

vious, we think, to those who will take the trouble to look into the matter, that the opposite is the fact. The high school sets the standard for the public school. The curriculum of the public school is specially fitted to prepare its pupils for the high school. The written papers of candidates for entrance into the high schools are examined by high school masters. As the reputation of the public schools is determined almost exclusively by the proportionate number of their candidates who succeed in passing the entrance examination, it will readily be seen that the courses of study, the methods of teaching, and the time and attention given respectively to different subjects in the public schools, are really determined and dominated by the high schools. And almost precisely the same relations obtain between the Provincial University and the high schools. The pyramid is on its apex. When it is remembered that only about five per cent. of the children who attend the public schools enter the high schools, and that probably no larger a percentage of those who attend the high schools enter the university, is it not too apparent that this much be-praised system is in constant danger of really sacrificing the best interests of the ninety-five to those of the five? Instead of assuming that the work of each grade of schools is to prepare its pupils for the next higher grade, do not the real interests of the country demand that the chief aim of the educational authorities should be to make the public school course the best possible for pupils whose education will be completed with it, and, in like manner, to make the course at the high school, the "people's college," the best and most complete possible for the great majority whose educational opportunities will not go beyond the high school. The practical question is, could not the public school course be made far more valuable to the half-million of pupils whose school education is limited by public school opportunities, were its curriculum drawn up and its teaching carried on, simply, or at least primarily, with a view to giving these the highest possible development during those precious school years? And, *mutatis mutandis*, would not the same thing be true of the high school, in its relations to the great majority of its pupils who never reach the university? These questions are at least worth thinking about, before we settle down complacently in the conviction that our school system is the best possible.

A question of a very similar kind, though possibly the difficulty might prove harder to meet, arises in connection with the rigid grading of the pupils in the individual schools, both high and elementary. We hear continually bitter complaints from parents with regard to the way in which their children are dealt with in the latter. In some cases the child who has the misfortune to enter at an irregular period, or with an irregular preparation, as adjudged by the scheme—we refer now to the graded schools—finds himself condemned to waste his time for the greater part of a year in a lower form than that for which he is really fitted, because of deficiency in some one or two particular subjects. The result is a disgust with school life which may affect the whole after career. Parents who wish their children to be taught first of all to read intelligently, believing that to be the basis of all real progress, find them located, for the reason above given, in a form in which they may not have a reading lesson more than once or twice a week, while the rest of the time is virtually wasted. Or the child who has learned to read with considerable ease, instead of being encouraged to make the best use of the attainment, is compelled to commence anew in order that he may be inducted into some phonic or other system. It may be that these evils are unavoidable under the system of grading which is absolutely necessary where the proportion of teachers to pupils is so small. But

it is an evil, nevertheless, and our public schools can never be really efficient so long as each teacher finds himself, or herself, responsible for the care and training of forty, fifty, or sixty pupils—one against a host.

But a worse evil, arising, we suppose, out of the same conditions, remains to be noted. We hear bitter complaints from the most intelligent parents, of the amount of "home-work" required of their children, even those of tender years. Owing, perhaps, to the fact that the teacher's time is so largely taken up with the discipline of the large numbers for whose good conduct he is made responsible, or to some other cause, it seems to have become the custom that the work of preparation of lessons must be done mainly at home, the school hours being occupied with the "reciting" of the lessons thus prepared, or with various exercises which may be well enough in themselves, but are mischievous by reason of the consequences to which they lead. We have heard parents complain that after being liberally taxed for the instruction of their children, they find themselves compelled to give up their evenings to teach them at home. But this is not the worst result. Far worse is it that, in order to perform their assigned tasks and keep up with their grades, the life of many children is made positively wearisome and themselves prematurely old, by the burden of perpetual study laid upon them. Deprived of the hours which should be sacred to play and recreation, and working constantly under a pressure, made heavier by the dread of punishment for shortcomings, in the shape of being kept in, or having to write impositions, or receiving low marks and standings, to say nothing of corporal pains, they lose the natural joyousness of childhood; their faces take on an aspect of worry; and the chances are that, even if health does not give way, as it too often does, they will become disheartened, peevish, and irritable, and imbibe a permanent dislike to school and study. Many of our readers will, we have no doubt, agree with us that this is no fancy sketch. Many ignorant or unsympathetic parents may take no notice of their children's hardships, or may foolishly persuade themselves that all this unnatural pressure is for their good, but again and again have we heard from the more intelligent that their children have actually become to them objects of pity and sympathy by reason of it. Yet they do not know how to find a remedy for the wrong under which they are suffering. If our belief in this matter is well-founded it is time that parents should speak out and insist on some modification of a regime which verges, in many cases, on positive cruelty.

Canada vs. Barnardo et al.

THE PLAINTIFF'S CASE.

THERE are twenty-three societies and individuals engaged in the work of bringing juvenile immigrants from Great Britain to Canada, who receive two dollars a head for every child not taken from a work-house or a reformatory.

Under these auspices, in the year 1894, no less than 2,720 were brought out, of which number Dr. Barnardo is responsible for one-third.

In addition to the children brought into Canada through these Benevolent Associations, large numbers have, in past years, been imported from the work-houses and public institutions of Great Britain.

These immigrants are, from time to time, distributed throughout the homes of the Canadian people, they play with their children, and, no doubt, many eventually marry in the country. Dr. Barnardo's Homes are famous throughout the civilized world, and it is well known that the boys brought out by him and similar agencies are drawn from the slums of great cities, and rescued from an element of vice, disease and crime. Moreover, under the Juvenile Offenders Act, a magistrate has power to commit a boy, upon conviction, to the reformatory at the expense of two dollars a week to the