

Editorial Notes and Comments.

The campaign in favor of good English in our schools is not confined to the Province of Quebec. From every part of the world where the English language is spoken and written, comes the cry that our schools are not preparing men and women who shall stand successfully the examination of after-days in the streets and the market places, that shall prove them to have been educated. "Does that man or woman speak the English language with propriety," as old Lennie puts it, is the unfailing test to which every school boy and school girl has to submit; and unless the query can be answered in the affirmative on the part of every pupil who has graduated from our schools, then so far must our school system or curriculum bear the responsibility of sending into the world uneducated persons. As a writer in the *Graphic* has lately said, "Education has been defined as a system by which we acquire, at a vast amount of trouble and expense, an untold quantity of useless knowledge." Far be it from me to in any way endorse this cynical definition; but I am quite certain there are many unnecessary things taught in the present day, while other matters in the highest degree useful are absolutely excluded from our curriculum. One of great importance strikes me forcibly; that the art of speaking plainly, of enunciating clearly, of pronouncing properly, and of giving every syllable its full value, is entirely neglected—and has been so for a long time past—in our educational establishments. The speakers—by that I mean the ordinary talkers of the present day—are for the most part a set of mumblers. They do not speak out as if they enjoyed it, but they disguise their speech as if they were ashamed of it; they clip their words, they drop their voices at the wrong time, they muffle their sentences, they run one word into another, they obscure their meanings with chuckles, and practise a dozen methods of making themselves incomprehensible. Probably I shall be saluted with the cry, 'Yah! Bystander! Getting old and deaf!' But I do not experience this garbling of language and mutilation of words anywhere but in England, so I can afford to smile, being well aware that there are many who will agree with me in finding it a positive treat to hear a man speak the English language with distinctness, deliberation, and harmony, as if he had some respect for his mother tongue. When I bring out my volume entitled, 'Things which should be taught in schools, but which are not,' the matter above alluded to will receive most attentive consideration."