

early, nor any age under fourteen too late, for admission into the Lower School. The general rule appears to be that boys may enter as soon as they are able to read, and they remain in it until they are fit for the Upper School.

The old series of six ascending forms, consecrated by usage in most of the great schools in this country and in Germany, still subsists at Eton; but not for the purpose for which it was originally established—that of instruction in school. For that purpose, a “form” must of course be of manageable size, and composed of boys nearly equal in proficiency. The lowest three forms at Eton belong to the “Lower School,” while the other three belong to the Upper School. There are, in fact, eleven forms or subdivisions of forms in the Upper School, and a boy who advances regularly from the bottom makes ten steps to reach the top, each step marking in theory at least, a grade of proficiency. The form and remove in which a boy is, denote his stage of advancement and his rank in the school; but the forms first, and then the removes, have gradually grown too large to be handled by a single master; and it has been thought better for the purpose of teaching in school, to distribute the whole mass afresh, without disturbing the organization already described, into groups of manageable size called “divisions,” each of which has a master of its own. The number of divisions may be multiplied or diminished from time to time without affecting the number or arrangement of the removes, of which it is wholly independent; thus boys in different divisions may be in the same remove, and *vice versa*; and a boy may possibly be promoted into a higher remove without quitting his division or changing his class-master. The division, therefore, in which a boy is, marks the master by whom he is taught, and the group of boys with whom he goes into school, for the time being. Sometimes, too, a boy passes over a whole division without entering it. In 1861 there were 17 divisions in the Upper School.

Before admission to the Upper School, a boy has to pass an examination, consisting of some easy translations from English into Latin, prose and verse, and from Greek and Latin into English. The standard is low; and nobody would believe, says Mr. Balston, how poor are the results obtained. If the candidate cannot come up even to this low standard, as is often the case, he is permitted to enter the Lower School, which, as already stated, admits any boy who is able to read. There is no inferior limit of age; no boy is admitted after 14, except on special grounds; and no boy can be placed, on entrance, higher than in the lower part of the remove, or seven steps from the top of the school. The average age of entrance is from 12 to 14, and the average time of remaining at school four or five years.

The general government of the whole school, upper and lower, is vested in the head master, subject to the control of the provost. The discipline and classical instruction of the Upper School were, in 1861, shared by the head master with seventeen assistants; the lower master, with four assistants, having the like charge of the Lower School.

The head master is, by the Statutes, to be a Master of Arts, “if such can be procured conveniently,” sufficiently instructed in grammar, and experienced in teaching, unmarried, and not holding ecclesiastical preferment within seven miles of Eton. He is not required to be a clergyman, nor to have been educated at Eton; but, practically, he is always both the one and the other. In his case, as in that of the Fellows, the condition of celibacy has become obsolete. He is elected, and may be deprived, by the Provost and Fellows.

Although the head master governs the school, he governs it under the control of the provost. This control is not, like the power of the governors in most other great schools, an almost nominal check—it is active, extensive, and minute. No assistant master can be appointed, no holiday or half holiday given, no alteration of the school hours made, no new school-book, or new edition of a school-book, introduced by the head master without the provost's sanction. This control applies not only to matters of real importance; “it has always been exercised even in the smallest matters.” Such is account given of it by the provost and fellows themselves.

This relation between the provost and head master springs historically from the old position of the latter as a subordinate officer of the college—“conductitius et remotivus,”—and subject to the control of its head. His statutory position is still the same as it was when the school contained only the 70 foundation boys, with such few “Commensales” and day scholars as could be taught with them by a master and usher. And whilst the number of the Oppidians has gradually increased, the provost has been constantly resident on the spot; and both provost and fellows have been men who, having spent much of their own lives as masters in the school, were naturally disposed to claim and exert a control over the working of it, and to receive, perhaps, with more or less of reluctance, alterations suggested by their successors which had not been deemed necessary by themselves. Different opinions have been expressed on the

question whether this control is or is not beneficial to the school. The opinion of the fellows collectively is strongly in its favour.

The course of study at Eton was until 1851 exclusively Classical: it now embraces both classics and mathematics. There is a teacher of French attached to the school, who resides at Eton; there is also a teacher of German, and one of Italian, who do not reside there; and lectures on Natural Sciences are delivered occasionally to such boys as choose to attend. In these subjects and in drawing, some instruction may be obtained by boys who are willing to pay for them as extras. But they do not enter into the course of study, and many boys leave Eton without having learnt there any one of them.

The teaching of the classics at Eton divides itself into two branches—teaching in school, and teaching out of school, or in pupil-room; and the large proportion which the latter bears to the former constitutes the chief peculiarity of the Eton system. The teaching out of school again, consists partly in the preparation of lessons which are to be construed in school, and the correction of exercises which are to be shown up in school; partly in private reading, the choice and direction of which rests wholly with the individual teacher, and which is quite independent of the school-work. Every assistant master has a share in this double teaching—in school, as a master in charge of a division—out of school, as a tutor, and every boy stands in a double relation to his tutor and to the master of his division, so that, except during the short time which he passes in the school division of which his tutor has the charge, he is under a double system of instruction at almost every point in his school life. The head master takes a division, but does not act as a tutor.

The work in school consists in construing and in repeating passages learnt by heart from Latin and Greek poets. Including the time spent in showing up compositions previously corrected by the tutor, a boy is in school on an average not more than two hours and a half on a whole school day; a lesson usually takes from 35 to 50 minutes. The real work is done out of school in “pupil room,” under the tutor, who not only goes over the pupil's exercises and construing before they go up to the division master, but goes through a large amount of private reading on any subject on which he may find the boys deficient besides. Thus to a course of reading in school, which is narrow and incomplete, is superadded another course which the tutor may make as elastic and discursive as he pleases, it being left entirely to him to supply the amount and kind of instruction which the character and capacity of every individual boy may render desirable. The large amount of repetition and of Latin verse composition, and the sameness and narrow range of the reading in form, are among the chief peculiarities of Eton school-work; to which may be added, also, the large use of extract-books instead of original authors.

Fifty years ago, the boys at Eton were taught, or supposed to be taught, in large masses, and the curriculum through which they were conducted was much narrower than at present. The whole of the sixth form, with the upper fifth—198 in all—were, under Dr. Keate, heard together. The number of masters in the Upper School was, in 1812, only six, and the average number in each form 80. The average number in a division does not at present exceed 40; the largest is 48; the smallest (the head master's) 32. There is a greater infusion of Attic authors than formerly in the higher divisions; but Homer, Virgil, and Horace continue to be the staple of the teaching in school.

A boy reads no Greek dramatic poetry in school till he reaches the very top of the fifth form; he may, and probably does, in all cases, read some in pupil-room, but this depends on the taste or judgment of his tutor. The Greek historians and Livy he reads only in extract-books.

The quantity of Latin and Greek poetry learned by heart is very large. Speaking generally, every lesson which is construed is also learnt by heart. A boy has to say 80 lines of Homer, and 60 lines of some other author alternately five days in the week. But the manner in which it is heard by no means ensures its being learnt by all the class; and the quantity exacted, it is stated, “has very often the effect of making the exercise of memory mechanical and slovenly, and therefore worse than useless.” A Latin theme is done every week in the fifth form and remove; translations into Latin prose very rarely. There is little or no Greek prose, and no English writing, prose or poetry, except two essays in a year for the sixth form.

In the judgment of the present provost and head master, the divisions are now reduced to a convenient size. And it appears to be the general, though not the universal, opinion of the assistants, that 40 is a perfectly manageable number, and is indeed to be preferred to a smaller, as more easy to keep alive, and better calculated to quicken the interest and call out the powers of the teacher. That it requires some skill in handling appears to be admitted, and that there is some difficulty in making the process of “calling up,” and the dread of being called up a thoroughly effective stimulus, each lesson lasting only about three quarters of an hour; and this is a