

Table I. shows that 91 per cent. of the children examined in the standards satisfied at least the minimum requirements for a pass. From the point of view of standard passes this result is very satisfactory. We are responsible for the "passes" of the four highest standards, and the headmasters for those of the two lowest. The mean of our percentages of passes is 88; the mean of theirs is 97. In the majority of schools the passes awarded in Standards I. and II. were well earned; but in some children were passed whom we should certainly not have passed. On the whole, however, these classes are kept up to a good general level of attainment. Though we do not award the passes in these classes, our examination of them is as searching now as ever it was. The percentages of passes for the several standards are: Standard VI., 94; Standard V., 87; Standard IV., 84; Standard III., 88; Standard II., 96; Standard I., 98. These percentages are very high; but, in estimating their value as indices of efficiency, we must bear in mind that a "pass" means in many cases only that a child did correctly not less than from one-half to two-thirds of the work set him to do in all the pass-subjects, or in all save one. The proportion of children who, though passing the standard for which they were presented, failed in one subject, in many cases an important subject, is high: 37 per cent. in Standard VI., 44 per cent. in Standard V., 43 per cent. in Standard IV., and 33 per cent. in Standard III. It is obvious, therefore, that the "pass ratio" is not a very accurate index of efficiency, for it does not indicate the *quality* of the passes. The quality of the passes does not depend entirely on the teacher. In nearly all schools it is affected by two circumstances over which he has little or no control: the irregular attendance of a minority of the pupils, and the presence of from 10 to 15 per cent. of dull children. Only the teachers and ourselves can realise how much the progress of bright and regular children is retarded by dull and irregular ones.

The proportion of children taught in preparatory classes is slightly lower than that of last year, and about 2 per cent. lower than that of 1893. Of the 6,581 pupils, 1,129 were over eight years of age when the schools in which they are taught were examined. The reasons assigned for their non-presentation in Standard I. appeared to us to be, in most cases, sufficient. In many small schools the pupils of this class do not—we may even say, cannot—receive sufficient attention; but in most schools in which there are two or more teachers they receive a good training in the standard work. They learn to write on slates, to sing, to do physical exercises, to spell words of one and two syllables; they learn more or less about common objects; they are taught the elements of number, the addition table, to add numbers orally and on slates, and to read the primers, the Infant Reader, and No. 1 Standard Reader of at least one series of readers. In the infant classes of some of the larger schools they read more than one set of introductory readers, a practice that might with advantage be adopted in all. Though not examined in Standard I., these children are, at any rate in the larger schools, receiving a sound preparatory training for the work of the standard classes.

The syllabus does not prescribe any kindergarten work for this department of the schools; nevertheless two or three mistresses have introduced several of the more useful of the hand-and-eye occupations. We are of opinion that kindergarten exercises should be introduced into all schools in which there are two or more teachers. We give the following as a suitable list of such occupations: Games with music; games without music (guessing games, taking messages); stick-laying (safety matches with the heads cut off); threading beads in twos, threes, fours, &c.; counting with sticks and beads; picture-lessons, flower-lessons, object-lessons; matching colours (*e.g.*, picking out from a heap the same shades of coloured papers, wools, &c.); paper-folding and paper-plaiting; working patterns with needle and worsted; drawing and ruling geometrical forms; measuring and estimating length; weighing and estimating weight; basket-work; tablet-laying. To these we wish to add story-telling and recitation.

In a fair number of schools satisfactory work was done by the pupils of the class above Standard VI. To make the work of this class definite we beg to suggest the following syllabus: 1. English, including reading (say, Chambers's Advanced Reader), spelling, grammar, and composition. 2. Arithmetic: To keep up the standard work. 3. Euclid: Book I. to proposition xxvi., with exercises. 4. Algebra: Fundamental rules and easy simple equations. 5. Commercial geography. 6. Optional subjects: (1) Latin: Smith's Principia, Pt. I. to the verb *sum*. (2) French: Macmillan's First Course.

In schools in which there is but one teacher we should be satisfied with less work than this. Except in the normal school, the headmaster should be held responsible for the work of this class. Should our suggestion be adopted the headmasters should be relieved of the subjects now prescribed for them.

TABLE II. (FIVE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS).

Classes.				Presented.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age.
							Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI.	...	...	...	9	8	8	14 9
" V.	...	...	...	49	47	37	14 7
" IV.	...	...	...	57	51	40	13 0
" III.	...	...	...	95	85	64	12 1
" II.	...	...	...	111	107	93	11 0
" I.	...	...	...	117	116	109	9 8
Preparatory ...	...	...	...	138*	...	...	...
Totals	...	...	...	576	414	351	12 6½†

* Return of infants from one school not entered in this examination schedule.

† Mean of average ages.