to illustrate the solar system? How have astronomers been so clever as to find out the names of the stars?" On the question of over-pressure, Mr. Romanes quoted the testimony of Mrs. Henry Sidgwick and Sir Spencer Wells, and stated that he had discovered but few cases of break-down. This proved, however, not that the system was perfect, but that English girls have marvellously vigorous constitutions. He then stated some grave abuses which had come to his knowledge, against which he desired to see public opinion directed. In some of the high schools, no check is placed on the ambition of young girls to distinguish themselves: there is no provision for bodily exercise, no play-ground, and the gymnasium, where there is one, is not used by the harder-worked students. A correspondent informed him that in one of the most famous high schools, girls usually began work at six, and worked ten or eleven hours a day: as examination approached, these hours were increased to fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, or even eighteen hours. The time fixed by the school time-table was, it is true, eight hours, but it was absolutely impossible for any girl to keep to this.

ENGLISH IN THE PREPARATORY SCHOOLS.

The changes that have taken place in recent years in the methods of language-study have done much to advance the cause of good learning. Every teacher owes a lasting debt to those who have wrought out and to some extent perfected these new and advanced methods. The debt of the teacher is, however, but a tithe of that due from those who have thus been spared laborious and well-nigh fruitless gropings through the labyrinths of a complex grammar and the blind by-paths of inexplicable idioms. Where the new methods have been wisely held in check by a recognition of the legitimate functions of grammatical study, the results have been in the main entirely satisfactory. Languages are now learned much more rapidly and easily than was the case a few years ago, and are thus the earlier brought into requisition as the means to some other and better end. Parrot-like knowledge of inflections and rules has ceased to be the goal of linguistic scholarship: the ability to use a language as a medium between the possessor and something to be sought in literature or life, is now more generally recognized as the purpose of such studies and the main reason for them.

It is somewhat astonishing, that, in view of all this, some more practical and rational method has not been adopted in the study of our own language as a vehicle of thought. In many of the colleges and universities there is, to be sure, a well-defined mania for philological research and an abnormal appetite for Anglo-Saxon roots. In our common schools this tendency is to some extent imitated by an unwearying attention to the minutiae of grammatical structure and the puzzles of syntactical forms. Of practice and humdrum drill in the use of English, there is little, in either school or college, in comparison with the importance of the subject and the needs of the students.

This lack of proper training in the use of English is due largely to two causes: 1°, the want of some efficient method in the teaching of English; and, 2°, the reluctance shown by our best teachers to engaging in this branch of work. Possibly the second reason may be the result of the first; possibly it is the result of some inherent prejudice, or some unconfessed doubts as to the dignity of this kind of work. As to these last reasons, it must be acknowledged, that, under the existing methods, the work is far from agreeable or inspiring to either teacher or taught, and no teacher can justly be blamed for preferring to avoid it whenever possible. The question may well be asked, however, whether this very reluctance is not one main cause why this important branch of work has been so long neglected, and whether, if our best-equipped and most earnest teachers were to apply themselves to a solution of the problem, it would not soon be solved as easily as were numerous other knotty problems in educational methods.

The writer has had occasion to test at college entrance examinations the familiarity of applicants with the forms and use of their mother-tongue. The results have been in the main unsatisfactory, and at times discouraging. The commonest grammatical forms seem entirely unfamiliar; a composition of a dozen sentences exhibits the most utter disregard of the simplest grammatical and rhetorical constructions. Students who construe Virgil with ease, who are on familiar terms with Euclid, and see no serious difficulties in Legendre, stumble and hesitate and fail in the use of their own language. To illustrate. At a recent examination the students were asked to decline the pronoun 'thou.' A large per cent of those examined failed utterly. Here are a few examples of how this inoffensive pronoun was treated: —

1. Thou, thine, thou; their, theirs, them.
2. Thou, yours, thou; same.
3. Thou, thine, thy; they, theirs, they.
4. Thou, thine, thee; they, theirs, them.

These four are fair examples of the whole list of failures. Nor must it be supposed that these young gentlemen had not been prepared in schools that stand fairly well. One was a graduate of a Massachusetts high school; one was a graduate of the preparatory department of one of the largest colleges in Ohio; two were prepared in New York high schools: the four taken together represent the educational system of three of the wealthiest, most populous, and most progressive states in the Union. In other simple grammatical forms a like ignorance was displayed; as, for instance, when one student declined Moses thus: —

Moses, Moses, Mosaic.

Such examples might be multiplied indefinitely, but these will suffice to prove how utterly inadequate is much of the preparatory instruction in the simple forms of our almost grammarless tongue.

When the work of writing English is considered, the results are almost equally barren. Scarcely an applicant for admission can write the simple essay required at the examination without some blunder in orthography, punctuation, capitalization, and, what is worst of all, grammatical accuracy. I say nothing of the faults in logical arrangement and rhetorical effectiveness. These qualities might, and indeed should, be taught in the preparatory schools; but I am sure every teacher of English in the colleges will be fully satisfied if students are sent up well equipped for writing English with grammatical correctness and some degree of ease. Such a foundation as this would enable the teacher to begin at once the work of aiding the student to acquire a clear and forcible style, instead of wasting time, as is now necessary, in doing the work of the preparatory schools.

The trouble seems to be that the preparatory schools do not, as a rule, give enough attention to the study of English. There is in the grammar schools a certain amount of grammatical drill and of analyzing and parsing. Much of this is good; much is worthless. So far as any useful end is concerned, the mere ability to analyze and parse an intricate English sentence counts for little. The ability to write a simple English sentence with accuracy and effectiveness would be of vastly greater advantage to the student. When the student attempts to pass an examination in any first-class college, this fact is made clearly evident. The main requirements at such a time are three, — first, the ability to recognize the few grammatical inflections that still persist in English, and to illustrate these, together with certain sentential constructions, by examples written at the examination; second, the ability to point out in sentences given at the examination the examples of false syntax and of offences against idiomatic English; third, the ability to write, on some familiar subject, a short composition which shall prove that the applicant possesses a reasonably full vocabulary, and is able to construct grammatical and idiomatic sentences and to combine them with ordinary skill. Of the three tests, the last named is by far the most important.

This brings us to a consideration of the work necessary to be done in the preparatory schools in order to fit students for college entrance examinations in English. In sketching this I shall not attempt to be exhaustive, but simply to indicate the main lines on which preparatory work ought to proceed.

1. There ought to be a thorough grounding of pupils in the inflections of English. This does not imply that pupils should be put through a severe course of training in all the niceties of grammar, but simply that the necessary inflections should be made perfectly familiar. For the accomplishment of this end, any one of the numerous 'methods' of language-study may be profitably employed; but it is my conviction that patient drill, accompanied by constant practice in the use of the various grammatical forms, is the best and simplest method. It cannot be too emphatically impressed upon the teacher that there ought, under any method, to be constant illustration, in actual work, of all difficult points in grammatical structure. It is especially important that the student be thoroughly drilled in the use of idiomatic English, and be taught to observe the distinction between closely related forms; as, for instance, 'shall' and 'will,' 'may' and 'can,' and other forms which persons ignorant of the idiom of the language are likely to confound.

2. There should be a reasonable amount of instruction in the simple intellectual qualities of English style. Dr. Abbott says, "Almost any English boy can be taught to write clearly, so far at least as clearness depends upon the arrangement of words. . . . [It] is a mere matter of adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, and auxiliary verbs, placed and repeated according to definite rules."[1] Clearness is simply an intellectual quality, not depending, like strength and elegance, upon emotional or aesthetic gifts. Clearness, therefore, may easily be taught in the preparatory schools, and the principles and rules upon which it rests may be made a part of the intellectual equipment of the student. Beyond this it is useless to go. The study of rhetoric, in any proper sense of that term, is a waste of time, a source of confus-

[1] *How to write clearly*, pp. 5 and 6.

ion to students, and often an absolute hindrance to the acquisition of a good English style.

3. Throughout the entire course of a pupil's studies, from the time he can construct a simple sentence to the time he leaves the highest grade, there should be constant and rigorous drill in the writing of English. This part of the instruction is by far the most important, and is, at the same time, the part most frequently neglected. The writer has already published his views regarding the proper methods to be pursued in the teaching of English composition, and will not, therefore, go into that subject in this paper.[1] It is sufficient to say, in general terms, that all instruction in English composition should have constantly in view the immediate capabilities and needs of the students. It is no uncommon occurrence to have students in the lower classes of a college complain that they are asked to write upon subjects much simpler than those given in the high schools Students who have been stringing together a lot of senseless verbiage on 'Sunshine and shadow,' 'True greatness,' 'Heroism,' 'Honesty,' and the like, cannot see why they should be asked to descend to the trivial matters of every-day life, and to a discussion of subjects about which they know something. Yet one composition written on a familiar subject, composed with reasonable care, and then carefully and sympathetically criticised by the teacher, is worth a dozen perfunctory affairs, hurriedly written, upon subjects entirely beyond the experience or knowledge of the pupil. Careful and conscientious work in English composition would afford the best possible basis for future studies in all fields. With this should go, if possible, a reasonable familiarity with good writers, in order that the vocabulary of the pupil might be enlarged, and models of good and wholesome English be constantly presented.

In conclusion, it is only just to say that the charge of neglecting the proper study of English does not lie at the door of the preparatory schools alone. It is only within very recent years that English has begun to receive a fair share of attention in the colleges and universities. The tendency of modern education is toward the practical. It is beginning to be seen that the most useful weapon in the hands of any scholar is a thorough and practical knowledge of his own language. This conviction is arousing our colleges to better methods of work in this department, and is, in consequence, making necessary better preparation in the secondary schools. This preparation they can and should provide.

ERNEST W. HUFFCUT.

[1] See the *New England journal of education* for December and January.

SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES IN THE UNITED STATES.

COMPLAINT has been made by many scholars that the study of the Scandinavian languages is almost entirely neglected in our colleges and universities, and that the general public is not alive to the importance of this study. Of the justice of the complaint there can be no doubt; but that the neglect is continually becoming less and less, it is my object to prove in this short paper. As no complete account of the Scandinavian movement in our colleges has ever been written, and as it is necessary, in order to arrive at a logical conclusion, that there should be a clear understanding of this movement, it may not be amiss if I preface my remarks with a brief sketch of the origin and development of Scandinavian studies in the United States. Though I have taken great pains to make the account complete, it is possible that some colleges may not receive the notice due them. Only college instruction will be discussed, the consideration of the purely literary side of the question being necessarily omitted.

To the University of the city of New York is due the credit of founding the first chair of the Scandinavian languages and literature. In 1858, Rev. Paul C. Sinding of Copenhagen was appointed the first professor in this department, and occupied the position, with honor to himself and the university, till his resignation in 1861. Professor Sinding's work had to do chiefly with Danish history and literature; and of the interest his work awakened in New York, we may judge from the fact that his 'History of Scandinavia' ran through seven editions in a few years. Since Professor Sinding's resignation, the chair has remained unoccupied.

In the same year that the study of the Scandinavian languages was abandoned in the University of the city of New York, the Norwegian Luther college was founded at Halfway Creek, Wis., and in 1862 was removed to Decorah, Io., where it is still located. It "owes its origin to the growing demand for educated men who could preach the Word of life to the rapidly increasing Norwegian population of this country." Luther college is, then, the first purely Scandinavian college in America. The instruction has always had a distinctively Norwegian tendency, and many of the text-books are printed in that language. The faculty and the students are almost entirely of Norwegian birth or parentage, and the Norwegian language and literature are studied through the whole college course.

On the opening of Cornell university in 1868, Willard Fiske was appointed professor of the North European languages, and instruction was