

Standard III., and Standard IV., and 1 per cent. in Standard VI. A rough idea of the proportion of schools in which the percentage of failures was low, moderate, or high, may be gathered from the following table :—

					Percentage of Failures.
In 17 schools (equal to 9 per cent. of the total number) from	...				0 to 5
" 30	"	16	"	"	6 to 10
" 74	"	39	"	"	11 to 20
" 34	"	18	"	"	21 to 30
" 19	"	10	"	"	31 to 40
" 11	"	6	"	"	41 to 50
" 3	"	2	"	"	51 to 67

The percentage of pupils who are *excepted*, though still small, shows a slight advance on that of previous years. Last year we were glad to note that on the average Standard I. was passed at an age of a trifle over nine years. Our hopes that the age at which this standard is passed would still further decline have not been fulfilled, for this year the age has risen to nine years and two months. At present teachers are allowed to withhold from examination in Standard I. as many of the pupils preparing the work of that standard as they please. The way in which this power is exercised causes a good deal of dissatisfaction to parents, and in some cases the power is evidently abused. In one school several pupils, who are now twelve years old or more, and have been from four to six years at school, have not yet been presented for examination in Standard I.

The tables and statistics given above afford gratifying evidence of the growing efficiency of the teaching in the Board schools. A most satisfactory feature in the progress which they disclose is that it has been shared in by every class of pupils. The only features that suggest misgiving are the continued decline in the percentage of marks for class subjects, the unexpected advance in the age at which Standard I. is passed, and the increase in the percentage of *exceptions*.

The great majority of the schools are now on the whole very fairly conducted, and a large number are conducted well. The schools of intermediate and smaller size, though they may not show the highest percentages, are decidedly the most efficient, their superiority being evidenced by better attention, greater intelligence, and a better working spirit on the part of the pupils. In these respects a very few of the largest schools are almost their equals, but as a general rule the bigger the school the more distracted is the attention, and the less earnest and single-minded the application to study. These shortcomings of the larger schools are partly inherent, being due to the unwieldy size of the classes and the very scanty staff allowed for their management. But they are also in a very considerable measure attributable to the great difficulty of securing for headmasters men who have the qualities of a captain or chief, and who can make their personality felt in every room and every class under their charge. It is owing to the want of these qualities that the frequent changes of assistant teachers are attended with such friction and such peril to attention and progress. Schools that must be classed as badly conducted are chiefly of small size, so that their feeble management affects but few pupils. The practice of appointing females as head teachers in many of the smaller rural schools is working very well. Female teachers do not move from school to school so frequently as males, and on the whole they conduct schools of this class decidedly better than most of the male teachers who fill such positions.

The teaching continues to improve in intelligence, though the progress is not rapid. There are still a good many teachers who are satisfied with the attainment of mere results, and take little account of the educative quality of the process by which the results are reached. This criticism applies specially to their treatment of geography, of grammar, of science, and of object-lessons, though also to a considerable extent to that of English, of history, and of composition. A high degree of earnestness and care is quite compatible with mechanical methods, and may even make men overlook their failure to cultivate in a progressive and intelligent manner the pupil's powers of observation, of reasoning, and of expression. Great pains, for example, is taken to train children to read with ease and expression. To this end a good many teachers never allow their pupils to attempt a passage until it has been read to them in a model style by the teacher. Such treatment of new reading lessons is most mechanical, and calculated to stifle every gleam of originality. A limited number of lessons can no doubt be got up in this way; but how is the pupil to learn to grasp for himself the writer's meaning and mood, and render them with expression inspired by his own feelings? Except in the most elementary classes, it were surely much better to encourage the pupils to prepare and study their reading lessons, care being taken to test the preparation, and then, and not till then, to get them to try the passages without help, which should, however, be given when required, and not when it would arrest every attempt at original interpretation. It is in the grammar of Standards III. to VI. that there is the greatest danger of mechanical routine supplanting intelligent study. To make this work educative it is indispensable that the significance of technical terms should be constantly brought out, and that the uses of words in a sentence and their connection with one another in the thought of the writer should be clearly stated. To say, as is done commonly enough, that the word "for" shows relation, without specifying the objects between which the relation exists, or that "cow" is the name of a thing, without any attempt to specify the kind of thing named by the word—all this is mere dead routine, and of scarcely any educative value. We need not multiply examples of this grievous fault. It is the chief danger that teachers have to guard against, and it is the besetting sin of many an earnest man. Unintelligent methods involve a double failure—they fail to educate and train the mind and its powers, and they fail to achieve good results, as they are called. The better the teacher the more watchfully does he consider whether his methods are in the highest degree intelligent and educative. To attain the best examination results is never his chief aim—it is rather to attain these by the means that yield his pupils the best kind of mental discipline. He who carries on his work in this spirit rarely fails