

not to that of Canada. The currency throughout these lessons, we need hardly say, is English, as in the following, on p. 281—"The *really grand* Suez Canal, which cost upwards of £16,000,000,"—cheap, we may add, for the superlatives in the sentence!

Examples of inconsistency in statements made in the text are also numerous, the result of patch-work in the lessons, such as that on "A Voyage Round the World," where, on p. 343, reference is made to "at home again in England," while two pages further on the pupil reads of "the magnificent chain (of lakes) which divides *our* country from the United States." The patch-work is also objectionably manifest in the two forms of spelling occurring in the book, where, in the case of the original lessons, words such as honour, favourite, colour, neighbour, harbour, recognize, etc., are spelt in the English form, and in the interpolated lessons the spelling conforms to American models.

The want of proper editorial work on the incorporated matter is also a grave defect in the series. The speech of Sir John Macdonald on "Canadian Confederation," for instance, has no introductory note to indicate when it was delivered, or to point to the crisis in our history which brought Confederation about. In the absence of this, the pupil reads (see p. 363), "We know that the United States *at this moment* are engaged in a war of enormous dimensions," etc.; and on p. 336, he will gather that it is but *twenty-five years* since the union between Upper and Lower Canada! The lesson on "Winnipeg," sandwiched in at the close of the book, without note or comment, is another evidence of want of editorial supervision, as the lesson itself is a specimen of atrocious English. The best of editors, we know, are not always at their best, but surely Professor Meiklejohn is not responsible for more than a few pages of this book. For the meaning of the sentence at the bottom of p. 259, we must ask Mr. Gage mercifully to be his own interpreter:—"What is *not seen* is much more, and is much more terrible." The sentence, italics and all, is as it appears in the text; and to us there are fifty of like mystery.

The Fourth Book of the Gage Series, is the only one that may be said to be in any degree Canadian; but the book is wretchedly

edited, and the work carelessly done. It is, moreover, badly graded, the opening lesson (Lord Dufferin's) being more fitted for the close of the book. Its old country origin also betrays itself, as, on p. 107, where "*foxes in this country*" evidently refers to England. On p. 17, we observe that the text has been revised since our previous criticism on the book. Here the statement was made that beavers used their tails as trowels in building, but the question, on p. 21, is retained, "How do they (beavers) use their tails in building?" The questions on the lesson, entitled "Yussoof," p. 107, refer to matter which has been removed from the work! Orthographical eccentricities, broken letters, and every variety of spelling, are to be met with all through the book, while errors of taste (see pp. 135 and 138) are numerous and offensive. Instances of bad grammar, and inelegant English, confront one on almost every page. In this respect, the text of the lessons, the notes and questions, the elocutionary hints, and the biographical sketches in the appendix, are alike disgraceful.

Once let the hand of incompetency begin its work, and progress becomes degeneracy. The Second and Third Books of the series are no improvement over those we have dealt with. Little of the matter in either book has any Canadian bearing, and what there is of a historical character must be unmeaning to the child without introductions or ample notes in explanation. Most of the poetical selections are objectionable for the same reason, that they appear without note or comment. Some of those in the Second Book are incomprehensible to a child, being purely subjective, and their difficult words and phrases unexplained. In the Primer, it is stated, that "*only one power* of single letters is used in the lessons"—a statement that is belied on every page, if it is not to be read as a sally of wit.

But a truce to this war upon incompetence and charlatantry. Yet are we called by our office to have an eye on the literature that is endeavoured to be palmed off on the Province in the name of education. The experience hitherto of the schools does not assure us that the authorizing body in connection with our educational system has always discreetly and impartially done its duty. Hence the need of watchfulness, and whatever aid independent journalism can render. Some people have a poetic way of regarding literary criticism. Its function is not always to turn on sprays of rose-water, or to fire blank cartridge salutes on a gala day. Occasions sometimes arise for the use of the mortar and the siege-gun. Criticism that is too delicate to take cognizance of the threatened perpetration of a great wrong had better get out of the way.