

Grammar, among the class-subjects, occupies the same position as arithmetic among the pass-subjects, and probably from nearly the same causes. Unlike arithmetic, however, grammar, defined by Lindley Murray as "the art of speaking and writing the English language with propriety," is practically useless. In the edition of the standard regulations issued in 1892 (page 6) the following remarks are made on this subject: "The great value of grammar depends on its character as a science of elementary logic, as a study of the forms in which the processes of thought stand revealed. In this aspect it plays a very important part in the development of intelligence, and is pregnant with suggestions that may guide the pupil into ways of philosophic thought when his school days are over. It is, moreover, a science of classification, and among the classificatory sciences it has this advantage: that there is no need to go far afield to find the objects of it; they are accessible always and to every one, being the thoughts of our own minds and the words of our own lips." Similar opinions are expressed by many eminent writers on education, and, having regard for them, I cannot think it would be wise to dispense with this subject, as has been suggested, or even to limit it (except as a pass-subject) to "the grammatical basis of composition."

At the present day, when such vigorous and enthusiastic efforts are being exerted for the promotion of practical (*i.e.*, technical and manual) instruction, there is some reason to fear that the claims of intellectual education in primary schools may be altogether thrust aside, and its pursuit relegated solely to high schools and universities.

The Catholic Schools.—I was unable to examine these schools last year through press of work, and this year for the same reason I was compelled to limit my examination to the Sixth Standard classes. Ten girls and six boys were examined, and all passed but one girl. The nine girls who passed made an average of $69\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the possible marks, four of them gaining "credit passes"—that is, over 75 per cent. of the total marks. The boys averaged 62 per cent. of the maximum. The average age of the girls who passed was fourteen years and six months, and that of the boys thirteen years and seven months; and, though the girls gained a higher average of marks than the boys, they had the advantage of nearly a year in age and a very much more regular attendance, the boys averaging only 250 attendances, against 367 by the girls. Both schools did very good work, the only weak subject being arithmetic; and a few of the girls were not very successful with spelling. On the other hand, the composition of the girls was, on the whole, somewhat better than that of the boys; so that, taking one thing with another, I consider they were practically equal, and both can bear comparison with most of our larger schools. The standards below the Sixth were examined, according to the regulations, by the teachers.

Scholarships.—The annual competitive examination of candidates for scholarships took place in December. The number of candidates was the same as at the last competition—twenty, sent up by one private school and nine Board schools. The number who qualified by gaining 60 per cent. of the possible marks was nine, the same as last year; but the average age of these was nearly three years less than that of the candidates in 1900. The scholar at the head of the list was sent up by one of the small country schools, which has long been noted for the uniform excellence of its work; and the second in order of merit has the distinction of being, with one exception, the youngest of the twenty candidates. The scholarships to be awarded were: Two country scholarships of £35 per annum and three town scholarships of £10 per annum; in addition to which the Governors of the High School allotted two "free" places to the next in order of merit of those not gaining ordinary scholarships. For the first time a private school has sent up a candidate, and, although he did not take a very high place on the list, it does not follow that his real attainments are in any way inferior to those of many of the other competitors. Unless the curriculum of a private school is in harmony with the public-school syllabus in the subjects dealt with by both a private scholar would be heavily handicapped in competition with scholars entirely and continuously trained under the Government regulations. Next year there will be only one country and two town scholarships offered in addition to the two "free" places.

For the first time since their institution by Mr. T. L. Buick the M.H.R. medals have both been taken this year by the same school—Renwick. These medals are given one to the boy and the other to the girl in the Marlborough Education District who gains the highest marks in the Sixth Standard at the Inspector's examination. In awarding these medals those only are considered who are presented in Standard VI. for the first time, and I think that there should be some limit as to age; but that is a matter for the donor to consider.

If the suggestions before made with regard to the systematic employment of exercise-books throughout the year are generally adopted, I purpose next year, as a rule, to accept the judgment of the teachers of all schools above Grade O as to the promotion of their scholars.

It is a matter worth serious consideration whether some of the despised old-fashioned methods of school management should not be brought into use under the new system, which throws such serious responsibility upon the teachers. It is customary nowadays to decry all or nearly all the methods practised by our forefathers in educational matters, and with overweening self-complacency to condemn as inferior everything that has not been evolved during the last few decades. Under the pressure of their new responsibilities the conscientious teachers will feel the want of some more trustworthy evidence of fitness for promotion than the bare results of an annual or quarterly examination, and this, I think, might be found in the adoption of some of the despised "old-fashioned" practices.

The practice of "taking places" in class, and of keeping a record of the average place of each scholar, together with a well-considered system of marks for, say, regular attendance and punctuality, weekly place in class, neatness and cleanliness of written work, general good conduct, &c., with a reduction of marks for breaches of discipline or other bad conduct, would, I believe, furnish the teacher with far more reliable data for his decision at the end of the year; while it would arouse and keep alive a healthy spirit of emulation, which could not fail to assist the progress of the whole school.