourish already in King's College, and we await the future with hope and confidence.