

the energy he spent in proper channels it will bring its reward ; and I have tried to shew that this is one of the proper channels in which the energies of a teacher may be directed.

All that has thus far been said applies, with some slight modification, to the *miscellaneous school*.

In any system of graded schools to be conducted efficiently, it is an absolute necessity that the 'Trustees' examination for grading should be in writing, for where the grading is performed only by oral examinations, it must be done in a loose and inaccurate manner. This examination I would place at the end of the winter term ; and no pupil should be allowed to pass from one grade to another without making a certain percentage—say 50 per cent.—as a minimum. Then, after making all necessary allowances for the customary number of dunces and hopeless cases that are to be found in all classes of all schools, if, at least, 70 to 75 per cent. of the remainder do not grade, it shews something radically wrong somewhere in the work of the teacher himself. It brings out the weak points of the year's teaching, and enables the representative of the School Board to say to its *employé*: Your work in this or that subject is not up to the mark ; pay more attention to it in future. It also brings out clearly to the School Board, the thoroughness and efficiency of the work accomplished by each teacher, and is likewise a fair test of his professional qualifications.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

MR. BLUNT made a recent caravan journey from Damascus as far south as Jebel Shammar (Djebel Shomer in Campbell's Geography) in Arabia. He describes the country as a heavy sand. The Shammar Mountains rise about 2,000 feet from a plateau 4,000 feet high. The district immediately north is called Nefud, that south Nejd. Though it has the name of being a desert, Mr. Blunt found abundant evidence of vegetation, and says during the whole of his journey he was never so comfortably off for both pasture and

fuel as in crossing the Nefud. The ostrich is the most valuable and the rarest animal. The other animals are gazelles, wolves, foxes, hyænas, hares, the ibex, the marmot, and the wild cow or white antelope, which, he says, never drinks. There are immense numbers of lizards ; few birds, consisting chiefly of hawks, which the Bedouins train for catching hares, etc., buzzards and wrens. The Arabs of Tiberias, who assured the author of Eothen that the king of the fleas lived there, when he complained of want of sleep, would surely regard Hail (not Heyel, Mr. Blunt says) as a paradise, for his dogs became free from them as soon as they reached that place, and he says fleas do not exist there. Dates and locusts form the staple food of the Bedouins of the desert when the herbage is scanty, and the camels are not in milk. Indeed, he says, not only human beings, but horses, dogs, camels, and nearly every animal of the desert devour the locusts, which, when boiled, have the flavour of green wheat ! Horses are not at all so numerous in Arabia as is popularly believed ; as proof of this he says "it would be possible to travel from one end of the peninsula to the other without having seen a single horse, or having crossed so much as a single horse track." Few of those he saw were over thirteen hands two inches high. "The camel is the universal means of locomotion with the Bedouins. The townspeople go on foot."

The government of the Emir of Jebel Shammar is by far the most powerful in all Arabia ; it is mild and just, and so secure is life and property that "nowhere in Asia can be found a more prosperous, contented and peaceable community than in Jebel Shammar." Mr. Blunt and his wife, who accompanied him, were the means of making a marriage contract between an Arab friend who conducted them from Damascus and a girl at one of the villages on the way. After the contract had been signed and the girl's dower of £40 handed over to the girl's parents, it was determined that the young man should come in two years and fetch home his bride. For says our traveller, "it would