

viding for the grouping into working units in each of these subjects respectively only such pupils as possess equal, or approximately equal, attainment and aptitude in it. The question of attendance and, to some extent that of home advantages, lie with parents; but innate capacity, whether mental or physical, lies beyond both them and the teacher. Where nature is against us, little can be done; but in so far as equality of opportunity is controllable by parents and teachers, it should be controlled. Most teachers are alive to their duty in this matter; but, unfortunately, no inconsiderable proportion of parents are, we regret to report, largely insensible to theirs: they do not realise the necessity either for regular attendance or for home assistance and sympathy. British freedom is an excellent thing; but when it is claimed and practised by parents to the extent of depriving their children of the means of qualifying for citizenship and of hindering those of others in their efforts to qualify, it degenerates into license and should not be allowed. More than one-seventh of our pupils are always absent from school. Irregular attendance is the most distracting factor in our school economy. It retards the progress even of pupils who attend well; it depresses the spirit of the schools; it causes friction between teachers and pupils and between teachers and parents; and it adds immensely to the difficulty of discipline and control. It is, indeed, an unmitigated evil. Country Committees are, not unnaturally, unwilling to face the enforcement of the compulsory clauses; enforcement, however, is the only effective way with inveterate defaulters. Who should face it?

The discipline and *morale* of our schools are very good. Willing obedience, orderliness, honesty, good manners, and good temper are, so far as our observation extends, the rule within the limits of the school ground; and, though in the streets and on the roads we not infrequently note an absence of easy politeness, we hardly ever see an instance of actual rudeness. The factors operating on the ethical side of school life are—(1) the influence of the teacher, and (2) the influence of home and local environment; and it is only when both of these make for good that we can reasonably expect to see good conduct exemplified in the totality of the child's life. In estimating conduct we should keep this in view; and, in considering the relation of the teacher thereto, we should remember that the children spend only about one-seventh of their brief school life within his ken.

During recent years the public mind has greatly changed on the question of school and home discipline. Formerly it erred on the side of severity; it now errs on the side of lenity, if not of laxity. "Rule by love" is now the maxim. It has a fine sound, but the teacher who should attempt to found his government upon it alone would certainly fail ignominiously. A considerable proportion of children are amenable to the discipline of love; but he has little knowledge of juvenile human nature who does not know that no small proportion are amenable only to the discipline of compulsion. Children would not be children were that not so, and it is absurd to credit them with qualities they do not possess. The average child is much more disposed to gratify his own inclinations than to yield himself to the rule of another, be it that of teacher or parent. Though he may be an angel in the making, he is a long way short of being an angel wholly made; and it is unreasonable to stigmatize as harsh and cruel the teacher who, when the discipline of love and persuasion fails to compel to right conduct, resorts to that of physical force. To maintain effective working discipline in a class of from sixty to eighty pupils of as many different temperaments is no easy matter, and we should like to see those who make light of it try their hand at it for a day or two. The average child has little love for intellectual conquest; real mental discipline is disagreeable to him; he shirks it whenever and wherever he can. But without mental discipline there is no education, no adequate training in what constitutes a large part of life—namely, the doing of disagreeable work willingly and cheerfully. What follows? That with the average child there must be compulsion, wise compulsion it should be, but compulsion all the same, to do with all his might what is disagreeable or even repulsive to him. Effort, strenuous effort, is of the very essence of education; and, when and where it is not given willingly, it must be compelled. Here is the point at which lies the parting of the ways: the skilful teacher will compel wisely, the unskilful unwisely; but even unskilful compulsion is for the child better than none at all. To few is it given to be entirely successful in every department of their work, and we plead that parents should try to realise the great difficulty of teaching large numbers, and be slow to take the part of the children against the teachers, even when they feel that the teachers are in the wrong. Most parents are familiar with the difficulties of family management. Let each multiply his difficulties many times, and he will get a faint notion of those of teachers.

Owing to an invasion first of measles and then of influenza our average school year was of only two hundred days' or forty weeks' duration, and the mean average attendance was only 169·4 days, or thirty-four weeks. That is to say, the children were on the average eighteen weeks absent from school. Under circumstances so unfavourable high results were, of course, unattainable; still they are satisfactory, the mean efficiency mark being 63. The following table gives the details:—

TABLE B.—SHOWING EFFICIENCY-MARKS IN SUBJECTS.

Pass-subjects.

Reading.	Spelling.	Writing.	Drawing.	Arithmetic.	Composition.	Geography.
64 per cent. Satisfactory.	69 per cent. Good.	68 per cent. Good.	68 per cent. Good.	61 per cent. Satisfactory.	57 per cent. Fair.	62 per cent. Satisfactory.

Mean percentage, 64·2—"Satisfactory."