

great difficulty arises from the multitude of counsellors: every subject in turn asserts its scul-saving power, and puts forth its claim on a portion of the school time; an infinite number of suggestions are made—who is to arbitrate in so difficult a case? Certainly, the more I study the educational problem, the more I realize the extraordinary difficulties which it presents: we are not all cast in one fixed mould, and cannot all be made alike; educational rules must necessarily be made infinitely elastic, and educational success can only be achieved by the elastic administration of rules.

But are those who are charged with the conduct of so difficult a mission in any way specially prepared for the campaign? Suppose at a largely attended representative meeting of British teachers some one were to discourse in most eloquent terms of the beauties of the Chinese language, and were to affirm in the most positive manner possible that no other language offered the same opportunity of inculcating lessons of the highest import, what would be the result? Few, if any, present would know a word of the language, and therefore, although all might agree that they had listened to a most learned and interesting discourse, the effect would be ephemeral, and the advice given would be wholly disregarded by the majority. Never having had occasion to study the language, they probably would mentally set down the lecturer as a doctrinaire—as a member of that troublesome and objectionable class, the enthusiasts, who are always interfering with other people's business and trying to lead them to mend their ways. Some few might think it politic to include Chinese in their school programme. These would either purchase a "Reader," and endeavour to master the subject themselves sufficiently to impress a smattering of information on a limited num-

ber of pupils in perhaps the higher forms in their schools; or would engage a young fellow fresh from the University as teacher, who had little more than mastered the principles of the Chinese alphabet, but was considered capable of anything because he had taken a good degree. I very much fear that the treatment which I picture as accorded to my hypothetical subject, Chinese, is very much the kind of treatment meted out to experimental science in most schools. In the majority of cases, it has been included in the programme because it has become fashionable and is a subject in which public examinations are held, more or less under compulsion, and without real belief in its worth of efficacy as an educational instrument. It is not surprising, therefore, that the results have been so unsatisfactory.

Two causes appear to me to operate in retarding educational progress. In the first place, our schools, with scarcely an exception, are controlled by our ancient Universities, and these, I think, are not improperly described as, in the main, classical trades-unions. The majority of those who pass through their courses are required only to devote their attention to purely literary studies, and, unless by accident, they acquire no knowledge of the methods of natural science; consequently, having no understanding of, they exhibit no sympathy with, its aims and objects. It is a strange fact that so limited and non-natural a course of training should alone be spoken of conventionally as "culture," and that it should count as no sin to be blind to all that is going on in the world of nature around us, and to have no appreciation or understanding of the changes which constitute life—no knowledge of the composition and characters of the materials of the earth on which we dwell. As the entire body of teachers in the more