

distaste for school life. Those naturally crammers pass. And here we get a glimpse of another possible effect. I fear our spelling in the elementary stages of school life tends to sift from the great current of potential scientific scholarship in its earliest manifestations, the more original and inventive of its minds. The assimilator passes, the inventor is disgusted. No wonder we have no Shakespeares in these days of spelling drill. No wonder so many geniuses arise outside the ranks of the school-trained. Chinese culture may be very delightful to those once intoxicated with it, but the science-loving, common-sense Japs will inherit the earth. "But surely the evil of our system is exaggerated by this presentation?" I fancy some one says. That is just what I wish to be carefully examined.

Max Müller says: "English spelling is a national misfortune, and in the keen international race between all the countries of Europe, it handicaps the English child to a degree that seems incredible till we look at statistics." Again he makes a rough quantitative estimate: "Millions of children at school might learn in one year, and with real advantage to themselves, what they now require four or five years to learn, and seldom succeed in learning at all." Read the treatise of Dr. J. H. Gladstone, F. R. S., of the School Board of London, in which he deduces from English statistics conclusions as strong as these I have presented. I can quote but a line: "If English orthography represented English pronunciation as closely as the Italian does, at least half of the time and expense of teaching to read and spell would be saved." This is strong testimony to the extent to which the English child in his education, and the English language in its adoption by other races are handicapped by our spelling. Gladstone's researches have been very extensive and thorough. Apart from its spelling, the English language is the most concisely expressive, it is said, of all languages; and by reforming its spelling, besides removing the tremendous difficulty of its orthography, it might be made seventeen per cent. more concise. Such considerations, I have no doubt, prompted the following expression from Jacob Grimm, the great German philologist: "The whimsical orthography of the English language stands in the way of its universal acceptance." As compared with German, the report of the Faculty of the University of Mississippi to the State Legislature, in 1879, makes the following statement in clause 2:—"Spelling hinders our people from becoming readers, (1) by the length of time it takes to learn; (2) by the dislike of reading it induces. An average German learns, they say, in about one-third the time."

In this connection I quote a few lines from an address of Pro-