

Table I. shows that 89 per cent. of the children examined in the standards obtained a pass 91 per cent. passed in 1895. The following are the percentages of passes in the several standards: Standard VI., 91; Standard V., 84; Standard IV., 82; Standard III., 87; Standard II., 96; Standard I., 98. The mean of the percentages of passes awarded by Inspectors in the four higher standards is 86; that of 1895 is 88; the mean of the percentages of passes awarded by head masters in the two lower standards is 97, the same as in 1895. Of those who passed their standards, 49 per cent. in Standard VI., 52 per cent. in Standard V., 42 per cent. in Standard IV., and 34 per cent. in Standard III. failed in one pass-subject.

Table I. shows a fall in the average age of making the standard passes. In each of the three higher standards there is a fall of three months; in Standard III., one month; in Standard II., two months; but in Standard I. there is a rise of three months. In 1895 pupils over eight years of age to the number of 1,129 were not presented in any standard; but in 1896 only 1,039 were not presented, and the rise in the average age of Standard I. is probably due to the presentation and passing of an unusual proportion of these backward pupils. It is the duty of head masters to assign reasons for the non-presentation of these pupils, and the reasons assigned are generally satisfactory; but non-presentation in Standard I. should not necessarily imply detention in the preparatory classes. The presence of these backward pupils is generally detrimental to the work, discipline, and tone of these classes, and it would be well for all concerned were they placed whenever possible with children nearer their own age. They are old enough to stand a little extra pressure, accompanied by a little extra encouragement and guidance, and in the course of their progress upwards through the school they will probably reach the passing point of one or the other of the standards. We specially advocate promotion in the case of children of weak intellect. Their presence in the infant departments of the larger schools is an injustice to their young companions, to the teacher, and to themselves; and, though their passing a standard is hopeless, their apparent association in work and discipline with children of their own age may give some tone to their faculties. We shall gladly allow them to go through the routine of the standard examinations along with their companions. We have noted instances in which such children have profited by being thus promoted. In one case a child whose speech was unintelligible while in the preparatory classes was present in a standard class at examination. Of course there could not be a "pass," but to our surprise the child passed in reading. That was clear gain. In another instance we saw a child deliberately brace itself up at the beginning of the arithmetic lesson, work correctly the first sum, a simple one in addition, dream while the second was worked, write nonsense for the third, and copy the fourth, smiling to the Inspector at intervals while doing it. Still, there were two minutes of self-control, the result of the gentle pressure by a wise teacher and of the force of example.

In our last report we advocated the introduction of Kindergarten employments into the infant-rooms of the larger schools. The ideals of Pestalozzi, and the principles, methods, and discipline of Froebel, influence to a large extent the conduct of these departments; but still in many of them there is little variety in the occupations of the little ones. With a wearisome monotony writing tables, making figures, drawing straight lines, reading, spelling, and writing letters succeed each other, and but for the satisfaction of pleasing the teacher and earning a word or a look of commendation there would be but little pleasure in the school life. A child loves dearly to be doing, and we think that half of the slate-work might well be set aside, and ear and tongue, hand and eye be employed in such work as a child, left to Nature's teaching, finds for himself. We should like to see in every infant-room programme provision made for a systematic course of sense-training, leading up to a systematic course of object-lessons. Teachers might well draw up such courses, each for herself, according to her circumstances, and to facilitate this work the list of object-lessons prescribed some years ago is cancelled. The Kindergarten occupations were specially designed for this work, and we again commend them to the attention of teachers.

In our last report we announced our attention to test every class in unseen reading-books. This we did. A pupil who failed in the unseen test was tested again in the prepared book, and passed or failed by that test. Only about 5 per cent. of those who were presented in the four higher standards failed in reading. The passes were divided into three classes, and Table II. shows with fair accuracy the condition of the schools with regard to reading.

TABLE II.

Class.				Read well the unseen books.	Read satisfactorily the unseen books.	Failed in the unseen but passed in the prepared books.
Standard VI.	...	...	...	37 per cent.	46 per cent.	17 per cent.
" V.	...	...	...	35 "	47 "	18 "
" IV.	...	...	...	33 "	47 "	20 "
" III.	...	...	...	31 "	45 "	24 "

In our last report we expressed the opinion that, "so far as the prepared books are concerned, reading is, in quite a large proportion of schools, distinctly good." Table II. warrants us in expressing that opinion without the limitation. When we consider that the large city and suburban schools were examined with but short notice of the altered character of the test, and that many teachers who had ample notice of it made no special preparation to meet it, we cannot but characterize these results as creditable to our teachers. We cannot, however, commend so highly the reading of the preparatory classes. Teachers themselves were frequently surprised by the poor reading in the