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ENGLISH AS SHE IS WROTE.

Though it has been pretty well known for some months past that the Geological Survey of Canada intended publishing a monograph on Niagara Falls, whispers have lately circulated in scientific circles that the report was held up on account of differences between the author and those in authority as to the merits of the work.

A very short synopsis of the report has been published, by the author, Dr. J. W. Spencer, in the October issue of the Geological Magazine, and if it be a sample of the work submitted to the Geological Survey, surprise at its non-appearance will be small compared to curiosity as to the statements it upholds.

The two pages referred to contain a few opinions regarding Niagara Falls and a great many opinions regarding Dr. Spencer's connection with them. Nature and the Almighty have, it seems, had very little to do with the Falls themselves, for Dr. Spencer nobly assumes full responsibility. The doctor tells us in, practically, the only grammatical sentence included in the two pages, that "Almost all the physical changes in the history of Niagara Falls have been made by me, at different times." It is a large and comprehensive statement; it is a statement that upsets some of our choicest geological theories; it is a statement that makes us despise most of what we absorbed in our Science course, but we believe the doctor—though thousands wouldn't.

Hard must it press, however, on the staid and solid Survey to accept the doctor's personal interference with poor Niagara; easy for all to understand the reluctance to give it publicity.

If the powerful professor whose almighty arm, as the hymn says, has played such havoc with the topography of this Province, had stated the rest of his premisses in grammatical English the Geological Survey might have doubted, but could never have misunderstood, his claims. A genius, however, is seldom a cosmopolitan genius, if one may use the term, and the difference the professor has made in our Falls is scarcely inferior to the indifference with which he treats our Mother tongue. What, indeed, is mood compared to metamorphism, and why should tenses trouble when terraces attract? Why indeed? They shouldn't, and they don't. Is it to be presumed that the professor—wielding a power almost creative—is likely to be trammelled by grammatical conventions? The man in the street may foster the belief that what is written is intended to be understood, but he fails to appreciate the triple advantage of Dr. Spencer's prose—it may mean anything at all, or nothing at all, or something quite different, and is naturally worth three times the money.