

pupils are placed under the government and instruction of one set of teachers one half of the day, and then under the somewhat different government and instruction of another set of teachers the other half—and are thus kept alternating from one room to the other, from one set of teachers to the other, every school-day in the year. Originally all the public schools in Boston were organized after this plan; but since the commencement of the present century, experience has evinced that its practical working is clumsy and unfavorable to the continual and rapid advancement of the pupil in knowledge, and it has, therefore, been very much modified, or rather completely changed, where it was possible to make the requisite alterations in the buildings.

The remaining fifteen grammar schools are conducted on a different plan. Each building contains a large room or hall, in the upper story, capable of holding 200 or 300 children, and from seven to ten class-rooms, each fitted up with seats and desks to accommodate 60 or 70 pupils; and is occupied by a single school, divided into as many departments as there are class-rooms, all under the control of a head master or Principal, who has the direction of the whole course of instruction. Children are admitted in the grammar schools from the primary schools on the first Mondays of September and March, provided they are found, on examination by the master, to be able to read easy prose; to spell words of two syllables; to distinguish and name the marks of punctuation; to perform, mentally, simple questions in the four elementary rules of arithmetic; to answer readily any combination of the multiplication table; to read and write Arabic numbers containing three figures, and the Roman numerals as far as the sign for one hundred; and to enunciate clearly, and distinctly, and accurately the elementary sounds of our language. The grammar school course extends over six years for boys and eight years for girls, and embraces reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, map-drawing, grammar, composition, book-keeping, linear-drawing, and natural philosophy. Algebra, geometry, the philosophy of natural history, and human physiology may be introduced, when in the opinion of the master, any part of his scholars can attend to them without neglecting their other studies. The staff of teachers consists of a master, with as many assistants as there are departments in the school, two of these generally being males, and the others females. The master has the care of the senior or most advanced department, but, as he is required to examine, in person, the classes of the other teachers from time to time, he is provided with a female assistant who superintends his division while he is thus engaged. Each grammar school master receives a salary of \$1500 per annum; each sub-master, \$1000; each usher, \$800; each master's assistant, \$400; and all other assistants, \$250 each for the first year's service, \$300 for the second, and \$350 for each succeeding year. By the time a boy has reached the age of fourteen, he is expected to have passed through the several departments of the grammar school and to have qualified himself for admission into the ENGLISH HIGH SCHOOL.

This Institution was established in 1821, with the design of furnishing the young men of the city, who are not intended for a collegiate course of study, and who have enjoyed the usual advantages of the other public schools, with the means of completing a good English education and fitting themselves for all the departments of commercial life. Any boy over twelve years of age, who stands a satisfactory examination in reading, writing, spelling, English grammar, arithmetic, modern geography, and the history of the United States, is eligible for admission into the English high school. The prescribed course of studies is arranged for either three or four years, and includes linear-drawing, ancient geography, general history, book-keeping, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, natural philosophy, chemistry, geology, logic, intellectual philosophy, English literature, the French and Spanish languages, declamation, moral philosophy, political economy, natural theology, and Paley's Evidences of Christianity. It is supplied with a very extensive and valuable set of philosophical and mathematical apparatus, and contains 180 pupils, under the care of five teachers.

The LATIN SCHOOL is designed for instruction in the languages. Boys can enter at ten, and, after going through a six years' course of study, fit themselves for matriculation into any respectable college or university. In it four teachers give instruction to 200 pupils.

At the summit of the Boston school system is the city NORMAL SCHOOL, instituted in 1852, for the purpose of giving those pupils who had gone through the usual course of study in the grammar schools for girls, an opportunity of qualifying themselves for the duties of teachers. It is divided into two departments—a Normal school, in which 150 female students, between the ages of 16 and 19, are taught by a master, with three assistants; and a Model school, containing about 150 children, in which the students-in-training are required frequently to assist, for the purpose of acquiring experience in the application of correct principles of instruction and discipline, under the direction of skilful teachers. The prescribed course of instruction in the Normal school is arranged for two years, and its aim is to fit the pupils for the duties of teachers, by making them familiar with the most approved methods of teaching, and by giving them such command of the knowledge they have acquired, and such facility in imparting it, as shall enable them to originate methods of their own, and to apply them successfully to the instruction of those who may afterwards come under their care.

I have thus given a brief and very imperfect sketch of the several parts of the Boston school system, and I now solicit your attention to a few general facts respecting it as a whole.

The entire government and supervision of all the public schools in the city rests in the general school committee, which consists of the Mayor, the President of the common council, and twenty-four members, who are elected annually—two for each ward. The Mayor is chairman, and appoints the various committees, among which is a visiting committee for each school, consisting of five members for the English high school, five for the Normal school, five for the Latin school, and three for each of the other schools. These committees are required to visit their respective schools at least once a month, without giving notice to the instructors, and to report quarterly upon their wants and general efficiency. Two years ago, the Board, feeling how vastly important the trust reposed in them by their fellow-citizens, and how impossible it was for persons actively engaged in business like them, to give that minute attention and vigilant supervision in every department of their school system, which is essential to its thorough efficiency and success, appointed a city superintendent with a salary of \$2,500 per annum. It is his duty to devote the whole of his time and attention to the improvement and superintendence of the public schools; to pass continually from one to another, and critically examine them; and to make, from time to time, such suggestions to the Board as he considers would tend to render their various educational institutions more perfect. Since this office was created, it has been filled by Mr. Nathan Bishop, under whose talented and energetic direction the schools of Boston are said to have more than doubled their efficiency within the past two years.

The city annually expends about \$350,000 upon its public schools. It has invested in school-houses about \$1,500,000. The whole amount of money raised yearly, by taxation, for city purposes, is about \$1,200,000. Hence, it appears that, at present, somewhat over 29 per cent. of the city taxes is appropriated to school purposes. During the last fifteen years the proportion has varied from 25 to 34 per cent., or from one-fourth to one-third. The population of Boston is about 150,000; and if the amount expended for schools were raised *per capita*, the proportion paid by each man, woman, and child towards the expenses of the public schools would be a little over two dollars. The number of voters in Boston is somewhere about 22,500. If the expense of the schools were divided equally among them, each would have to pay about \$15. The whole number of pupils annually attending the various public schools is about 22,000; the total yearly cost of educating each child is therefore about \$16.

Such, then, are the general features of the Boston public