

speech than for mental training. Murray's view had prevailed for nearly one hundred years. To-day the reaction is complete, and we venture to predict that henceforward the truth that correctness of speech and of writing depends largely upon a distinct and readily available knowledge of the laws of grammar will become more generally accepted and acted upon, though it ought never to be exaggerated beyond its right value.

It is next to impossible for a college trained man to determine just through what influences he attained correctness of speech. A rigid inspection of his intellectual history would perhaps convince him that the rules of Grammar had nothing to do with the matter; he might attribute such correctness as he discovered in himself to the influence of his parents, his teachers, his chums at school and his friends of riper years, to sermons, lectures, plays, speeches, and books which he had heard or read, and to his own vigilant care to be conventional. If he asked himself how often he had consciously referred to the rule that the verb must be made to match its subject and the pronoun its antecedent he might conclude that the instances were rare. It is because of such conclusions that recent writers have rejected Grammar as a means of attaining correctness of speech and writing. And as long as these views are restricted to the education of the class to which these writers belong, and as long as these writers do not overrate their grammatical attainments their position is unassailable. But when their conclusions are applied to the education of boys from illiterate homes, and illiterate villages, and illiterate section-schools where the illiterate third-class teacher who "got a certificate" without himself attaining correctness, doles out illiterate English to these boys and their sisters, then the case is different and it will

be necessary for these writers to go over the grounds with a new set of data. Again, when the average college bred man assumes that he has attained correctness of speech sufficient for colloquial and ordinary literary purposes he is usually not overrating his attainments, but when he assumes that he has all the precision and solidity of sentence structure which a perfect mastery of syntax, whether acquired by studying classical or English sentence structures, has given to writers like Burke and Macaulay, or speakers like Gladstone and Edward Blake, or when he assumes that he has the perfect ease in long sentences, and the perfect self-possession in parenthetical sentences which the study of syntax would certainly give him, he assumes too much. But as the college bred man, particularly if he has occasion to speak in public either prepared or *ex tempore*, would be the first to admit this, whether with jest or lamentation according to his disposition, it need not be argued at length. De Quincy says, "we have never seen the writer who has not sometimes violated the accidence or the syntax of English Grammar;" he speaks of Grammar as a rare attainment and declares that only two or three, "one being Shakespeare, whom some affect to consider as belonging to a semi-barbarous age," approached perfection in it. In our own times Wordsworth, Tennyson, Macaulay, and Goldwin Smith have been notable for grammatical precision. Tennyson has repeatedly spoken of grammar directly and has condescended to allude to its technicalities in discussing the meaning of certain passages from his own writings. Browning shows profound respect for formal syntax even in his most elliptical sentences.

As for the necessity the illiterate feel for set rules to guide them we have the frequent testimony of them-