

How many popular beliefs, even though supported by great names, have to give way to the stern facts of the statistical table! For years the American people have willingly believed that the Indians are gradually disappearing, and Schoolcraft has expressed the belief in these lines:

"I will weep for a season, in bitterness fed,
For my kindred are gone to the hills of the dead;
But they died not of hunger, or lingering decay—
The hand of the white man hath swept them away."

But, unfortunately for the truth of these, as well as of equally beautiful lines by other poets, a prominent official of the National Board of Education has proved from statistics that the long cherished theory must be greatly modified and probably abandoned altogether. M.

MYTHS.

This is an age of close and original investigation. While shams are being mercilessly exposed, nothing else, however time honored it may be, is exempt from the critical examination of the iconoclast. A notable phase of this movement of the age is the zeal with which the many stories that have delighted us in childhood are attacked and their authenticity dissipated. The keynote to this warfare is evidently the determination to spare nothing that cannot withstand the severest scrutiny.

The story of William Tell, after it has long held an honored place in our school readers, has been formally condemned as a myth by a scientific society of Geneva. The romantic story of the saving of John Smith's life by Pocohontas has shared a similar fate, and it is also declared that George Washington never ruined a cherry tree with his hatchet.

When, about thirty years since the authenticity of Shakespeare was first seriously doubted, the presumptuous sceptic was regarded with astonishment. But disbelief in this gained ground and men are not now wanting who dismiss, with the assumption of positive certainty, the idea that Shakespeare wrote the immortal plays that bear his name.

In how short a time will it be denounced as an absurd fiction that Henry Wilson was ever a shoemaker? If we mistake not, the story of Gen. Putnam's adventure with the wolf has already been assailed.

Now, gentlemen, do you not carry the matter a little too far? We should not receive as true everything that history tells, but if all records and traditions are to be subjected to the most rigid tests, we fear that but a mere trifle will remain for the historical sceptic to receive as authentic. Many historical events may be true although no longer capable of absolute proof. Historical precedents lose their regulative influence in proportion as their foundations are undermined.

CAIUS.

