

the tabular results. Comments in detail upon the reading, writing, and other subjects and points examined are but a waste of time, type, ink, and paper by paraphrasing the remarks and complaints made even since school-inspection began. "Under unskilful teaching the mechanical and rote acquirements and the mere tasks of the memory may 'pass,' the exercises of the intelligence 'fail,' the notation is bad; the arithmetical examples are wanting in intelligent method; the grammar is downright nonsense."

I concur with other Inspectors who attribute such failures to "negligence" and "unskilful teaching;" and, as to grammar, that "many teachers will have to change not merely their modes of teaching, but even their entire conception of the subject;" and that "numbers, in the higher classes, fail as to the syntax relations." The worst failures in grammar in Canterbury are, however, in some measure attributable to a capricious treatment of it as a "non-essential," and also to teachers having overlooked the subject while dazzled by a laudable aim at an advanced course. The subject being the most difficult one taught in the common schools, children of a debased vernacular tongue cannot, during their school life, fully overtake the present requirements and the nicer distinctions of the language; but it is the duty of teachers to lay a greater stress upon the intelligent study of the subject, and of their Inspector not to pass such gross errors as "he see," "he seen," "him throne," "him and the ship was blowed to pieces." Results can only be stated strictly, and I deplore any such laxity as will give a false impression of a scholar's proficiency: for instance, that he has passed either the grammar or the arithmetic of his standard when such is not the case.

I have not yet had the thorough satisfaction of proving by irrefragable evidence that all the success I had expected has been attained by massing large numbers in central schools; for "the average age per standard passed" is often lower in the smaller than in the larger districts—under diligent and efficient teaching in outside districts than under nominal and superficial supervision in large town schools. This will be fully exemplified by comparing the average-age table annexed with that showing the number and percentage of standards passed; but, to quote a single instance, *cæteris paribus*, as to tone and discipline, but with even inferior *matériel*, the scholars at Leithfield are better brought on for their age than in the Christchurch schools. To illustrate the discrepancy more fully: a reference to Table I. will show a larger proportion of "scholars in attendance," "presented in standards" at Ashley Bank, Brookside, Cust, Fernside, Leithfield, Loburn, Riccarton, and Woodend—successful country schools—than in those of Christchurch, Lyttelton, Kaiapoi, Rangiora, and St. Albans. These larger schools cannot, therefore, have yet attained their full efficiency. The best strength in them is either wasted in nominal supervision, or concentrated upon the teaching of comparatively small numbers of advanced scholars at the head of the school; while large classes of backward scholars remain in the hands of the junior teachers. The remedy consists, I think, in the more even distribution of the staff, so as to strengthen the infants' department in the larger schools, also in granting the staff according to the number in each department, instead of upon the gross attendance; in economizing the time spent in fruitless supervision by devoting more of it to practical teaching, and so giving a more complete responsibility to each competent teacher in charge either of a department of the main school or of a side school.

But I think that the only immediate and absolute cure for the instinctive ambition to produce a comparatively few and advanced scholars to the detriment of the lower classes will be found in a good system of "payment by results," such as will render it as important to "pass" a unit from the infants' as from the highest classes. Due allowance must, however, be made that, until recently, and even now, we have wanted buildings suitable and teachers competent for the conduct of large infant schools. Teachers of some few years' practice and experience, added to their training at a normal school for this special work, are those really required. In their absence, the appointments have necessarily been filled up by persons of little, if any, fitness for the work they have undertaken, and by young persons whose training and experience have not, as yet, been sufficient to qualify them for the charge of infants' schools.

In any special commendation of the efficiency of the teaching staff, it is very satisfactory to be able to report that the English-trained masters specially brought out from Home must deservedly occupy a prominent place: their schools are always noticeable among those producing the best results of orderly conduct and proficiency. The same remark may be applied generally to schools conducted by other well-trained teachers. And I believe that the good work done has reacted upon the general staff by creating a wholesome emulation; for several schools, conducted by teachers new to the work in Canterbury, vie with those under the English-trained masters in producing similar results.

A general tendency to improvement in the teaching staff appears also to have been imparted by the issue of the new regulations for the examination and classification of teachers and scholars; the requirements have had the good effect of directing the energies of right-minded teachers, eager for self-culture and earnest in their work, to the matters most worthy of their attention, and to the judicious employment of the large amount of leisure at their disposal. The educational lectures and the classes for drill have been numerously attended. Facilities are sought for obtaining instruction in drawing and singing. Manuals of instruction in science are in great request. It is highly important that the fullest encouragement should be given to this general desire for improvement, not merely by popular and entertaining lectures, but, further, by practical illustrations and classes for instruction, and the more especially during the harvest season of each year, when the country schools have a long vacation, and, even when open, are but thinly attended.

Many teachers require a course of instruction and a series of exercises in preparing time-tables and notes of lessons—not merely a reference to the best publishers and text-books, but rather to see the work done, and to hear it illustrated by a normal expert. Many would be glad of a course of instruction in elementary science, others in drawing, others in singing. If harvest classes could be formed for instruction in these and other requirements, with a view to their being rendered as fully beneficial as possible, attendance at them should be compulsory upon all pupil-teachers, assistants, and candidates for certificates living within their reach.

In the meantime, however, and more especially with reference to singing, and since many schools