

must not be given to its bearing, since there are other indications that teachers, in view of the prospective broadening of the course of instruction, are disposed to keep the children longer at this stage. The average age, for example, in the First Standard has gone up, approximately, by two months, and the number of children eight years of age and over retained in the preparatory divisions has risen from 832 in 1897, the last year for which a record was kept, to 981 in the present year.

In examination we have in nearly all instances been in a position to approve the teachers' judgments. The approval has invariably been based on a complete examination of the subjects made independently of the teachers' tests. In the larger schools the method pursued is by way of "sample," one-half of the class being taken to form an estimate of the whole. In the smaller schools—roughly speaking, those under one hundred in attendance—this method offers so little convenience or certainty that it has only on rare occasions been resorted to. In determining the status of their pupils the teachers, with a second year's experience of their privileges and responsibilities in the matter, have now arrived at a fairly uniform common understanding, which, though consistent with a good deal of latitude in the standard adopted, requires a pupil to qualify in four out of the five subjects of individual examination. They have too lively a sense of the difficulties to be met with in the upper classes to take full advantage of the option given to adopt a more limited basis. In most of the schools a few doubtful cases are left for the Inspector to determine, and in some—small single-handed schools chiefly—he is asked to take the whole business into his own hands. In general the teachers highly appreciate the privilege of making their own standard classification, and as a whole the system works well. On the day of the Inspector's annual visit teacher and children feel easier in their minds; to the Inspector himself it is a great relief to have the teacher's judgments before him, the chances of strained relations are diminished, and with a faithful adherence to the practice of strict verification the terms of qualification are not in much danger. Whether in the future we shall ever be in a position to abandon the process of examination altogether so far as the Inspector is concerned, relying solely on the observation of methods and the general character of the school in judging of its efficiency, we are unable to say; but we remain of opinion that under ordinary forms of control examination in one shape or another furnishes the only safe course, and, in spite of inevitable defects, we are quite satisfied that it exercises a much healthier influence on the conditions of school life than its opponents are disposed to admit.

Manual training as a means of education is the question of the day, and if we can contribute anything to the general stock of information on the matter, or help in any way to guide the teachers' efforts in a profitable direction, it will be our excuse for dealing with the topic at some length. Notwithstanding all that has many times been said on the subject, we find a vast amount of misunderstanding still existing. We are afraid the common attitude is that of the simple countryman, who, in talking of the new departure, remarks that, in his opinion, it will be a very good thing, for carpenters in the country are hard to get, and boys are often required to mend gates and the like. It cannot be too often or too strongly insisted on that the object of the instruction is not to produce amateur carpenters—not to produce anything, in fact, but a better pupil, better trained in observation, discrimination, judgment, better fitted mentally to deal with the ordinary subjects of instruction, and through the habits of care, attention, and concentration, cultivated under circumstances calculated to awaken more interest than mere abstract teaching, better fitted to fill afterwards any position in life. At the same time, as a secondary purpose, the intention is to develop a general manual dexterity applicable to any trade, and incidentally to give the pupil's mind a bent in the direction of some manual occupation as a means of living. If the exercises do not cultivate "carefulness, self-reliance, accuracy, patience, perseverance, and other points of character," and, moreover, bring these to bear on the ordinary subjects of the school course, they fail in their object and are better omitted. As mere exercises, it is aptly pointed out, they have many better competitors for the interest of the boys. School games, for example, which have the advantage of being played in the open air, develop the boys' will in a far freer fashion, and cultivate presence of mind and some very desirable social qualities. The main problem is one of establishing an organic connection between the exercises contemplated and the ordinary subjects of the school course. This is no easy problem. The most we can do is to establish, at all events, the external relation as far as means will allow, and rely on the personality of the teacher to do the rest. Hitherto the difference between the methods of the trained and the untrained teacher has lain in the comparative use made of visual impressions in the formation of concepts. "Make more use of your blackboard," has been the constant injunction. "Draw everything you can, and let the children see for themselves." "Let them see an experiment performed, and the result will be a vastly deeper and clearer impression than any description can possibly produce." The conception of the newer education adds "do" to "see," brings in the hand on every possible occasion to aid the eye, and thus assimilates the education of the school-room to the education of life. Of the value of the conception there can be no question, the difficulty is wholly in the application. The hand has ever obtained the fullest recognition as one of the most potent instruments of civilisation. "The hand," says Herbert, "has its place of honour, side by side with language, to raise man above the beasts." Even our ideas of space are largely dependent on the hand. What, then, can be more natural than the idea of calling in the hand to aid the eye in the education of the young? When we come to apply the principle, however, we find ourselves in a rather troubled sea. First and foremost comes the question of expense in various forms, for there is no doubt that the newer education is vastly expensive—in the apparatus required, the conditions of space involved, the school organization that must be provided, and the degree of skill demanded from the instructor. Then comes that troublesome question of the "organic" relation between special manual exercises and ordinary subjects of the school code. "For the establishment of an inner organic relation between the workshop and the school," says a recent writer, "it is not sufficient that the workshop