

other unavoidable causes of absence, the average attendance for the whole year always falls much below the whole number of pupils. There is always a fear that the average will sink below the required mark, and that the school will be broken up; and hence a strong influence—or as one Master is quoted (in the Inspector's last Report) as terming it, a powerful "moral suasion" is exerted to induce every pupil to learn Latin, for the benefit of the school; and, as a matter of course, nearly all the pupils do study Latin; as, under the like inducements and urgency, they would all study Syriac or Sanscrit.

The Grammar Schools of this Province are nominally under the charge of local Trustees, appointed by the municipalities which contribute to maintain the schools; but the Trustees have really very little power beyond the engagement and dismissal of the master. The course of instruction and all the regulations are prescribed with what (without any offensive meaning,) we may term a Chinese minuteness, by the Council of Public Instruction. Of the gentlemen composing this body we desire to speak with the utmost respect,—a respect due alike to their personal character and to their public services. We may venture also to express the belief that many, if not a majority, of these distinguished gentlemen, would concur with us in the opinion expressed in this letter. But we observe that the Council is, in fact, divided into two distinct classes of members. The one class, consisting of eminent civilians and clergymen of different denominations, apparently has charge more especially of the common school system. The other is composed of the "President of University College and the Presidents of the other Colleges affiliated to the University of Toronto," who are declared to be "*ex-officio* members for Grammar School purposes." It was natural that to these gentlemen the regulation of the Grammar Schools should have been in great measure surrendered by their colleagues. It was equally natural that they, regarding a University education as the highest boon that could be conferred on the youth of their country, should have seen in the Grammar Schools chiefly the means of making this boon more readily accessible to all who aspire to it. It is easy to comprehend that in their eagerness to accomplish this desirable end, they should have overlooked the fact that the preparation of boys for college is in truth only the secondary object of these

schools, and that their primary office is to furnish a good practical and commercial English education. With assuredly perfect rectitude of purpose, with great abilities and experience, and an evident desire to fulfil worthily a high public duty, they have devoted themselves to the work of framing regulations which should convert the Grammar Schools under their charge into manufactories of college matriculants. And the result is that while our common school system and our Universities may justly challenge a comparison with those of any other land, our Grammar School system may, with equal justice, be termed the worst system of intermediate instruction which exists in any civilized country. The accomplished Inspector of these Schools, whose sympathies are evidently what may be termed the classical system, is compelled to make his last report one long elegy over the failure of the system. The best remedy which he can propose, and that only with doubt and hesitation, is an elaborate and expensive system of inspection. But mere inspection cannot redeem a system which is breaking down solely by reason of being based on erroneous principles.

If the censure which we have pronounced upon the existing Grammar School system should be thought too severe, we would invite attention to the remarkable statistics which appear in the latest report concerning them,—that for 1866. It there appears that while the total number of pupils in the 104 Grammar Schools of the Province was 5,179, the number of pupils from these schools who in that year entered the Universities was only 63,—not quite one in eighty. Thus, in order that these sixty-three pupils might be prepared for college, the remaining 5113 were obliged to expend a large part of their time in studies which in after life will be of hardly any benefit to the great majority of them.

Even for those pupils who are preparing to become common-school teachers, and to whom (as we have before remarked) some knowledge of Latin is undoubtedly desirable, the amount of instruction in that language prescribed in the programme must be deemed altogether excessive, especially when compared with the instruction given in other studies. For example, we observe that French is deemed sufficiently taught when the pupil is proficient in the "grammar and exercises," and in two reading books—Voltaire's *Charles XII*,