

with the higher seminaries of learning in England and America, is to give the ancient languages a subordinate place in the scholastic curriculum. The tendency is to ignore the traditions and experiences of the past; not because they are not worth knowing, but because, in comparison with the present, the labor required for their study is Herculean and in most cases profitless. The crusade against what are called the dead languages must not, therefore, be supposed to have originated from a sense of their inutility; nor is the present excitement, in favor of limiting the branches of education to a knowledge, exclusively, of "common things," to be referred to a settled conviction that the latter are the most essential to the formation of national character. Such a supposition would be falacious. The public mind is sound, in so far as its appreciation, in an abstract sense, of the real value of holding fast by the knowledge of the ancient world, applies. The veneration for the past is an instinct that cannot be eradicated, however it may be obscured, for a time, by false reasoning or the exigencies of conflicting causes; and the prevalent disposition to depreciate the value of Greek and Latin especially, by persons who have not had the advantage of studying those languages or who have not been able to turn their study afterwards to any profitable account, is to be traced to the apparently insuperable difficulties and disgust attending the process of learning them. In the abstract, therefore, and in so far as the latent sentiment is an indication, the call for the teaching of "common things" is an imposed necessity. On the other hand, and with respect to the crusade itself, carried on to expel the ancient languages or, at least, to depreciate their value and importance, the threatened consequences appear rather alarming. Setting aside what has been done in England, partly a result of which has been the University Reform Commission; or in the United States where the teaching of Greek and Latin is becoming every day more subservient to the professional pecuniary demands of business men; we have had, within the last few years, in Canada, more particularly in Montreal and Toronto, various indications of a disposition to modify the old order of things so as to make our schools conform to the progressive materialism of the age. The claims of commerce and "English classics" have been ably set forth, and so also of a knowledge of "common things;" and in all cases this has been done, more or less to disparage the claims of the ancient tongues. What might be the result, in the course of a few years, if this disposition should receive no check, is too evident; for as modern progress is assumed to consist in the appliances of steam and the mechanical arts to the purposes of commerce, those branches of learning which, directly, contribute nothing to gratify the ruling commercial propensity would be sure to sink down to a state of merely nominal existence. And a change so fatal to the best interests of education would thus be brought about, not from a settled conviction, nor even a belief, that the

ancient languages are less to be desired as a branch of education, but, simply, for the reason that an imperfect knowledge of them cannot be acquired without an expenditure of time, and money, and patience, altogether disproportioned to the advantages afterwards to be derived.

The *Canadian Quarterly Review* has been commenced chiefly with a design to explain a system of studying ancient and modern languages, in a way exceedingly simple, and at the same time critical. This announcement may excite incredulity, with many, who have had cognizance of the erroneous pretensions advanced by numerous publications, professing to teach without a master and mostly on, what is called, the Hamiltonian System; while others may imagine there is no short road possible, wherein to comprehend the endless rules and exceptions, common to the various methods of teaching those languages with which we are most familiar. A cursory examination, however, of the English or Latin Grammar is sufficient to satisfy any one that the rules are altogether arbitrary. This fact is itself sufficient to account for the difficulties with which the whole path of grammatical study is beset. It is the radical error of every grammar to be met with; and has been transmitted from time immemorial through successive generations, without having undergone any material modification. But, to understand the laws of language, it is necessary to go back to first principles. A merely imitative habit may be convenient, but cannot satisfy the reason, and therefore is unsatisfactory. Nothing short of a complete renunciation of the paraphernalia of substantives, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, &c., and a resort to the natural elements of speech, can ever explain the true theory. By taking this course we soon discover that mankind has but one grammar, one set of rules for all languages, simple in its conception, and admirably precise when applied in practice.

Hitherto it has been customary to assign great importance to the study of Latin, chiefly as a disciplinary exercise for the mind; and in the numerous treatises which have come under our notice, advocating its claims, we have often felt surprise that so much consequence should be attached to a supposed advantage of, really, so very little intrinsic value; while its main uses remained wholly unnoticed. We cannot, however, estimate too highly the advantages of Latin when we consider that it forms the principal element of the English language; and, till very recently, was the exclusive medium of correspondence, among the learned, throughout Europe; and, moreover, still constitutes the key to much that is requisite to be known in the history and institutions not only of the Romans, but also of the early Germanic tribes, and the civilization of the East. Greek, for similar reasons is indispensable to the English student; but the value of these two languages is still farther enhanced, by the circumstance, that in them are preserved the oldest manuscript copies of the Holy Scriptures