

such machinery, and instances can be quoted in the history of state education, where unexpected enquiry has revealed gross neglect of duty, to say the least, even among those whose social position alone might be considered a guarantee for honesty of action.

The most important subject of consideration, however, is the method of inspecting.

Although local circumstances or official requirements may limit the duties of a Superintendent, and direct his attention to particular details to the exclusion of others, yet, speaking in general terms, as regards schools established and supported by public funds for the education of the people, a careful and accurate enquiry into the literary progress of the scholars is so essential, that I look upon inspection without it as a farce, I conceive it becomes highly important to ascertain the most advantageous method of conducting such enquiry. This method can, I think, be pointed out in a few words ;—the Superintendent, at each visit, should examine all the classes in every department of education in which they may be receiving instruction. Of these examinations he should keep careful notes to enable him to compare the result of each with that of the preceding.

These notes should have reference to all the details connected with the school, but more especially to the number of pupils engaged in the different branches of study, and their proficiency in each. By this means the Superintendent will be enabled to form a tolerably accurate estimate of the progress of the school in all essential particulars.

In forming such an estimate, however, various particulars should be taken into account—such as the general backwardness or otherwise of the locality, the previous habits of the children, and above all, the regularity or irregularity of the attendance ; all of which have a direct influence on the advancement of the school. Perhaps the most active of these is the nature of the attendance, and a few observations thereon may not be deemed irrelevant.

There are very many circumstances materially affecting the attendance of pupils at Common Schools. In some places the labor of the children is so valuable on the farm or in the house, that they cannot be spared ; occasionally insufficient clothing is the alleged excuse : but in most instances the real cause is the apathy of the parents, which is such as to render them altogether indifferent to the subject. This is unhappily too frequently the case. In all the grades of life, persons are to be found ready to overlook or neglect the importance of those details which do not appear to affect their interests immediately. Many otherwise sufficiently enlightened, fancy themselves altogether uninterested in the measures adopted for the moral and intellectual culture of the youth of both sexes of their fellow-countrymen, because perhaps they chance to be without children, or in a position not likely to render them direct participators in the operation of such measures, forgetting altogether that few public measures have a more specific and powerful influence on the well-being of society than the nature and extent of national education ; and such persons strenuously object to undergoing trouble or difficulty in the cause, on the ground that it does not immediately affect themselves, though they do not refuse to aid in the support of numerous other public arrangements equally indirect in their application, but which happen to be more familiar.

A very petty example of a similar line of conduct is afforded by numerous