

generalizing. If these features are present the scientific faculties of observation and reasoning may be developed, and the pursuit of precision of statement, of truth of inference, and of breadth and strength of grasp becomes possible. These are the splendid possibilities of an ideal science, and these are the actual results of the study of Grammar. Instead of rocks, flowers, insects, acids and gases, Grammar has words, phrases and sentences; they are universally available in endless profusion; the specimens are infinitely various in species; the differences of species are sometimes so marked that a young child can perceive and state them; sometimes the species are so subtly blended that experts cannot say where one species ends and the next begins; the phenomena are so important that without them thought itself vanishes into the dark mental movements of the savage or of the deaf mute; so important that all the world must use them all the time; so important that their importance is lost sight of in their universal and essential omnipresence.

Physics is a great and noble study, Biology is a study that must arouse the interest of the dullest, Geometry is so ideal a subject that a poet might well regard it as the only science fit for the cultivation of an angelic reason; but where shall we find a science so profuse and varied in its subject matter, with specimens so easily collected and withal of so close and human an application to the life and business of us all?

It is probable that a rightly constructed mind closely pursuing any of the ordinary sciences would attain that perfection of action which is the common object of them all, as discipline; it may be, probably is, a prejudice of our own, but it seems to us that there is no science equal to Grammar as a means of producing strength with subtlety, accuracy with elasticity

and truth with tolerance. What any one may claim for Geometry as giving its student a conception of the standard of ideal truth will not be refuted, but while inferior to that study in that respect Grammar is more helpful to the average mind in a dozen other respects.

If nothing more could be said for Grammar than all must agree to (who are competent to judge of the matter) with regard to its worth as a science it might safely be asserted that Grammar never stood so high in the curriculum as it does to-day.

4. But English Grammar is the rock upon which rest the two great departments of the Moderns and the Classics. The university man who slights or neglects English Grammar in our High Schools, is engaged naively in hoisting himself with his own petard. The student of Latin or Greek who does not resent attacks upon the teaching of Grammar in our High Schools is like the warder of a castle who sees the enemy crossing the moat and fails to give the alarm or to help the men at the drawbridge. Only very stupid people will seriously contend that in this country Latin would flourish just as well if the Classical master had to do all the work of the teacher of English Grammar in addition to his own. We know positively that the most successful Classical masters in Ontario attribute much of their success to the work of the teachers of English Grammar, and further that the best Classical masters fail comparatively without that assistance. But the case is more serious than even that argument sets forth. If Grammar were reduced to the state that its enemies desire it should be reduced to in this Province, if it were abandoned in the Public Schools and taught in the High Schools only so far as it concerns grammatical purity for rhetorical purposes as set forth in our second argument, the study of