

ers to be led about by Reformers, above all by Radicals. Their duty is to make their papers rather Conservative and to allow the text-books, the syllabus, and the masters, to take the lead in revolutionizing a subject.

There is a type of English master who belittles grammar. He is usually an enthusiast for the emotional reading of poetry and an advocate of high literary criticism and philosophic discussion of a poet's system of belief with children who ought to be learning to read and write simple English with decent propriety and appreciation. He holds that the relation of adverbs and subordinate clauses are too difficult, abstruse and imponderable for the brain of a High School pupil but thinks the subtlest psychology of Rossetti and Shelley quite the appropriate nourishment for the same pupil. Now this type of master does much good, be it known, and is really an excellent antidote for the logicians and scientists of algebra and physics, but he does not accomplish what he might with a sympathy for the arid and weary waste of learning dubbed English grammar.

In grammar a boy sees the mechanism of English as in botany of the flowers. At first sight botany destroys the flower, but Gray and Agassiz had more than the vulgar love for plants and animals, and so the great authors who have loved English have always shown a grammarian's knowledge of language. In grammar we find the bony frame of poetry, and the aforesaid art-master stands effeminately aghast at the desecration; but a sturdy boy feels an intense satisfaction in getting at the scientific side of language, if it be taught him with enthusiasm.

In grammar a boy gets a *confidence that will enable him to build long and intricate sentences*, and it is a safe statement that the long and rolling majesty of the periods of our greatest

prose writers and orators has invariably arisen and must of necessity arise from this confident building of sentences which only syntax-knowledge can give.

In English grammar and in a minute knowledge of the technicalities of English grammar lies the key to the study of French, German, Latin and Greek. Apparently this may be refuted, but on a closer examination it is irrefutable. A boy who does not understand the construction of his own sentence cannot translate it into a foreign tongue.

In grammar a boy gets as good a training in the inductive habit of thought as in botany, chemistry or physics, I will not say geometry. In spite of the excellencies of the Greek grammar as training, it may be questioned whether the good points and the subtle points of the Greek constructions may not be very often paralleled in English and whether there are not idiomatic subtleties of the English sentence structure to place against the Greek idioms, if we descend to a comparison not of prejudices but of facts.

Considering the immeasurable importance of language it is a question whether grammar should not be treated as an advanced University study; in the multitude of its phenomena, the difficulty of its nomology, and its importance in life it is hardly surpassed by other science branches.

It is a matter of regret that men of light and leading should desire to emasculate English studies by destroying the study which gives form and solidity to all compositions. Mere technical grammar, except as technicalities facilitate study, may be made the most useless of all time-killing devices, but the understanding of the uses and relations of words, phrases and clauses in expression is beyond all reasonable question the one only path to a scholarly and confident as