

lished in England, may properly be chronicled here, as the work was written in Canada, and a special edition was placed on the Canadian market. Mr. Smith had an exceptionally delicate task entrusted to him in preparing a history of the poor, faded, melancholy life of the poet Cowper. The memoir, however, is admirably written, with a thorough appreciation of the gentle life and literary work of the poet, and a reverent treatment of the incidents of his career which call for considerate yet discriminating comment. The book is invested with all the charm of style characteristic of Mr. Smith's writings. Not less valuable to the student of literature is the collected volume of Prof. Smith's *Lectures and Essays*, which, though printed for private circulation, well deserves to be recorded among Canadian book issues of the period. The work consists, in the main, of contributions to Canadian literature, em-

bracing papers on historical, social, and literary topics, which for the most part appeared in the *Canadian Monthly*.

The volume shows Mr. Goldwin Smith at his best, not only as a master of English style, but as a profound thinker and a man of scholarly acquirements and rare intellectual gifts. To the literary work on these two volumes we have to record the great national service Mr. Smith has rendered in the publication, over a period of eighteen months, of "*The Bystander*, a monthly review of current events, Canadian and general." Rarely, if ever, have passing events in any country been discussed with greater ability than the topics of the time have been treated of in this serial. Its publication has made a substantial and unique contribution to the intellectual resources of Canada, which we venture to say many have profited by.

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## ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN PUBLIC AND HIGH SCHOOLS.

BY E. B. POWERS, NASHUA, N.H.

THE expression, "Language in the Public and High Schools," is, of necessity, indefinite; for, in its broadest signification and in its most rigorous analysis, every subject of study and every mental process, since words are its signs, must contribute, directly or indirectly, to discrimination and facility in the use of language. But, upon my part at least, this discussion will be limited to those subjects and exercises which have for their avowed end and direct object systematic instruction in the English language. These will include conversation, language lessons, composition, rhetoric, grammar, and perhaps literature.

How, then, not in talk nor upon paper, but in the school-room, shall English language be taught? The cardinal principle is that from the first to the last, from the lowest to the highest grade, from the entrance at the primary school to the graduation from the university, careful training in oral recitation and description, and daily systematic work with pen and pencil are the only efficient instruments by which correct, vigorous, and idiomatic English thought and language can be developed in the mind, and expressed by the hand of the average pupil. More than this. Practice should precede theory, and thus technical grammar be-