

schools in every settlement; that has primary schools of the greatest excellence, and whose grammar schools are what I have attempted to describe, may well be proud of what she has accomplished. While awarding her this well-merited praise, it is necessary, in order to give a correct idea of the schools, to point out defects and difficulties that hinder her progress.

I have already remarked that though the intention is that the schools of the same grade in all parts of the State do the same work, the practice is another thing. In receiving scholars from other schools, principals everywhere find the widest divergence in attainments. Some schools neglect one study some another, the one most usually overlooked being arithmetic. This is the natural result of an inefficient system of inspection. One of our weakest points, probably the weakest, is the want of a thorough supervision. The salary allowed county superintendents is altogether too meagre, or the number of schools under charge of each is too great to permit of thorough inspection. As a rule, their official visits are "bo-peep" affairs, merely a formal compliance with the law. Moreover, the necessity of thorough inspection is not fully appreciated. In fact, in a meeting of some 10 or 12 superintendents, a short time ago, I heard one frankly declare that he would be thankful to any one who would tell him his duty in visiting a school! So long as the salary is insufficient to recompense men of the highest type, so long will the inspection be of little service. In Ontario, where a thorough system of superintendence has been established, the effect of the Californian plan upon the schools can be easily understood.

Another weak point is the equivocal position of our high schools. Those we have are looked upon by many as unseemly and extravagant excrescences on our school system. Everything has been done for the primary and grammar schools, and nothing for the high schools. Take your admirable high schools out of your school system, and what would be the result? Deprived as we are of much of the healthy stimulus these afford, the progress made by our schools is all the more remarkable. Notwithstanding this neglect, we have in every city a high school of some sort, and some of them are doing admirable work. This is the case when the corps of teachers is composed of men and women of high attainments. Except those who teach classics, or German and French, no extra qualifications are demanded of high school teachers, and consequently all engaged in high school work have not that thorough education that is necessary to ensure success. Each high school arranges its own course, and, with one exception, none of them extend that course beyond three years. The exception to which I refer is the San Francisco Boys' High School. Lately they found it necessary to admit the classical boys one year earlier than the English ones, so as to complete in proper manner the university matriculation subjects. In addition they have a post graduate class composed of those who intend entering Harvard. This makes their classical course extend over five years. I lately visited that school, and was delighted with the work I saw. The moral tone of the school impressed me at once, and I could well believe the classical master when he assured me that in the senior classical class there was not a "mean boy." The discipline is eminently calculated to make self-reliant, manly boys. The teachers whose rooms I visited are men of great ability. The principal is a Harvard man. Another teacher was an instructor in Latin in Michigan University, and afterwards spent some time studying in Germany. The class in Latin prose composition was particularly good. That science is also particularly well taught, I should judge from what little I saw. Another excellent school is the Oakland one, in which are teachers of great ability and no little erudition. This school is attended both by boys and girls, and is rapidly growing. In fact it is claimed that every term, i.e.,

twice a year, there are 500 additional children to provide with accommodation in the different grades in Oaklands. Be this as it may, their high school is rapidly growing in numbers and in well-deserved reputation. Its course is, like others, a three years' course. This reminds me that while visiting a high school three years ago, I heard the senior Latin class read Virgil. They merely translated; the class was too large, and the amount of work to be done too great to allow of that close, critical examination so necessary to ensure thorough knowledge of the Latin, and in which, in fact, its great value as a mental discipline depends. The master, who made a most favorable impression on me, complained that he was so hurried by the amount of work to be gone over, "that it was a scramble." I lately heard the same gentleman in charge of a junior Greek class, and as it was small he had time to teach, and did it with admirable skill. These are the sort of men and women to whom I have referred as the leaven that has leavened our whole school system. Because I have mentioned only these two schools it must not be inferred that they are the only two good high schools in the State. There are others, but these two I lately visited, spending agreeably a day in each. Hence the reference to them.

In San Francisco a rule has been lately established that no scholar under 14 years of age can be admitted. This would make the average age of the high school "graduates" about 17. The classical graduates would probably work the "pass" papers of the Toronto University. None of them could pass as severe an examination as is requisite for first-class honors in the junior matriculation. This is particularly true of mathematics. Much has already been accomplished; much more yet remains to be done. There is a growing feeling that a change of some of our machinery must be made. That feeling has been intensified by recently discovered frauds of a shocking character in connection with teachers' examinations. These have been partially investigated, but the source of the mischief has not been discovered. Few expected that it would be discovered. With a strange inconsistency, the demand is being made that the Central Board should be entirely abolished, and each county grant certificates, thus increasing the risk of fraud 52 times, under the plea of securing honest examinations. The constitution of the State Board of Examination is a source of weakness; and in that, as well as in the State Board of Education, changes must be made. But nothing short of radical changes will satisfy many of our people. A convention is now assembled at the capital engaged in framing a new constitution. Not content with a constitution, they are determined to frame laws also, and of course the educational system must receive their attention. They have agreed that State funds must be devoted solely to the maintenance of primary and grammar schools, the Normal School, and the University. High schools may exist, but not at the expense of the State. Thus they will have an expensive university, and not a single feeder! They are not content with altering the constitution of the State Board of Education, they completely demolish it. They cannot leave to the Legislature the solution of defects in educational machinery, but they must needs now make the election of county superintendents a part of the constitution, and thus perpetuate beyond hope of remedy the evils of inefficient inspection. They propose also to entrust to the county superintendent and the board of supervisors of each county, all matters relating to schools in their respective counties. Just fancy your county councils prescribing text-books, arranging courses of study, and forming an irresponsible Council of Public Instruction, each for its own county! Yet that is virtually the scheme endorsed, and only waiting final adoption by the convention to go out to the people for acceptance or rejection. If in other respects the new constitution is preferable to the present one, that