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ENGLISH IN THE HIGH SCHOOLS.

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IN an article in the December number of the EDUCATIONAL MONTHLY, Mr. Libby makes a valuable contribution to the discussion of the position of English Grammar in the High School curriculum. In the same uncontroversial spirit I desire to make some suggestions, not merely in regard to this narrower question, but also in regard to the whole subject of *English* in the High Schools. The opinions of one who is not actually engaged in the work under consideration, are in some measure invalidated by this very fact; they are not the outcome of direct experience. The views of an outsider have, however, a value of their own, and the work of the present writer brings him very close in interest and point of view to the teacher of English in the schools.

With Mr. Libby's article I am for the most part, in agreement; especially do I heartily concur in his estimate of the necessity and value of a *thorough* discipline in that main part of grammar which leads up to a complete comprehension of the structure of the sentence. As to the question

when, in the school course, that sufficient comprehension is acquired, those practically acquainted with the schools must judge. It is worth noting, however, that it is quite possible to carry the study of grammar, as well as of English in general, to an injudicious extent—injudicious because of the limited time available for school work, and because of the other subjects which ought to be mastered within that limited time.

There are, for example, many subtle and difficult points in English grammar, some of them extremely nice questions of logic, some unsettled by usage, many of them of no practical importance. These difficulties arise from the fact that our language is a living organism in a condition of growth and change, whereas formal grammar is an abstract science with limited and inelastic categories. Such difficulties when solvable, are determined by extremely subtle considerations, or by historical investigation. Accordingly, it is quite possible that the pupil's time may be employed on matters for which his immature mind is little fitted, or for