

different cases that come before our notice? One will simply play the nursery governess, and, with nothing more than a hint here or a reproof there, loiter about the room for half the day, while the children listlessly loll or wearily pick their way through a tangle of books, papers, slates, and rules. Another, more energetic, teaches as little collectively, but wears herself out in continual supervision, distractedly running from child to child, and never realising that a few minutes with the blackboard would instruct the whole class more effectively, with a great saving of time and energy. A third, instead of systematically carrying on the work professedly done according to the time-table, devotes most of the time to "shoppy" conversation with the Inspector, evidently being under the impression that he, poor innocent, is best beguiled by conversation, or has come to be entertained. The vagaries of the time-table are often too serious to be even amusing. In a few instances we still find no visible sign of its existence, and one tires of the oft-repeated excuses "not yet complete; a new one in process of formation," or the more original but already thrice-repeated "an accident happened to it just before the visit." In some cases also, but fortunately somewhat rare ones, a workable time-table, neatly drawn up, is posted on the wall, but no attempt whatever is made to follow it. Evidently it is meant for show rather than for use, unless its purpose is solely to interest the poor deluded Inspector, who finds trouble enough in its dark labyrinths, especially when unaided by the light of an intelligible summary. But the most common forms of eccentricity are to be found among the mental offspring even of teachers of some ability. The time-table, for example, clearly shows a certain lesson which, when its time comes, entirely disappears, either through others overlapping or another being substituted for it. The excuses given by the makers for so ignoring their own creations show that, in one direction at least, our teachers are not destitute of resource. In one case where a lesson had been thus omitted the teacher's explanation was charming in its simplicity: "Yes, that is my regular lesson, but I did not give it to-day because you are here!"

All the faults to which we refer may be roughly collated under one head—"want of method," a defect which is common enough in the majority of our schools, and from which many of the very best are not wholly free. The work is too often spasmodic, different subjects being taken by fits and starts, with a tremendous spurt at the close of the year, instead of the instruction in each subject being orderly, systematic, and continuous from year's end to year's end.

The following table, extracted from the annual return, gives a general summary of results for the whole district:—

Classes.				Presented.	Examined in Standards.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
							Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	...	...	...	180	...	...	...
Standard VI.	...	...	...	365	354	226	13 11
" V.	...	...	...	619	597	388	12 10
" IV.	...	...	...	777	754	567	12 1
" III.	...	...	...	913	885	696	10 8
" II.	...	...	...	784	767	672	9 7
" I.	...	...	...	783	760	707	8 4
Preparatory	...	...	...	1,630	...	...	...
Totals	...	...	...	6,051	4,117	3,256	11 3*

The mean of average age is exactly the same as last year—11 years 3 months—which was lower than that recorded by any other district in the colony. The decrease in the proportion that the preparatory class bears to the whole number and the corresponding increase in the class above Standard VI. are matters for congratulation. We are also pleased to find that the number of children—182—who were over eight years of age, and yet considered unfit for presentation in Standard I., has also considerably diminished, being now the smallest number recorded for the last five years. The reasons assigned for their non-presentation were—in sixty-three cases, irregularity of attendance; in fifty, shortness of school-life; and in sixty, exceptional dulness. For nine no reasons were given, and to guard against such omissions in the future we desire that, as in the case of standard children, the names and ages of all preparatory children be fully entered on the examination schedules, when the "reasons" may be indicated in the column for remarks.

In our recent examinations fifteen schools have proved unsatisfactory, but in six of these, owing to changes of staff and temporary suspension of work, the present teachers cannot reasonably be held responsible for the results.

A few notes are appended concerning those subjects which, in our opinion, call for special mention:—

Arithmetic.—For the last three years the Education Department has taken upon itself the task of setting the arithmetic tests for the higher standards. Although some few schools, and notably Waimangaroa, have found this year very little difficulty with the subject, yet generally it has been a veritable bugbear to the district. From a careful perusal of the Inspectors' reports of the last two years we should conclude that seven at least of the other educational districts have had a somewhat similar experience, though probably to a less extent, and have found the arithmetic more difficult of accomplishment than formerly. Some of our teachers, however, who have an idea that the work demanded from the children is hopelessly beyond their powers, will be surprised to read the following extracts from the South Canterbury report for the year 1895: "Presented, 5,223; present,

* Mean of average age.