

formulated which does not take some account of matriculation subjects—English, Arithmetic, History, Languages, Mathematics and Elementary Science. When it is gravely argued that the “plan of allowing though not compelling certain (matriculation) subjects to be taken up in the lower forms of High Schools does much harm,” it would seem as though the Education Department might be led to take action in the way of perpetuating and even intensifying the very evils of which President Loudon has complained. The main ground of offence in the schools seems to be language teaching, and the authority of Prof. Swete is invoked to prove that “pupils should not begin Latin until they reach sixteen years of age.” Now language study (apart from English and elementary grammar) ought to be universally recognized as “one of the most admirable forms of mental discipline, giving increase of grasp and intellectual power, calling for and developing, as few other studies do, the faculty of rapid review and ready application of knowledge already possessed.” No one has a greater respect for English than I have, but I can only regard it as a regrettable and even discreditable circumstance that pupils should sometimes present themselves for matriculation at McGill who have never studied any language except English, and who ask for special consideration because they were actually debarred by the conditions of the school they attended—otherwise excellently well equipped—from taking up any language save their mother-tongue. To one-sided advocates of the study of English, one might almost say by way of parody: “What should they know of *English* who only *English* know?” And it may be noted incidentally

that it is often those who cry up most loudly the exclusive study of English who contrive themselves to write English just about as badly as it can be written!

In regard to the improvement of schools in the Province of Quebec it must be said that while there is in existing conditions a good deal of reason for discouragement there is also some ground for confidence and hope. Quebec ranks lowest, I am given to understand, among the provinces of the Dominion as regards the amount of its appropriations for the support of the schools; and the circumstances of some rural districts, where the dissentient minority is quite insufficient in point of numbers, render adequate school provision an utter impossibility. But the school question in Quebec ought to be a negotiable problem. We have to deal with something under 1,000 schools with over 1,300 teachers. These schools are all organized on pretty much the same lines, and the results of their work are reported from time to time by the inspectors of the Department. The Protestant committee is anxious to do everything in its power to increase the efficiency of the schools, although it has often to suffer in the estimation of the public for the slackness of school trustees and commissioners—some of whom appear to be altogether impervious to criticism.

It is no rash prophecy to say that the question of what the right and true curriculum should be will long continue to be an absorbing subject of discussion. Time was when continuous training in the “Three R’s” for a period of school life extending over six or eight years, was considered the educational ideal. These were the accomplishments which were regarded as essential for self-education, with perhaps “a top-