

has been made on this account we think it remains true that more could and should be done for those who pass out into the working world at this early age.

To guard against possible misunderstanding, we must distinctly point out that the foregoing remarks are not in any sense an estimate of the efficiency of the teaching of the work of Standard IV. They are designed to set forth the results in training and knowledge gained by the pupils when the teaching has been as good as can be reasonably expected. The defects noted are not as a rule consequences flowing from inferior teaching, but the normal outcome of the system as it acts in the case of those whose education ends on passing Standard IV. The best remedy for these defects would evidently be to substitute Standard V. for Standard IV. as the compulsory one, but at present this change seems to be beyond the range of what is practicable.

It will not be out of place to consider briefly the average attainments of pupils who pass Standard VI. They, too, though they have a ready knowledge of the class-books read in school, have not the easy mastery of reading that is desirable; and this is no doubt a main reason for current complaints about their having so little love of reading or thirst for knowledge. So long as they find reading, and the acquisition of knowledge that reading promotes, a difficult task, they will be repelled from them, and their interests will take other and less improving directions. There are, however, for these complaints various other obvious reasons that have nothing to do with school training, but arise out of the social and material surroundings of all classes, and especially of the less wealthy. These are difficult to counteract, and of necessity they greatly aggravate the evils that flow from the imperfect knowledge and appreciation of English which the school training gives. The strengthening of the reading in the lower standards could not fail to exert an excellent influence on the higher ones, and pupils passing Standard VI. might then hope to embark with fair ease and some measure of satisfaction on a course of improving and informing study.

In writing and arithmetic the finished public-school pupil is on the whole satisfactorily equipped. His arithmetical training to be sure is general, but he should have no difficulty in applying his knowledge in any special direction that may be required. His power of original thought is of course very limited, for he is only about fourteen years of age. His command of the art of composition is at best on a level with his command of reading, and the close dependence of the one upon the other is sufficiently evident. If he is to compose better he must read more and get a better and wider acquaintance with the art as practised by others. We see no prospect of any substantial improvement in this direction without a previous and corresponding improvement in the power of reading and in the literary study of what is read, and we have little doubt that progress in these directions would react powerfully and favourably on the art of expression. Here, therefore, as in the lower standards, the path to improvement lies in a more extended course of reading. The value of technical grammar as an educative agency has been very variously estimated, and the traditional position accorded to it in elementary education may be hard to justify. It is certainly in part an aid to composition, and in most of its stages it imparts an admirable simple training in the type of reasoning that relates to classification and definition. In particular the analysis of sentences in its most general features, but in these only, is of great value for understanding the construction of long or complex sentences, and is a true handmaid and minister to composition. Serving, as it does, these functions, the prominence given to grammar in the school course is probably justified, and the time devoted to its study fairly rewarded. Of the studies in geography and history little need be said. The scope of geographical study is from the nature of the case slight, and the wording of the regulations relating to it tends to make it mechanical. There is nothing to prevent intelligent teaching and there is nothing to encourage it. The limitations imposed by the age of the pupils, and the time available for its treatment, render it impracticable to make the teaching much deeper or wider, and in these circumstances its value for education and as information is likely to remain inconsiderable. History is chiefly of use for the information it conveys, but even in this respect the time devoted to its study confers but little advantage on the finished public-school pupil. The wide scope of the course, dealing as it does with the long period from 1066 to the present time, makes it impossible, certainly in the smaller schools and probably in all, to do justice to the events of the last hundred years, and to the great political, economical, industrial, and social changes and developments that they have witnessed. A Sixth Standard pupil knows much less than is desirable, and is easily attainable, of the constitution of his country and the government organization under which he lives, and of the nature and growth of the institutions he sees around him. To expect that he should know all this is of course ambitious, but he could certainly learn a great deal of it, if the course of study were deliberately framed with a view to that end. Were the course of reading and study mainly confined to the last hundred years much valuable information on these topics could certainly be acquired, even though the instruction were given only to the two highest standards. Under such an arrangement as this implies, the finished public-school pupil would be much more likely to take a continued interest in such studies after leaving school, and as a citizen and an elector to exert a healthy influence on the industrial and social development of this new land. But, so far as our knowledge goes, text-books that would adequately serve this end are still to be written.

The only other subjects in which the finished public-school pupil is trained are drawing, singing, and science, with sewing in the case of female pupils. Of drawing we need only say that drawing from objects appears to be unduly neglected, while plane geometrical drawing receives a disproportionate amount of attention. It may well be doubted if the course of instruction is even tolerably adapted to the needs of such trades and arts as are established in our midst. The love of song and music is a moral influence of great power in a community, and, on the whole, the school training fosters it to a greater extent than is generally supposed. The number of those who learn to sing even simple music at sight is, indeed, inconsiderable, but a taste for music is being widely fostered. The weight of the course of instruction meanwhile prevents the attainment of more than this, and one of the happiest consequences that would flow from the lightening of its burden would be greater scope for the cultivation of this catholic refining agency.