

DUAL LANGUAGE DEBATE.

This great debate will be historical. It gave an opportunity for speech-making. It disclosed an important view of public sentiment. But after all, in the historical future it must show even the radical reforming English representative to be rather an absurd sort of a reformer after all. Evolution is slow. If the delicious morsel of sucking pig was accidentally roasted by the burning down of the primitive hut, it was only quite natural that more huts should be built and burnt down purposely over the gastronomic piggies. It probably required some time to discover a more economical method of making a roasting fire.

Science moves, but slowly, slowly: creeping on from point to point.

A conspicuous Imperial Federationist, *mirabile dictu*, appeared to take as an axiom, "No community of language no unity of Dominion." It transpired that in the great Imperial British empire but a small minority spoke the English tongue, perhaps about one-fifth. The brilliancy of this ultra-English champion will scarcely eclipse the splendid pose of British muscle seen reclining in the editorial chair of a London thunderer who damned most contemptuously the notion that a few extra letters would handicap the growth of the great English language. Several nations have already reformed their orthography, restored spelling to its original function, consigned the ignorance and conceits of more vain than learned and sensible ancients to the limbo of historical dictionaries, brushed the barnacles from the bottom of the ship, and now make several knots more per hour in the race. A tar on the "Great Eastern" might smile at the impotence of a barnacle, but what would the officers think of a huge bottom-load of them? But the slow brain is yet on the quarter-deck. The momentum of the huge mass is relied on to press its way through the waves. But millions of foot-tons of the Antean energy of the boilers are utilized in tearing the water into myriad ribbons of foam to the immense delight of the little fishes beyond, although to the deep chagrin of the intelligent engineer within. Germany, with but comparatively little to reform and little to gain, a few years ago by Imperial decree reformed the spelling in the equivalent of our common schools, and it was directed that five years later the change would be compulsory in the high schools. Already the great mass of German literature is appearing in the new orthography. France is just now commencing to be agitated with the same problem,

although its spelling is incomparably more simple and regular than the English. And although the discussion is but a few months old, we observe it has already moved some of our Canadian French exchanges to discussion.

If our English reformer would endeavor to advance the interest of the English language, it should be by moving for a simplification of a mischievous spelling condemned now by every leading philologist in England and America—a spelling which makes it extremely difficult for the French or any foreigner to acquire the language. At the present time, more than ever before, we have good reason to believe, the French of Quebec and of all our provinces are making strong attempts to learn English. But we have made a law to prohibit their acquiring it, which is a hundred times more effective than any parliamentary statute against the use of French could be—we have made such a law in our system of spelling. And we ourselves pay a tax to support this law, more vastly horrible than the tax of the fabled minotaur of Crete on ancient Greece—the sacrifice of two years of the school life of every son and daughter in the vast English empire.

N. S. BARRISTER'S SOCIETY EXAMINATIONS.

Under a rule of the council of the barrister's society, the preliminary law examinations are held twice a year instead of once as formerly. The first winter examination under the new rule was held a few days ago, the result of the same being as follows:

H. E. Congdon, Berwick; H. B. Stairs, Halifax; D. A. Cameron, Sidney, C. B.

The names of the above candidates are given in the order of merit.

Five papers are required to be "passed" in the preliminary examinations above referred to, namely: 1. Latin; 2. Greek or French or German; 3. Mathematics; 4. English; 5. History and Geography. In each of these subjects, we understand, the syllabus will be approximately that prescribed from year to year by the Council of Public Instruction for the High School or Academic curriculum. Such an arrangement would give the best possible chance to all future law candidates whether attending the public schools or studying privately, and would be a great saving of energy in schools where students are preparing for various examinations. It has always been noticed as a strange anomaly that the *law* society should have so long ignored the *lawful* public educational curriculum. But, after all, evolutionary slowness is surer and safer than revolutionary rashness.