

which should come quite late, are begun quite early." Professor Bain, who is of opinion that "it is more difficult than Arithmetic, and probably on a par with the beginnings of Algebra and Geometry," considers that it cannot be effectively taught to the mass before ten years of age, the difficulties of grammar being the difficulties of all science, viz., generalities couched in technical language. Such being the case, and remembering how hard it is to get the youthful mind to make any approaches towards the comprehension of grammatical niceties, I should certainly be inclined to put the age for studying grammar much later than he does. Of course, as long as education is primarily literary and secondarily scientific, this will be impossible, as grammar lies at the root of all literary training. But the time is not far distant, we may be permitted to hope, when education will submit to the inevitable reform of allowing the culture of the powers of observation to precede that of the powers of reasoning; and not until this revolution takes place in education, will the study of grammar be relegated to its true place and its proper age.* Meanwhile we have to work out some scheme by which the study we are considering may be rendered at once sufficient for the purpose of instruction and logically consistent in itself.

How little consistency there is in our grammars it is now my work to show, and in doing so I must ask your indulgence if I take you for a short time into dull and technical details. My excuse is that the subject requires it.

The primary difficulty of English Grammar teaching consists in the fact that no two books upon the subject agree together. Between the ordinary books upon French or Latin Grammar there is substantial agreement, between the different English books there is so little in common that the pupil trained on

* The writer has received from Messrs. Ginn and Heath, of Boston, a book entitled "Elementary Lessons in English for Home and School Use," the first part of which is intended to show "how to speak and write correctly." From the teacher's edition which the writer received, many valuable hints and suggestions as to the elementary teaching of English may be derived. It is noticed here, however, especially because it is an attempt to base English teaching upon the powers of perception and observation. Its plan precludes it from comparison with ordinary grammars, the technical parts being rigorously excluded.