

and soberly attempt to deal with the evils referred to in the order in which they occur. Not only Dr. Watson but Herbert Spencer has expressed his opinion of the unsatisfactory results of our educational system. He says: "Not what knowledge is of most real worth is the consideration, but what will bring most applause, honor, respect; what will most conduce to social position and influence; what will be most imposing. As throughout life, not what we are but what we shall be thought to be is the question. So in education the question is not so much the intrinsic value of knowledge as the extrinsic effects on others. And this being our dominant idea direct utility is scarcely more regarded than by the barbarian when filing his teeth or staining his nails." We cannot concur in all he seems to imply, namely, that the genius of education is wickedly devoid of the most vital moral principle, that is, of common honesty. Yet we believe that this "dominant idea" of Spencer, in a somewhat modified sense, rules supreme in our present system of modern language, and even classical education. For in the former of these especially the "dominant idea" would seem, from the results obtained, to be "not what we are, but what we shall be thought to be" for having graduated from a famous university with honors in modern languages. We say, "the dominant idea would seem to be," for it is not to be supposed that the school boards, in providing for instruction in the schools under their care, are actuated by any other motive than that of the most ardent desire for the welfare of all the departments of instruction. They of course submit the management of the teaching to the principals, and they do their best to make the labors of the whole staff as successful as possible. The

fault, therefore, we think, lies at the door of no individual or class of men, but in the general system of teaching this branch of education.

With modern languages the first thing aimed at in commencing instructions is to teach a correct pronunciation. Now we submit that, with the present system, this is impossible, for *the teacher has far too much labor to perform for the amount of time he has at his disposal*. In the Collegiate Institute, into which the pupil graduates from the Public School, one teacher is generally expected in the course of three or four years to teach, not only a correct pronunciation of the French and German languages to thirty, fifty, or one hundred pupils, as the case may be, but to teach them to read and translate three or four French and German authors, to teach the grammar of those two languages, and some French conversation of course, though this latter is not prescribed in the curriculum. Every year the number is augmented by the further addition of thirty or fifty fresh pupils from the Public Schools. All these have six or ten other studies, Latin included, to attend to, besides the environment of the English-speaking community in which they live. Generally not one of these pupils had ever heard, before entering the Institute, a syllable of the strange tongues they proposed to learn, and when he or she commences to try to imitate the difficult sounds each, in spite of the protestations of the teacher, assumes his own peculiar accent and style of pronunciation, and the poor teacher, though he may have learned the correct pronunciation from a native or some other properly qualified teacher, soon finds himself, from lack of time, utterly unable to cope with the current, but is forced to yield and abandon the idea of