

The important thing to be regarded in the matter of grading is the intervals between classes. If the intervals are a year, as in the more advanced, whose pupils are aged from eleven to thirteen, then it is clear that each class contains differences in qualification which may be as great as one year's study would produce. In the lowest classes of the primary grades there would be differences of a half-year. This means that in each class where the teacher set the lessons for the capacities of the best pupils, those lessons were too hard for the least advanced pupils. On the other hand, in the classes where the teacher adapted the lessons to the capacity of the least advanced pupils, the best ones would not have enough to do, but would acquire listless habits. If the lessons were set for the average of the class, there would be cases of too much work for the poorest and of too little for the most advanced. Now it has been shown (and one may easily verify the fact) that a year's interval is too great between classes of the age under fourteen, and a half-year too great for pupils of six, seven or eight years. The growth of the mind is too rapid at those early periods to keep pupils in the same class for a year without detriment to the pupils in the two extremes of the class. For the best get listless or indolent, losing interest in their work, while the slow minds get discouraged because they are dragged along after their brilliant rivals and lose their self-respect. This is a dreadful result as it actually exists in many a school famous for its grading.

Now, when the rural schools attempt to secure some of the benefits of the graded system--and these benefits are gain in time for recitations and the mutual help that pupils of the same grade give one another by showing different points of view of the lesson--the rural schools make a system of two, three or four grades instead of ten, and suppose that they have really secured some of the good which the city schools obtain. This is, however, only a supposition.

If an interval of one year is too great it is evident that an interval of two or three years is far worse. The entire course of study is eight or nine years in the so-called district school. Four grades give intervals of two years, and three grades give intervals of about three years. The most advanced pupils in each class are likely to be two years or more in advance in scholastic preparation beyond the lowest of their classmates. These advanced ones are kept "marking time" while the teacher is laboring with the struggling dullards of the bottom of the class. These are perhaps not dullards except because