

In referring to the complaints against our system of Public Schools, we believe, the Chief Superintendent fully realizes the state of public sentiment. He says: "Among the points which a comparison of statements shows to be held in common are the following:—(1.) That the course of study in the common ungraded Schools of the country needs revision, both as to the branches of study embraced therein, and as to the relative amount of time devoted to each one. (2.) That many of these Schools are not doing their elementary work well; that the pupils rarely become good and sure spellers, or easy and fluent readers, and are deficient in penmanship, and especially in a knowledge of the primary rules pertaining to punctuation, the use of capitals and the common proprieties of letter-writing and English composition. (3.) That the teaching is too bookish, narrow and technical, being largely defective in method, dull in manner, and therefore devoid of attractive-

ness, inspiration and zest. (4.) That there is too much isolation in Schools and school-work; too little sympathy between the world within and the world without the School-house; too little apprehension of the fact that Schools are places of apprenticeship wherein to learn the use of a few necessary tools and implements, wherewith to fight the battles of life and duty in the world. (5.) Finally, that the attention paid to the morals and manners of the people are unsatisfactory."

We now offer no remark in regard to the force of these complaints. We believe they are real and well grounded. That they do exist is not the fault of our School System. So many parties are concerned in the management of our Public Schools, and there are at present so many *untrained* teachers, that we cannot expect, until our new Normal Schools are in full operation, a change either in the system or efficiency of many of our Schools.

READING AS AN ART.

PAPER I.

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Not only in this Province, but throughout this continent, and wherever English is spoken, it is admitted and deplored that the language of the people is shamefully abused. As the instrument by which thought is expressed, it receives all due honor; and as human knowledge advances the noble English tongue, which conveys the thoughts of philosophy or the inspirations of genius to the multitude, fails not to fulfil its great ends. But it is the vocal delivery of thought that marks the abuse of language. Reading as an art is unknown in our schools. It is simply a mechanical effort of voice, destitute of thought, or feeling, or

meaning; and, even as a mechanical effort it is defective on everything that constitutes the music of speech. There is a fulness of vocalization, and a completeness of consonantal sound attached to every word the value and charm and force of which we only understand, when some one of superior delivery as an orator or a reader stands before us. But the demands of school training rarely go beyond a correct pronunciation of words—that is a correct accentuation—for the correct pronunciation really means the most finished utterances. Public taste is not high, nor in any sense cultivated, to appreciate or to desire a finished and