

plexing niceties of grammar, which may be a useful kind of intellectual gymnastics in the school room; but which I am certain no speaker or writer consciously applies in the daily uses of language, even for the highest purposes of oratory or composition. Other questions I should designate purely subjective. That is to say, they are such as a teacher may legitimately submit to his own class in order to test how far the pupil has understood his teaching, and comprehended whatever he may have thought fit to impart as useful training. But such questions are out of place in an examination of candidates trained widely apart under many different teachers. They are no true tests of knowledge. By the pupil who has chanced to have the advantage of the special training they will be answered with ease; while to his equally gifted neighbour in the examination hall they may prove a hopeless riddle. As an author for more than half a century, apart from my experience as a teacher, I may perhaps without undue assumption, claim some fair knowledge of English. But I have looked over the junior matriculation papers in recent years, and found some of the questions obscure riddles. I could only dimly guess what the questioners aimed at, and comforted myself with the reflection that my own matriculation trials were over. A curious confirmation of the puzzling aspect of those matriculation questions has most opportunely come to hand at the very time of my receiving the proof sheets of this paper. A correspondent of the *Mail* of February 15th, writing under the pseudonym of "*Studiosus Literarum*," and claiming an intimate familiarity with the examination work in the Education Office, thus writes: though, as will be seen, with no apparent realization of the very curious significance of his revelations:

"If any evidence of the generally unsatisfactory results of the teaching of English in University College were needed, such evidence is supplied by the fact that at the last, and at two preceding, examinations of candidates for a second and a third class certificate, the sub-examiners (several of whom are graduates of the University of Toronto) had to be 'coached'; that is to say, had to sit down and with becoming humility endeavour to comprehend Mr. ——'s questions, with the vouchsafed accompanying answers! It is plain that such lessons at so critical a time would be received with a sense of mortification. Doubtless the only reason why these benighted University graduates submitted to so much self-humiliation was their wish to figure as examiners, at all events to grab their allowance per diem. Cannot so clever a man as Dr. G. W. Ross devise some means of relieving these poorly equipped graduates from a task for which neither their training nor their natural ability has fitted them."

Here then it is admitted that when the staff of examiners (consisting of graduates of the University, and others selected, we must presume, as competent for the work of reading and adjudicating on the papers,) met for that purpose, these supposed experts were so hopelessly puzzled that they had not only to be "coached," or put through a regular preparatory training before they could comprehend the questions; but had to be "vouchsafed accompanying answers," or, in other words, to be told the solution of what still remained to them inexplicable riddles. Nevertheless these questions are considered to be suitable tests for boys fresh from the High Schools. What sort of answers the examiners do get we learn from time to time when the veil is lifted, generally by some novice in the work of examining; and the public are invited