

longs to the last year of the high-school course, and not to the commencement of the grammar grade; and even then, if English grammar is to be what many people and some teachers regard it, it doesn't rightfully belong anywhere save in a museum with the stocks and thumb-screws of the Middle Ages.

As a scholar in English grammar, I never wrote a sentence. The correct use of capitals, and punctuation were represented by x and y , since they were unknown quantities; and the elegant expression "had ought" by acclamation was crowned king of emphatic assertion. English grammar was to us the memorizing of rules and definitions, of whose application and meaning we were profoundly ignorant. And yet, one solitary ray of light penetrated the darkness; for we learned that a verb was a word which signified "to be, to do, or to suffer," and its last stage certainly included us. It was also committing to memory thrilling conjugations, which commenced with the confident "I love," and ended with the saddest of all refrains, "I might have been loved." To us it was analysis and parsing, the determination of whether some collocation of words was a complex adverbial element of the fifth or fifteenth class; and a part of the elaborate machinery consisted of bars and links from which depended, writhing in agony, certain unfortunate words and phrases, which had been impaled thereon; and it did mean the tearing down of the glorious English of Shakespeare, Milton, and Macaulay, while out of the ruins no one of us could have constructed a single sentence which would not have been a fitting monument of our ignorance and incapacity. It was an intellectual desert, more desolate and barren than Sahara, since it was unrelied by a single oasis.

When a boy shall have acquired

facility in swimming by mastering the principles of specific gravity and the laws of equilibrium; when a carpenter shall become a finished workman by learning the definitions of his various tools; when a farmer shall successfully hoe corn by memorizing from a text-book on botany a description of weeds and grasses, there will then be some hope that technical English grammar thus taught will accomplish its avowed end. It is to be hoped that, to-day, no scholar in New Hampshire is heir or joint-heir to this heritage of woe. But I suspect that truth would be compelled to confess that there are many.

But how shall English language be taught in that graded school-system which includes seventy per cent. of all the scholars in this State? On the first day of the grammar-school course should be commenced daily systematic instructions on this subject. There is now, at least, no want of excellent text-books. A dozen firms publish *Language Lessons*, *Language Primers*, and *First Lessons in English*, that are well-nigh models in this department of study. Centuries of university and collegiate experience, the history of all manufacturing industry, and every example of brilliant individual success, unite in declaring that for the highest good of the pupils the departmental system of instruction should exist in every grammar school where more than one teacher is employed. Let one instructor take charge of the subject of language in all of the classes. But inflict upon no class a teacher who considers the subject a dry one; for language is the foundation upon which is reared all intellectual growth. Select one who has a love for this particular subject, whose industry is tireless, whose energy will awaken to life, and whose enthusiasm is broad and deep as the needs of the minds committed to her charge. A single text-