

while rearing the above somewhat imposing superstructure, are charged to keep a constant eye on the condition and stability of the foundations. They are to 'pay particular attention to the penmanship of the pupils and give constantly such instruction in spelling, reading, and English grammar as they may deem necessary to make the pupils familiar with these fundamental branches of a good education.' Though the school is graded, individuals are not lost sight of. The Master's eye is frequently brought to bear on the condition of each division, and once a quarter in each class, there is a general review of all the previous studies of that quarter. The entrance examination is peremptorily required to be strict, and no student is admitted without a thorough knowledge of all the preparatory studies. In a word, everything is done to sustain the intellectual tone of the school at a high pitch, yet without straining; while there was an honesty, a frankness, and an absence of restraint in the 'rapports' between the teacher and the taught which indicated that the moral atmosphere of the school was as healthy and bracing as the intellectual. Taking it for all in all, and as accomplishing the end at which it professes to aim, the English High School at Boston struck me as the model school of the United States. I wish we had a hundred such in England."

But the great point to be observed in this organisation of schools is what is called their "gradation." The schools in great cities like New-York and Boston are so arranged that each is at once preparatory to one above it and superior to one below it. The system is not very easy to describe without going into details, but perhaps the following account from Mr. Fraser will be found sufficiently intelligible:—

"Americans commonly divide their schools into classified and unclassified, graded and ungraded schools. The unclassified school is of the character that we should call in England 'higgledy piggledy'; and of course, is a type that is only found in the most backward rural districts. The classified ungraded school is one in which the children are arranged in classes upon a certain recognized principle; but the school is not one of a graduated ascending series, being, in fact, supposed to be complete in itself, and all the classes are taught in one room, generally by a single teacher, with the assistance, perhaps of monitors. Such are most of our English parochial and elementary schools. The graded school is part of a system divided in two, three, or more parts, each part, except the two extremes, organically connected both with one below and one above, of which it is the preparation; each grade ordinarily corresponding with and representing a year's progress, and though the progress is meant to be equal throughout, in certain points in it there are well-defined breaks, and the scholar passes from the Primary or infant school to the grammar or secondary school, and from that again into the high school, in which the system culminates. The period of time ordinarily assigned to the whole course is about 13 years, from the age of 5 to the age of 18, of which three or four years would be spent in the Primary school—three years is the prescribed period in Boston—four to five in the grammar school, and again four to five in the high school. The 'grades' correspond somewhat to our 'standards' of examination under the revised Code, promotion, from one grade to another taking place at periods, seldom oftener than twice a year, and always as the result of examination."

The great benefits of this system are two—first that it economises the labour in each school, and next that it economizes the number of schools required. All the scholars in each class and in each grade are supposed to be on a level and were the system is well managed this is very nearly the case. The teacher is thus enabled to teach the whole class, instead of breaking up his attention for the sake of individual scholars. Larger classes can be taught in this way, and taught more rapidly. The system, indeed, has its dangers. It is apt to render instruction very mechanical; and children seem frequently drilled into an intellectual uniformity with a very imperfect individual training. The results are often brilliant and general but not solid. The advantage in the economy of schools is manifest; each school is directed in one definitive work, upon which the whole energies of the teachers are contracted. There is, in fact, a strict division of labour, which is the first requisite in economical administration. This is the point in the American system which, it seems to us, is most open to imitation among ourselves. Why should not the middle-class schools which are now being established in the city, be brought into some kind of organic connection with our primary National-Schools? Might not the latter be more strictly confined to primary work, and the better scholars afforded an opportunity of passing on to the middle-class "grammar" schools? It might further some such arrangement that the very object contemplated by Mr. Rogers is to utilize the large charitable endowments of London, many of which were originally designed for primary as much as for "grammar" education. Indeed, we believe one difficulty in his way is that the trustees of these charities are unwilling to see their funds diverted from parish schools. It seems to us that the American system may indicate a useful solution of the problem. The system, of course, only applies to the cities.

We must notice briefly one point of great interest, on which American experience is full of instruction. It would be a great mistake to suppose that the "religious difficulty" is not felt in America. We have seen that it is a fundamental principle of the common school system that no instruction in the least degree sectarian should be given to the scholars. As might be expected, the practical result is that they receive no religious instruction at all; but it is remarkable that this deficiency creates gra-

ve dissatisfaction in America, and excites serious fears for the stability of the system. The Americans, after all, are a religious people, and many of them appear not a little anxious at the spectacle of their children growing up without any definitive religious teaching. The consequence is that the system receives a very lukewarm support from any of the clergy, and the Roman Catholic hierarchy, "silently and almost sullenly acquiescing in the system, are radically dissatisfied with it, and watching for the opportunity to substitute their own cherished system of separate schools." A similar difficulty is experienced in Canada, though in, at least, the Upper Province the system adopted is not strictly unsectarian. The clergy of different denominations have a right of access to the school to teach all children whose parents may desire it. But, with two important exceptions, this right is practically inoperative and both in Upper and Lower Canada another expedient is resorted to. A dissentient minority, however small, in Lower Canada, and as small as a dozen householders in Upper Canada, may establish a denominational school for children of their own persuasion, possessing all the rights of the ordinary common schools. There are not a few schools of this class, but they do not appear to work in a satisfactory manner. The general result of American experience is summed up by Mr. Fraser in the following sentences:—

"Mixed schools with religious instruction occupying a definite place in their programme are a phenomenon hardly to be met with on the American continent. No compromise and no comprehension have yet been discovered sufficiently skilful to appease, or sufficiently tolerant to embrace, the mutual jealousies of Christian communities. It was so in the United States, it was so, though less prominently, in Upper Canada; it is so, though in still smaller proportions, here. It looks almost like a law of human nature that it shall be so everywhere."

Nor must it be forgotten, as we have said, that where the purely secular system has been tried it is viewed with a good deal of uneasiness. It is, in fact, says Mr. Fraser, beginning to the doubted whether without definite religious instruction, any real moral education can be given at all. Such experience affords a most significant warning.

We will conclude with an interesting passage, in which Mr. Fraser sums up the general results of the system in the United States; but we must not part from him without expressing our thanks for his report. We could find some fault with its composition. In particular Mr. Fraser seems to have a propensity for long notes, which has led him into not a little repetition. Even in the text of his Report, at pages 87 and 89, and again at 90 and 130, he repeats the very same statements in almost the same words. But these are minor defects, and he has thrown himself into the subject with an interest and an energy which deserve the highest praise. His report is full of interesting matter which it is impossible for us even to indicate, a mine of information and guidance. He says:—

"In endeavouring to comprehend and appreciate the system of common or public schools—for the two epithets are used indifferently—it is absolutely necessary that the European observer should throw his mind, if possible, into the conditions of American life, should take his point of departure from a few leading social principles, and keep constantly before his eye certain salient social phenomena, which have, so to speak, necessitated its form, give to it its significance, underlie its action, maintain its motive power, determine its methods, and fix its aims. The principles have been already referred to—they are the principles of perfect social equality and absolute religious freedom. The phenomena are the restlessness and activity of the American character, without, perhaps, the culture and refinement of the old Athenian, but with all its versatility, the absorbing interest of political life, the constantly rising aims of each individual, the ebb and flow of commercial enterprise, and the immense development of the spirit of speculation; the intense energy of the national temperament, its rapidity of movement, its precipitancy, its impatience of standing still. Many an American in the course of active life will have turned his life to a half a dozen different professions or ways of getting a livelihood. 'The one lesson we are taught all through a life,' a person one day humourously said to me, 'is to be discontented with our station.' And it is this temper more than any other, intensified by the opportunities that the country affords and the prizes that it holds out to enterprise and ability, which is the motive power that sustains the schools. Corresponding, therefore, with these ideas, and reflecting these phenomena, must be the popular system of education. And the correspondence is marvellously exact, the reflexion wonderfully true. The American school is a microcosm of American life. There reigns in it the same spirit of freedom and equality, the same rapidity of movement, scarce leaving time for work to be thoroughly well done; the same desire of progress, eagerly catching at every new idea, ever on the look out for improvements: the same appeals to ambition, the same sensitiveness to praise and blame, the subordination of the individual to the nation, the same prominence given to pursuits of a refining aim, the same excessive and exhausting strain on the mental and physical powers, the same feverishness and absence of repose; elements of strength and weakness, of success and failure, mingled together in proportions which make it almost impossible to find any one discriminating epithet by which to characterize the resultant whole."—*Montreal Gazette*.