

the determination of which he does not possess the requisite knowledge. This is not a mere possibility. Many years ago (at a time, doubtless, when the teaching of English was in a very different state from that in which it now is) I read the papers in English Grammar at the Intermediate Examination. The question called for, or at least permitted, the discussion of such subtle points; the erudition displayed by some of the candidates who cited at length the opinions of various authorities, was quite astonishing. One could not but feel, notwithstanding a certain amount of discipline in such work, that time of the pupils might have been better employed.

In the same way it is possible to carry work even in Analysis beyond what is desirable. A candidate who is not able to analyse every passage in English Literature, may yet have a quite sufficient grasp of the structure of the sentence. The obstacles to analysis arise from the length of the sentence and the separation of related clauses, or from the abnormal constructions, or above all, from the abstruse and unfamiliar character of the thought. It is the latter peculiarity especially which causes the difficulty in one of the cases referred to by Mr. Libby, the ninth section of Wordsworth's *Immortality Ode*. The thoughts and experiences there unfolded, are altogether beyond the range of ordinary boys and girls. The pupil's failure to analyse the stanza might arise, not from ignorance of grammar, but from incapacity to grasp and follow the poet's thought. Analysis is not a purely formal matter. In Latin it might be quite possible for a student to parse a word in a sentence which he did not understand; the form might sufficiently indicate the character and relations of the word. This he could rarely do in English, and in analysis, at any rate,

it is essential that the meaning of the clauses should be understood. The meaning is the main element in determining their kind and connection. A pupil on leaving school might be unable to analyse a given passage, and yet do so with ease two or three years later, although meanwhile he had made no further study of formal grammar; simply because his increased experience and maturity enabled him to comprehend the thought.

A less important branch of the study of grammar in the schools is Historical Grammar,—the history of the language and kindred subjects. This study should be confined within very narrow limits; the pupil does not possess that familiarity with the various stages of the language which alone can make the work really fruitful. To study Historical Grammar without this familiarity is like studying Botany without specimens. It is proper that the school-boy should have some elementary information as to the history of his mother-tongue,—that he should know what a family of languages is, the names of the leading languages of the Indo-European family, that modern English is developed by a series of imperceptible changes from an earlier form, and what are the more important factors in these changes. But time ought not to be spent on the exact relationships of the languages of this family, on Grimm's law, on the minute differences between English in its various periods, on an elaborate study of roots, etymologies, word formation, and so forth.

The best course in pure linguistics would be one which would aim, not primarily at making the pupil acquainted with the past history of language, or at exhibiting the laws of speech through the relationship of modern English, Anglo Saxon, or Middle English, but at awakening his attention to the laws of language as exhibited