

# GENERAL REVIEW.

## Public Schools.

San Francisco has maintained a system of Free Public Schools since the first organization of a city government in 1849. In the earlier years of the city, the schools were held in rented rooms, small, ill-ventilated, and unsuited in every way, for school purposes; but at present the children are nearly all accommodated in convenient school houses erected on the school lots fortunately reserved for school purposes by the City Council, as early as 1851. The public schools have always been crowded to their utmost capacity, and at times it has been impossible to admit all the children applying. The school department has generally been limited in its usefulness, from lack of sufficient funds; still, comparatively speaking, the schools have been as liberally provided for as in other large cities in the United States.

The Board of Education consists of twelve School Directors, one from each Ward, one-half of whom are elected annually for a term of two years. They receive no salary.

The City Superintendent of Public Schools, under a special law of 1867-8, will, in December, 1869, be appointed by joint ballot of the Board of Education and the Board of Supervisors, to hold office for the term of two years, instead of being elected by the people, as heretofore, at the city elections.

The Superintendent receives a salary of \$4,000 a year.

The Board of Education has the entire control of the School Department; determines the annual rate of school tax, not to exceed thirty-five cents on the hundred dollars; and erects school-houses, subject, however, to the veto of the Board of Supervisors.

The first public school, as appears from the records of the City Council, was opened by John C. Pelton, in December, 1849; though it is claimed that a public school was taught on the Plaza, in 1848, by Thomas Douglas. The first City Superintendent of Schools was Thomas J. Nevins, appointed in 1852; and the second, Wm. H. O'Grady, appointed in 1853, both of whom are deceased.

The following statistics of the average daily attendance, taken from the Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1865, will exhibit the growth of the public schools from 1852 to 1868, inclusive: 1852, 445; 1853, 1,182; 1854, 1,272; 1855, 1,638; 1856, 2,516; 1857, 2,155; 1858, 2,521; 1859, 2,829; 1860, 2,837; 1861, 3,377; 1862, 3,786; 1863, 4,389; 1864, 5,229; 1865, 6,718; 1866, 7,949; 1867, 10,177; 1868, 11,890.

The total amount expended for public schools from 1852 to 1868, inclusive, is \$3,291,000; of which \$1,627,000 was paid for teachers' salaries; \$880,000 for school-houses; and the remainder, \$784,000, for rents and incidental expenses. The estimated value of the school property of the city, including lots, is not less than \$1,500,000.

The receipts of the School Department for the school year ending June 30th, 1868, were \$387,456.19; expenditures, \$415,839.60, showing a deficit of \$28,383.11, which was provided for by an Act of the Legislature, authorizing a special tax of five cents on the hundred dollars to be levied for the fiscal year 1868-9. The estimated school revenue for the present school and fiscal years is \$405,000.

The schools are classed as follows: two High Schools, eight Grammar Schools, twenty Primary Schools, two Training Schools, three Ungraded Schools, and one Chinese School. Whole number of teachers, 284.

The total number of different pupils enrolled on the school registers during the year was 18,000; the average number belonging to the schools for the year was 12,681, and the average daily attendance, 11,890.

According to the returns of the School Census, taken in June, 1868, the whole number of children between five and fifteen years of age was 23,386. According to the same returns the number of children between six and fifteen years of age attending public schools was 13,756; children between six and fifteen attending private schools, 4,008; making a total of 16,342 children attending school.

The number between five and six years of age, not allowed to attend public school—six years being the minimum age fixed by law—was 1,824, which, added to the number attending school, makes a total of 19,588, which, taken from the whole number of children (23,386,) leaves 3,798 children who did not attend school during the year.

The Census Marshals reported 3,365 children as not attending any school.

Thus it appears that one-seventh of all the children in the city, between five and fifteen years of age do not attend school.

Of this number, however, and probably a great majority, have attended school at some time, but left school between the ages of twelve and fifteen to go to work.

The number of children under five years of age was 16,342, making a total under fifteen years of age of 39,728.

Since the erection of spacious and convenient