—The annual report of the school committee of Boston for 1897 shows the following facts. The number of school children between the ages of five and fifteen was 81,947 ; of these 61,850 attended public schools and 12,272 attended private schools. The number of regular schools was 658 ; special, 20. Regular teachers, 1,681 ; special, 229. The cost per pupil, $26.07, being twenty-eight cents more than last year.

Practical Hints and Examination Papers.

THE LITERARY OBLIGATION OF THE TEACHER OF ENGLISH.

By Frederick William Coburn.

If the results of composition work in the secondary schools are unsatisfactory, the non-professional character of the teaching may probably be assigned as one of the chief causes. A person chosen to teach music is ordinarily supposed to be able to play and sing better than a mere amateur. A teacher of drawing, who gave up all his spare time to admiration of the work of other men, never himself essaying to make pictures, would not be on the road to greatest success. The best results in imparting the principles of any art are obtained by the man who is himself master of the art. The mere critic, whatever the sweep of his mental horizon, cannot teach action so effectively as can the man of action.

The application of the generalization to English composition is easy. In the majority of our schools composition is taught by amateurs—professional teachers, if you like, but amateur literary craftsmen. Somebody has remarked that in the traditional American college the professor of English was invariably a gentleman who had never wrttten ten lines that any one would read twice. The modern university has got away from that; its English department is apt to be a hotbed of literary production. The idea, however, is only now beginning to make itself felt in the lower schools, that the teacher to make pupils write is a person who writes.

The success of the English department at Harvard ought to be a constant inspiration to every secondary school in the country. Every freshman there comes to feel that he