

in the result before us, are very apparent. The books have a presentable mechanical appearance, and in this respect are, undoubtedly, much in advance of the present Readers. But they have serious defects, which, wherever they have been critically examined, have readily shown themselves. Notably, the books are of too low a grade for use in Canadian schools, and their contents are meagre and for the most part unsuitable. The latter defect is a grave one, but it is explained by the fact that the series is an Old Country one. We know that the most astonishing things are done when the design is to do something remarkable, and we have thrilling effects when the thing is done in a hurry. This is abundantly manifest in the present achievement of Messrs. Gage & Co. But, as some one has said, there is nothing more terrible than activity without intelligence. Hearing, no doubt, of the intention of another house to prepare a new series of Reading Books, the *School Journal* firm set to work to forestall it. There was obviously no time, even if there was the special talent at command, to produce an original series. Resort was therefore had to an existing one. Unhappily, the firm lit upon a Scotch series (Chambers's), and made haste to adapt it. The result is a hybrid series—a heterogeneous compound of the oddest ingredients. The books are styled "English Readers," for the reason, we suppose, that though of Scotch origin, they are got up for the "Cockney" market. Their meridian is clearly that of Greenwich, or the neighbourhood of the London "Zoo," and they seem wholly constructed for use in that latitude. It is true there is an infiltration of Canadian matter, but it is of "crude oil," and wants refining. To change the figure, the native mass is badly fused, and appears like a bit of disrupted trap rock in a field of Devonian chalk. It appears in ridges as if thrust out of the cavernous interior by the effects of forces either actively repugnant to it or with which it could not be made to assimilate. To make room for this material the original mass has been subjected to the action of strong explosives to dislodge matter to allow

of the carting in of the new deposits. The violence of the wrenching effort to displace the original material is everywhere apparent, as if some clumsy catastrophic action had been at work, or that the publishers had made use of literary dynamite to expedite the labour of adaptation. The consequence is an utter sacrifice of the graces of literary proportion, a painful display of "ragged-edge" work, and an intrusion of a rubble of matter which is neither honest boulders nor shapely broken stone. In this respect the series maintains the stylistic traditions of the house that issues it. There are passages all through the books which, if they contain grammar, contain it in the form of a solution not yet precipitated. The work, so far as the adaptation goes, would seem to have been done by men who in moments of confidence might be heard to say "Them books," and "I done it." The facts of Canadian geography and history are similarly muddled. We are told, for instance (page 350 of the Fourth Book), that New Westminster is the capital of British Columbia, and (page 372) that the Indians of Manitoba, *representing the different tribes of Half-breeds, Icelanders, French, English, Irish, Scotch, and Mexicans*, jostle one another in the streets of Winnipeg! On the same page, we learn that the *stone* with which the brick buildings of Winnipeg are faced, *contains all the modern improvements!* The statement is made that *we* have no mountains which are 5,000 feet high! and the pupil is enlightened by the explanation that the pyramids cover as much ground as Lincoln's Inn Fields. Brock's Monument would seem to be on the St. Lawrence. The natural history, too, of this continent, we are bound to say, will be unrecognizable in Canada. Throughout the books reference is repeatedly made to "our own country," and "this part of the world," the animal life of which "runs not on all-fours" with the statements made about it in the Readers. On page 36 of the Third Book the information is given that "At one time, *indeed not very many hundreds of years ago*, wolves and bears were