

tion will not, of itself, reform even juvenile tramps, and if left entirely to be enforced by cold official methods, dealing with truant children just as adult vagrants are dealt with by the police, it cannot be expected to do much for their *morale*. Indeed, the history of its enforcement in Britain records the most absurd instances of blundering on the part of the officials with whom its enforcement lay. As in most other sublunary affairs, the right man does not always get into the right place, and the wrong man is pretty sure to have unlimited capabilities for blundering. It is only those who, with some intelligent appreciation of what education is, unite a genuine interest in the children that are being ruined for want of any training but the worst, who can make this enactment the means of working any radical reform. But just this work may be done by such intelligent and patriotic women as are willing to devote a portion of their time to looking after individual families within the circle of their own observation, in which the children are either neglected from ignorance or indifference, or deliberately kept from school that they may go and beg from door to door in order to support the idle parents on misdirected "charity." To all who are willing thus to work for the salvation of these much wronged children, the new Act affords a most valuable ally. Some one has said that the most effectual kind of "moral suasion" is that which has authority behind to enforce it if need be. In future, those who endeavour to persuade selfish and indifferent parents to do their duty to their children in this respect, will have authority behind their persuasion. They can appeal to the law, and bring the truant officer to their aid, an argument which the most obtuse and blunted perception can sufficiently appreciate. In the same way, the most refractory and incorrigible child can

be compelled to submit for at least the eleven weeks in the half-year provided for by law. It seems matter for regret that the time during which school attendance is compulsory had not been made considerably longer. But at least, as has been already said, the eleven weeks in the half-year gives a chance for getting a hold on the children themselves. In that time, provided the children fall into the hands of a teacher with any fitness for teaching, latent ability and interest may be awakened, mental life may be developed, and the wildest child brought under, at least, some degree of discipline and training. Judicious individual influence may again come into play, to persuade to perseverance in the new line thus begun, to stimulate improvement by encouraging commendation, and also, when expedient and practicable, by some quietly-given assistance in the matter of clothes, which is often one of the stumbling-blocks for poor children placed at the school door sometimes even by the injudicious and thoughtless teacher, who will not infrequently go so far as to forbid children absolutely shoeless to come to school at all in summer weather, unless they can appear in what is to them an impossible luxury. Had such pedagogues been in authority in Scotland in days of old, some of the greatest names that have adorned her illustrious roll would assuredly never have been registered, at least, in her parish schools. Of course, this sort of petty tyranny will be made an end of by the enactment which makes attendance compulsory; since the State can neither provide shoes for barefooted children, nor compel their parents to procure them; as, if they are to be compelled to attend school, the schools must equally be compelled to receive them. It will probably be necessary, in some cases, that more school accommodation should be provided, for it is unfortu-