

## SCHOOL AGE.

There is no definition of school age, or any law respecting it, except that relating to compulsory attendance.

The "écoles maternelles" admit children from two years of age,<sup>1</sup> and from M. Ferry's report to the President on the organization of superior primary schools,<sup>2</sup> coupled with the facilities provided by the State for the promotion of adult education, it is evident that it is against the policy of France to impose any limit of age.<sup>3</sup>

INFANT SCHOOLS AND CLASSES.<sup>4</sup>

The infant class, or the maternal school, is the initial, although not, as applying to any under school age (six), a compulsory stage. Of infant schools, or classes, the following points seem worth consideration:—

- (a) The object of, and method adopted in, the "écoles maternelles," and "classes enfantines," including the adoption in great part of the method of Fröbel;
- (b) The addition of an infant class to a primary school when a separate school is impracticable;
- (c) The limitation of numbers for each teacher;<sup>5</sup> and
- (d) The fact that infant schools and classes are not only taught exclusively by females (who must be, however, of a certain age, and qualified), but also inspected by "Departmental Lady Inspectors" and "General Lady Inspectors," nominated by the Minister. It should, however, be added that the appointments of "Departmental Lady Inspectors" are not yet regularly and generally established, by reason of the expense; although it is hoped that it will be possible to perfect the organization in a few years.

Lady Inspectors.

Private infant schools are subject to supervision similarly to other private schools.

Private infant schools.

## ELEMENTARY PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

The next grade is the primary school proper ("école primaire élémentaire"), where instruction is always understood to be, whatever may be the number of pupils and classes, divided into three courses<sup>6</sup> of two years each—

- (a) Elementary (cours élémentaire) from 7 to 9 years of age;
- (b) Intermediate (cours moyen), from 9 to 11; and
- (c) Superior (cours supérieur), from 11 to 13.

An additional course (complémentaire d'enseignement primaire supérieur) of one year is provided under certain circumstances; but this course, although annexed to the elementary schools, is ranked in the category of superior primary education.<sup>7</sup>

In all the above-mentioned courses industrial work ("travaux manuels"), or, at all events, what may be deemed to be practical preparation for it, is in the programmes both for boys and girls;<sup>8</sup> and, indeed, in many primary schools, including a considerable number of those in the Municipality of Paris, instruction is given in handicrafts.<sup>9</sup>

The ordinary number of scholars in an elementary primary school, at least in Paris, is from 300 to 400;<sup>10</sup> and the average size of the classes ranges from forty to fifty pupils, and must not exceed fifty.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See—

(a) "Ecoles Maternelles, 1881-82 (Législation, Régle-  
ments, programme, &c.); and  
(b) "Infant Schools in France," by Madame Dillon,  
I.E.C., and vol. 13, pp. 139-143.

<sup>2</sup> See L. and R.

<sup>3</sup> Note N.Z. 1877 Act, s. 83; and see 1885 Act, secs. 6, 7, 8.

<sup>4</sup> "In France the infant schools, called maternal schools, a name which seems peculiarly felicitous, are perhaps more thoroughly and systematically provided for than in any other country. By a recent report of Mlle. Loizillon, a general inspectress of these schools, it appears there were comprised in this system 4870 maternal schools, with 7451 teachers, and 621,177 children." "Circulars of Information of the Bureau of Education," No. 1, 1885, "City School Systems in the United States" (hereafter termed Dr. Philbrick.) Washington Government Printing Office, 1885.

<sup>5</sup> For details, see—

(a) Règ. d'org. péd., espec. p. 3, Art. 2.

(b) "Écoles M."

(c) L. and R. (including rep.), and

(d) I.E.C., vol. 13, pp. 136-143.

See also R.C. 1st rep., p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> See Règ. d'org. péd., pp. 3 and 4, and also R.E.C., Mr. M. Arnold, 5905 and seq.

<sup>7</sup> See *ibid.*, and L. and R. espec., p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> See (a) "Écoles M.," p. 38 and seq., and p. 8, Art. 22;

(b) Règ. d'org. péd., p. 14, &c.; and

(c) R.C., 1st rep., pp. 14 and 15.

<sup>9</sup> See also R.C., 1st rep., 14.

<sup>10</sup> See Règ. d'org. péd., p. 52.

<sup>11</sup> Note the same p. 53, Art. 17. But see Mr. M. Arnold's May, 1886, report, and his evidence R.E.C. 5211, 5592, 5593, 5914, and 5969. Mr. Arnold advocates 25; Senior Inspector Sharpe, "never exceed 40, and for highest class or "lowest class infants not more than 25." R.E.C., 5591 and 4429. See also Senior Inspector Stewart, 4071, and seq.