

see every branch of important study, which does not encroach upon technical education, taken up and taught with a vigor and thoroughness which would place our national schools on a level with the gymnasia of Germany. Much of the teaching now done in our Universities could very appropriately be relegated to the High Schools, much to the advantage of the Universities themselves. The future will no doubt witness continued progress in this direction, and with the increasing tendency on all sides to elevate the standard of University teaching, we can reasonably suggest that the University graduate of a half-century hence will justly be considered highly educated.

But it may be questioned whether it is not possible to neglect the rudimentary and essential steps in a course of education in the attempt to add variety and comprehensiveness. However much the latter may add to the attractiveness of a school curriculum, and however flattering to the student to be engaged in ten or a dozen different studies simultaneously, it may be doubted whether anything more than superficiality results in average cases from such a process. Under existing school regulations a boy or girl can barely read English with anything like ease before a half-dozen other studies are placed before the youthful student to be mastered. What is the consequence? However unclassical or unscientific the study of the three antiquated R's may be considered by the framers of the school curriculum of to-day, it is unquestionable that the students of the past generation were better educated in a rudimentary sense than those of the present. This is especially true in the case of the study of English, which now occupies an almost unimportant position in the curriculum of Public and High Schools. If the study of English by young pupils is on the wane, it is not the fault of the text-books. The facilities for

the study of English which the last generation possessed were not equal to those of the present—the researches of philologists had not crystallized in such elaborate and exhaustive treatises on the language as the present authorized English Grammars. But the past generation excelled in *practice*, and the pupils were drilled in daily exercises of spelling, composition, and writing from dictation until their mother tongue became their most familiar accomplishment.

It may be asked, What effect has a deficient practical acquaintance with the English language upon the higher education of students, and especially upon those who enter Universities? It is generally conceded that University culture is for the purpose of training a student for the successful pursuit of knowledge in after years, as well as for the special calling in which he is to engage. But it is not as generally remembered that a sound practical training in English is essential in this country to the successful acquirement of other branches. Moreover, a man can scarcely be called educated who has not the faculty of expressing himself in speaking or writing in at least respectable English, and as the majority of College graduates enter into more or less of public life, the value of the acquisition is at once apparent. But, is the importance attached to this homely branch of education in either school or college at all commensurate with its actual value? We think not, and certainly the results of this deficient system of training are apparent on every hand. In every college throughout the country the majority of undergraduates are deficient in English, and manifest it by the slipshod exercises and essays handed in in the different classes. There is something incongruous in the mere idea of a student applying for honors in the sciences or philosophy, when he cannot write a decent page of English, nor prevent two or three mis-spelt