

## MISCELLANEOUS CONTRIBUTIONS.

(Under this head we group together several contributions, which can be given in this way more appropriately than as regular contributions.)

## HIGH VS. PUBLIC SCHOOLS. COMMUNICATION.

*To the Editor of the Ontario Teacher.*

I have read with much interest the article in the October No. of the *TEACHER*, entitled "High Schools vs. Public Schools," and I shall be glad if you can find room for a few remarks on one aspect of the question, which seems somewhat to have escaped your notice.

It is, no doubt, lamentably true that some of the High Schools, are to a great extent failing to accomplish the work they are intended to perform. I admit at once the truth of the statements in the report of the High School Inspectors, which you quote in your article, and on which you remark, "These quotations show that, as far as the attainments of pupils in the English branches are concerned, there is deficiency calling loudly for energetic action on the part of those controlling our High Schools."

Let us endeavor, if possible, to discover the cause of this sad state of affairs, and place the responsibility where it justly belongs. You have, doubtless, observed that in the extracts which you make from Mr. McLellan's reports, in the majority of schools mentioned, attention is directed to the miserable deficiency that characterizes the pupils lately admitted. You will bear in mind that the question, whether or not these have been properly admitted, has nothing to do with the present argument. You have, I believe, listened to Dr. Sang-

ster's masterly exposition of his views as to the proper methods of teaching the most important branches of our Public School programme, and you were, no doubt, fully convinced of the truth of a statement which he made repeatedly and emphatically—that in many of these branches, English Grammar and Arithmetic especially, the foundation was by far the most important part of the work; that if through the carelessness or incompetence of his instructor, a pupil, when first introduced to the study of these subjects, was not thoroughly grounded in correct principles and methods, it was scarcely within the bounds of possibility that, in his future educational career, the mischief done could be altogether repaired, however great his own diligence, or his teacher's zeal and ability.

Now, who are the pupils whose deplorable ignorance of the elements of English Grammar, and the fundamental principles of Arithmetic is so ruthlessly exposed by the Inspector? Are they boys and girls who have grown up from early childhood in the High Schools, whose infant steps have been guided in the paths of knowledge by the High School masters, and for whose intelligence and acquirements they are, therefore, alone responsible? These pupils, with scarcely an exception, are from the highest classes of our public Schools. Although the programme prescribed for entrance to High Schools is that of the fourth class of our Public Schools, there are very few schools, none with which I am acquainted, in which the pupils are examined for admission until they have gone through, at least, the work of the fifth