

noblest works in which, as Canadians, dating of our country as one people we could be engaged—in the consoli- and one nation.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

PROF. JOHN EARLE talks thus in *The Educational Review* of Madras, India, in the August number :

Those who recognize the importance of English grammar fall into two classes, according as they follow either the old scholastic tradition, or seek new lights in the modern development of philological learning. Both of these have missed the tree of philological learning. Both of these have missed profitable paths.

The man who sits down to make an English grammar has to face this practical question : Shall I furnish the student with a set of authorized phrases, shall I prescribe what to choose and what to avoid in diction, pronouncing *ex cathedra* upon all points of divergent practice, such as the split infinitive, pendant particle, and so forth ? Or, shall I pass before him the whole grammatical movement, in all the length and continuity of its operation, and thus furnish him with the leading data for the exercise of his judgment and the cultivation of his taste ?

In specific rules about diction there is not much to open the mind, not much of educational value ; and, if our current grammars are mostly concerned with such things, this has not come about as the result of a mature experience, but it is the natural consequence of certain casual antecedents, combined with the neglect of inquiring after a better system. The scholastic English grammars simply follow tradition, and, if we trace back the tradition to its source, we come to the Latin grammar, upon which our first English grammars were based. This was

necessary and unavoidable at the first ; but the influence of the model lasted too long, until it exercised a baneful restraint upon the development of a genuine English grammar. Latin is a dead language and English is a living language ; and this is a vital difference for the matter under discussion. The Latin declensions and conjugations are forever fixed. So are all the laws of Latin syntax, and the canons in classic taste in phraseology and composition, and, therefore, the Latin grammarian may safely deal in precepts, and prohibitions, because classic Latin cannot change, and a rule that was good in the sixteenth century is good now and always. But English lives and grows, and he who would teach English grammar must frame his operations accordingly. If he lays down many precise rules, his rules may be left behind by new and enterprising writers, like Thomas Carlyle and Matthew Arnold and Mr. Grant Allen. His business, then, is to inform and cultivate the grammatical instinct of the scholar, and exhibit the usage of good authors in such a manner as may best serve to exercise the judgment of the learner and develop a sound grammatical taste.

In education, the teacher of English is advised in the following kindly way by Samuel Thurber :

Give yourself no more compositions to read than you can read day by day. Learn the sorts of mistakes that your pupils make, and sometimes speak of these, if the pupils are old enough to care to listen to you. See individuals by themselves, and make sure that each is anxious to win your praise. You may praise very young