

our schools by the multiplicity of other subjects. In the case of classics or of the modern foreign languages, the pupil is required to write frequent exercises, and this is recognized as the only efficient mode of acquiring an accurate knowledge of these languages. English, however, is treated very differently, and it seems to be imagined that a knowledge of the mother tongue comes by intuition; the least time possible is given to the study of it, and from year's end to year's end the pupil is not required to write an English essay, very rarely a simple English exercise. I am speaking of schools with the work of which I am acquainted, and from the results of the examinations I judge that the same state of things exists in other schools also. Unfortunately, to many of the pupils, English—English pure and undefiled—is really a foreign language. Beyond a certain circle, which we are sorry to think is very limited, the English of Canadian social life is very corrupt, and it falls to the teachers in both our common and high schools to deal with the difficulty. English must be treated by the teacher as virtually a foreign language, and it is only by constant writing, by continued exercises in grammar, and by reading none but the works of our purest English authors that a knowledge of English can be acquired. But this course is not followed, and the evil is increasing rather than diminishing. In very many instances the teachers are not sufficiently guarded in the language which they themselves use. Lately, when visiting a country town, I entered one of our high schools and heard the headmaster explaining the laws of equilibrium; his explanation was clear and interesting, but within ten minutes he perpetrated nine blunders in English of which a boy in the third form of an English school would have had good cause to

be ashamed. I do not suppose that I was specially honoured with these choice specimens of English, or that the gentleman is more guarded when the Inspector is present. At any rate the influence of such ignorance or carelessness is very decidedly evil, and under such circumstances we cannot expect pure English from the pupils. I am aware of another school where a master is in the habit of telling his class that such a proposition must be "drewed;" or, again, "boys, you are here to learn, and I am here to learn you."

The subjects taken up at the matriculation examinations were the same in all the Universities and were prescribed two years previously. They were the "Autumn" and "Winter" of Thomson's "Seasons," and the last three chapters of Southey's "Life of Nelson," from which an essay was to be chosen. The portion from Thomson's "Seasons" is certainly not difficult, and there was ample time to master it thoroughly; ample time to commit the whole to memory, if that had been required; ample time, certainly, to have analyzed repeatedly every sentence, and to have become familiar with every allusion. The portion set for analysis for the candidates for matriculation into Trinity, Victoria and Queen's Universities may have been a little long, but three sentences alone presented any difficulty; yet only 30 per cent. of the candidates analyzed the passage correctly. In the passage occur the expressions, "Frigid Tempe," "Hæmus cool," "Hecla flaming." To the question "Why frigid Tempe?" etc., the following answers were given: "Tempe was a place in the extreme north, and was therefore very frigid;" "Frigid Tempe, because the temple or castle of Sir Richard Temple was nice and cool and breezy;" "Frigid Tempe, because Thomson is thinking of the