

In seeking for the causes of the alleged unsatisfactory results, our critics locate them in different quarters. One claims that too much system has crushed the life out of the public school teaching in cities and towns where the grading has been carried out with anything like completeness.

Another declaims against examinations as the root of all evil, and would have them abolished altogether.

A third declares that the children are overworked, and made either nervous or stupid.

Still another thinks that we have entirely too much school, and would have the time reduced to three or five months per year.

While it may not be difficult to fortify each of these assertions by citing instances in which each has seemed to produce the results complained of, exceptions do not make rules, nor do exceptional instances of abortive results warrant the wholesale condemnation of the system that produced them.

Leaving, for the present, the criticisms as to overwork and too much school, we will consider for a time those that relate to the system and to examinations, and endeavor to make some deductions of a practical nature from their discussion.

The organization of the graded school, and more particularly of systems of graded schools in cities and towns, has made necessary some device by means of which pupils may be properly classified so as to be most conveniently and economically taught together, and judiciously advanced through the course of study. This device, naturally and properly, is an examination at certain intervals into the progress and attainments of the pupils and a consequent readjustment of the classes.

In a school composed of several grades and taught by one teacher, his judgment alone is all that is needful, until another teacher is to receive his pupils and carry them on in the course of instruction, when another element—that of his ability and honesty enters into the case. As a system of schools enlarges, and the work of a single grade is to be done by a number of teachers, and the work of the next grade is to be done by an entirely different set of teachers, the propriety of advancing the pupils on the sole recommendation of their teachers becomes more than problematical. Without raising the question of the honesty of the teachers, the standard of qualifications will necessarily be variable, as the differing judgments of a number of equally honest teachers