

apishness of mental accomplishments. Good, robust, outspoken Anglo-Saxon has had to give place to French, mostly "after the schol of Stratford at Bowe;" and the commonest, and, therefore, the most useful, mathematical operations have been so shrouded by egotistical examiners in the mysterious gaberlunzies of a pitiful self-glorification as to be practically unrecognizable in their bewildering motley. Men who can scan Homer cannot write a page of grammatical English; and enthusiasts who know all about the conic sections, and many sections besides that are not conic, do so consistently and persistently murder the Queen's and their own speech, as to make it matter of grave doubt whither their souls will go after death, that is, if matricides have souls.

Of late years some attempt has been made by the advocates of higher English in Canadian schools to give it greater prominence on the curriculum; of course, with the usual result, loud outcry from the ranks of the nebulous—but much remains to be done before the subject receives that just appreciation which is its meed, and takes its proper place in the educational plan.

It is a well known fact that, at present, English is handicapped with commercial *legèr-de-main*, drill, calisthenics—what the acrobat physical has to do with Ælfred's royal tongue is an enigma to some—and other trivialities too numerous to mention. The English master, especially the junior English master, is supposed to be a repository of all second-hand learning, an encyclopædia of odds and ends, the very rags, bones, and bottles of the humanities. This fact alone might lead one to suppose that his salary should be far in excess, instead of far in arrear of that of any other member of the staff of teachers of which he may happen to be one.

And such English as sometimes goes with the graceful swing of the clubs—in corsets—or the agile hysterics on the horizontal bar of some unfortunate later edition of the Pickwickian fat boy!

There was once upon a time a laughing philosopher; he was supplemented by a weeping philosopher. Would it be too much to suppose that both had their origin in the *palais-tra* of ancient Greece?

Was the Greek used by the instructors in those days anything like the English used by ours? If so, no wonder Parnassus is forsaken, and Olympus has hidden his head in clouds!

A truce to levity. All these things are very good in their place, and no man can be a cultured gentleman without a liberal education; classics, moderns, mathematics, science, what not. We admit it all.

But there comes an after-thought. A man may be a gentleman, if not a very highly cultured gentleman, with a sufficient knowledge of his mother-tongue alone. The Greeks themselves knew but Greek. All else was mere *bar bar*; hence, those who used the *bar bar* were *barbarians*. What a lesson!

And mark, without a sufficient knowledge of his mother-tongue, no man can be a *cultured* gentleman or even a gentleman in the true sense of the word at all, though we know the *Aeneid* by heart, quote *Æschylus* or *Euripides* by the page, and read *Corneille* and *Goethe* in the original; though the integral and differential calculus be to him as household words, and the Fourth Dimension or the fossils of the earth's strata as a printed book. To hear a mathematical High School teacher pronounce the word "doth" with a long o, or inform his class that "he seen" a meteor, and that two and three "aint" six, in the august hall of instruction itself, is as though one had encountered a Divinity blind of an eye, deaf of an ear, or halting in his gait.

"Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell,"

reverence for the eternal fitness of things, and knowledge of everything that is best worth knowing; but let us, before all, have it first in English, not in parti-coloured Dutch, or hypochondriac French, or demented Ciceronian—pronounced with a *k*—the good, level-headed, honest-tongued English, in which Shakespeare wrote and Tennyson sang, used by Pitt in Parliament, and Wellington at Waterloo; not English acquired second-hand, but English English, from the well, pure and undefiled, as spoken by the best Englishmen in their own land. Let us have the genuine article if we can get it, regardless of expense, or as near a sample as we can get.

Consider what English is, and what he who undertakes instruction in the subject should be conversant with; then judge whether it should be handicapped with anything more ignoble, and whether its emoluments should not be at least on a par with the other subjects of the curriculum.

First, the language itself should be pure, grammatical, fluent in the teacher's mouth; for remember, English is English, not Canadian nor American, no, nor even Irish, but English, gifted not by plutocrat or sciolist of to-day, but by the viking and the bard of many yesterdays.

Consider the magnitude of its history; the wealth of its literature; the intricacies of its grammar; the subtlety of its philosophy. Its history; its birth, development, progress, transitions, perfection. Its literature, prose, and poetry—and the marvellous border land between, the realm of Ruskin and DeQuincey, of Lander and Blackmore;—biographical, historical, scientific, didactic, romantic, epic, dramatic, lyric, humorous. Its grammar; orthoepical, orthographical, etymological, syntactical, prosodial. Its philosophy, its ethics, its æsthetics, its aspirations, and accomplishments on the spiritual side; the psychological side; the idealistic side, in poetry and prose.

And with literature will go composition, and with composition is closely allied universal history, biography, geography, all that tends to intellectual development in the best sense of the word as far as is consistent with the study of a single language, that language the one into which has been translated the best of every other known language, ancient or modern.

Truly, here is a fine field for study, a fine field for tuition, not to be lightly undertaken by any mere novice with a smattering of commercial chicaneries, or a taste for the swinging of arms or jerking of legs, nay, rather is it the whole duty of an expert, born to it, matured in its atmosphere, impregnated with that atmosphere, able to speak of it and in it, as his very own, his birthright, his love—with authority, not as one of the scribes.

Are such paragons, then, to be found in Philistia? Perhaps; but *nepotism* to them is a foreign word, and so, again, perhaps, forbidden.

Lastly, no useful tuition can be conveyed in any other subject, save by the means of this once openly ignored, at present little understood and less valued mother-tongue.

This thought alone should give us pause; for if instruction be worth anything, its value must be in direct proportion to its accuracy and its thoroughness. What labourer ever produced a *chef-d'œuvre* with unworthy or alien tools? What universe was ever summoned from the abysses of chaotic time and space, but by the noblest voicings of the home-inspired intelligence.

"Let there be light!" Wonderful words these! Uttered in no foreign tongue to listening Nature!

Are things changed now so very much from then?

A. H. MORRISON.

THE ATOM AND THE SCHOOL.

SIR,—As Gold is the god of modern Society, so is the Atom of modern Science. The worship of Gold is easy and natural, perhaps owing to its general invisibility; but, one needs special training ere he can prostrate himself in lowly adoration before the all-mighty Atom. The general lack of such training is simply deplorable, and the School must see to it without further waste of time. Ignorance of the Atom means a state of Savagery. This we have on the authority of Prof. Huxley, who has been in the Atom-business all his life. The high-priest of an exploded superstition wages impious war on this one true god. Medievalism would shoot at him from the loopholes of the Separate School. A sad spectacle! Man's most precious interests are at stake; for, what becomes of us all, should disaster befall the Atom? A dark outlook; but, the dawn appears. Superstition is "a house divided against itself." Its Stronghold, the School, will soon be the Temple of Atomism. To this noble end let all true friends of humanity strive might and main. It is the battle-field of Truth *versus* Error; we yield not an atom of ground till victory perch on our banner! For, if Man must bend his lordly knee to some thing, at least let it be to the Greatest Thing. I do not say the "biggest." I am not an American.

As the Race has struggled up from its far-off unspeakable Slough of beastment, tripped by Priestcraft, it has bent