

of last year has increased from 8,605 to 9,053, the number of children in the preparatory class is less by 46 than in 1891. The ranks of Standard IV. and upper classes have been swelled by the addition of 277 pupils, while Standard I. shows an increase of 223. A small part at least of the latter increase is due to a misinterpretation on the part of not a few teachers of Regulation 5, concerning the inspection of schools. This regulation, which provides that a head teacher shall furnish the Inspector with a written explanation of the reason for not presenting children more than eight years old in Standard I., has been construed to imply a compulsory presentation of such children for standard examination.

Summarising the reasons given for the retention of children above eight years of age in the preparatory class, we find—(1) That some pupils had been enrolled only a very short time before the examination; (2) that others, whose school life had been longer, had attended very indifferently; and (3) that the rest were intellectually weak. The number of children thus kept back does not appear to be unduly large, while the reasons assigned could in almost every case be accepted as satisfactory.

Of the work done in the educational field in this district during the past year we think there is reason to speak hopefully. The teachers have for the most part been loyal to the Board, to their pupils, and to the cause of education; and though in some places the following notes appear to cast censure on the minority, we wish to suggest what ought to be rather than portray what is.

Were we asked to name the class in which the best work is done by individual pupils we should say Standard VI. The reasons are not far to seek: many of the pupils look forward to appointments of various kinds; they are expected by their parents to bring credit to their family by passing the highest examination in the primary school curriculum; with added years they begin to have dawns of independence and responsibility; and, above all, they now enjoy, in fullest measure, the teacher's confidence and sympathy. There is, withal, even in this standard, a residue of pupils who, not without ambition, but without the effort that should attend it, would gladly pass with somewhat less than the minimum of necessary attainments, and who are sometimes interceded for by the teacher on the plea that, be the result what it may, their school career is ended. Now a glance at the syllabus will show that pupils who pass Standard VI. are expected by the Education Department to do honour to the national system, in whatever positions it may be their lot to be placed. Being thus a kind of passport to the initial steps of an upward business career, a pass in Standard VI. should be granted to those alone who clearly establish a legitimate claim to it.

The practice of privately examining young people desirous of passing Standard VI. we must, through stress of work, discontinue. In any case it is manifestly unfair that those who are barely proficient in the pass subjects merely should, with respect to Civil Service and other appointments, be placed on the same level as, or even on a higher level than, pupils who have fully met the requirements of the syllabus. Young people who, having left school without passing Standard VI., subsequently find that a pass in that standard would be advantageous, should present themselves for examination in one of the public schools and submit to the standard and other tests in the ordinary way.

These notes on the status of Standard VI. pupils suggest a brief review of the general and special ends of primary education, with reference, more or less direct, to the manner in which they are secured in this district, and with a further reference to the extent to which our pupils are furnished with the mental and moral arms necessary for successfully facing the realities of life. It is an old truth, but a truth becoming every day clearer to thinking people, that the root principle in education is development—mental, moral, and physical. Not only are pupils to be developed in these three directions; they are themselves also, by having their minds stored with energising power, to acquire facility in, and be enriched with a bent towards, self-development. As was said in a recent speech by a well-known public man in England, "The end of all culture is to elevate the moral, to nerve, enrich, and discipline the mental, nature; it should fertilise and liberalise as well as enlighten." In a rising community such as ours, however, the practical and more immediately utilitarian phases of education necessarily and rightly bulk largely in the minds of the public. There are certain things which, for the common duties of citizenship, our pupils should be able to know, and to know unerringly, if not even unreflectively. But, as has been well said, reading and writing by themselves are no more education than the lane that leads into the field is the field itself; and teachers might just as well try to feed a flock of sheep on the flints of the lane as to educate children by giving them mere reading and writing. Viewing primary education from the double standpoint of practical and developmental value we venture the following remarks on the various subjects as taught in our schools.

Though the results in arithmetic sometimes appear to be indifferent it is really well taught—from the point of view of mental development, perhaps the best taught of our common school subjects. On the practical side also it is for the most part treated in an efficient manner, though, in this connection, mental arithmetic might be more largely employed in familiarising pupils with dealings incident to every-day life; and, in the same connection, each of the schools in the district might with great advantage to the pupils be provided with sets of the weights and measures actually in use.

The earnest seekers after effective methods in the teaching of reading are comparatively few, and the general standard of proficiency in this subject is correspondingly low. On its practical side the subject suffers throughout the whole school course from a rooted aversion that many teachers have to the use of the blackboard in helping their pupils to encounter difficulties. Children are but little enlightened by off-hand statements; their minds should, if possible, be riveted to the matter in hand by means of an appeal to the senses. In teaching infants to read, pupil-teachers should always select their own materials for lessons, and, with the sympathy of their pupils, work them up on the blackboard. They would thus form a habit of prime importance in the teaching of reading. Regarded as a means of mental development, reading, we fear, occupies a very humble place in many of our schools. Seldom do teachers pause to vivify by apt illustration,