

sive situation in which they are now placed. The attitude of the United States and the policy of Admiral Remy are the only laudable and sensible courses so far evident. The others had proceeded with a light heart in their land-grabbing policies in the past, but to-day they are face to face with a world-problem at the possible magnitude of which they are aghast. The threats of the German Champion of Christendom and the paralysis of the British Jingo alike show how utterly unprepared the West is for such an unprecedented contingency. The Chinese nation had in the course of its past history experienced unimaginable humiliations and castigations, and yet to-day it has dared unshrinkingly to look at the united armies of the great powers of Europe, America, and Asia not askance but face to face. It had already been a great power centuries before Germany became a national force, and there is not the slightest doubt that it will continue to be a world power when the Germanic nations have disappeared.

Lord Salisbury's senseless threat of dissolving the Chinese Empire is on a par with his suicidal war in South Africa, and the present subservient inactivity of the British forces in North China will undoubtedly rebound against British prestige throughout the length and breadth of Asia. A Chinese official friend enquired of myself in regard to Lord Salisbury's threat whether the British Prime Minister could arrange with the Almighty to guarantee the dynasty, let alone the Empire, for the next ten years. Even if to save the dynasty and the present régime the Chinese government should concede all that is now demanded of it by the powers in the way of reparation and so forth, who is there to guarantee their specific performance? You may hang Prince Tuan and his confederates, but the effect to the nation would merely be the removal of certain incapable fools for worthier people. The government may stipulate the payment of millions as indemnity, but it remains to be seen whether the nation will pay it. And as regards guarantees for future non-repetition of outrages, whose bond would be acceptable? The Imperial government's? Even at present the Viceroy is using their own discretion as to whether to obey or ignore Imperial edicts. The Reformers have already repudiated the authority of the Empress Dowager and her advisers, but would profess loyalty to the Emperor Kwang Hsu. I am of opinion, however, that they will soon be in the position of the French Girondins, the advocates of legality, who will ultimately be swept off their feet by the flood of Chinese *sansculottism*. In such an emergency it is not difficult to anticipate what would be the fate of mere treaties or conventions. The great powers would probably reply, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." But then what becomes of their far-seeing statesmanship, their united diplomacy, their armed interference, and their vaunting vindictive threats?

TAN TEK SOON.

SINGAPORE, October, 1900.

ON THE TEACHING OF ELEMENTARY MATHEMATICS.

The recent work on the teaching of elementary mathematics,¹ by Dr. David Eugene Smith, Principal of the State Normal School at Brockport, New York, and author of several text-books and historical treatises on mathematical subjects, is one that is eminently fitted to the needs of teachers and students and that fills a decided gap in American pedagogic literature. A vast field of reading and sugges-

¹ *The Teaching of Elementary Mathematics*. By David Eugene Smith, Principal of the State Normal School at Brockport, New York. New York: The Macmillan Co.; London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd. 1900. Pages, xv, 312. Price, \$1.00.

tion is here opened to the teacher, and the person who will follow its simple and intelligible guidance cannot help profiting greatly by it. The book is marked with evidences of wide philosophical and educational reading; the psychology of the subject of which it treats and the rich and helpful literature in which that subject abounds pedagogically, have heretofore been as good as closed to the average elementary instructor; and if the purpose of the book is destined to fulfil be only that of opening a wider and more cheerful vista to individual teachers, the author has every reason to congratulate himself. No two persons could have written such a work at all alike; myriad divergent influences shape the opinions of even competent individuals on this subject; and the captious and toplofty criticisms which efforts of this character invariably evoke in certain quarters are as groundless as they are ill-humored. The purpose of Dr. Smith's book may be best given in his own words:

"Several years ago the author set about to find something of what the world had done in the way of making and of teaching mathematics, and to know the really valuable literature of the subject. He found, however, no manual to guide his reading, and so the accumulation of a library upon the teaching of the subject was a slow and often discouraging work. This little handbook is intended to help those who care to take a shorter, clearer route, and to know something of these great questions of teaching,—Whence came this subject? Why am I teaching it? How has it been taught? What should I read to prepare for my work?"

The subject is envisaged, thus, in its evolutionary, as well as its logical, aspect. The three topics of arithmetic, algebra, and geometry are severally considered as to their history, their place in education, their typical forms, etc. The traditional methods of presentation are critically examined, and new and more powerful points of view set forth. In this respect the book will be a revelation to many elementary teachers, and the advice which it carries, if heeded, will do much to revolutionise our elementary instruction. It is true that a great deal that is offered here is already accessible to the students of our best Normal Schools and Teachers' Colleges, but it is essential that it be put in permanent form and also brought within the reach of the rank and file of our teachers, who are in sorest need of it. As to the rich bibliography and general references collected in this book, they have an independent value, which renders the possession of the work desirable on this score alone. Perhaps Dr. Smith will add to his second edition some references to the simpler mechanical aids to calculation, the slide-rule, arithmetical machines, etc.; for the analysis of these mechanisms is fraught with educational enlightenment and possesses an intrinsic attraction for students. Nevertheless, as our author remarks, it is impossible to compress an encyclopædia into three hundred pages, and we should doubtless be thankful for what we have, without tendering supererogatory advice.

T. J. McC.

A PSYCHO-PHYSICAL LABORATORY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.

A movement for securing government support for the maintenance of an experimental psychological laboratory has taken promising shape in a Senate amendment to the Sundry Civil Bill, asking "for the establishment in the Department of the Interior of the Psycho-Physical Laboratory; for a salary of the Director of the Laboratory, four thousand five hundred dollars; and for expenses incidental to the collection of sociological, anthropological, abnormal and pathological data,