

GENERAL REVIEW.

Our Public Schools.*

The San Francisco school year begins with July and ends with the following June. Hence the educational record of the calendar year 1873 includes the last half of the school year 1872-3, and the first half of the school year 1873-4.

ORGANIZATION.

The present classification of the public schools of this city divides them into five kinds—Primary, Grammar, and High; the Evening Schools, which are a kind of temporary and partial combination of Grammar and High School; and the Model School or Training School, which is really a kind of Sub-Normal and Practice School combined. To these one may add the Teachers' Normal School, held upon Monday evening of each school week, in which teachers of any grade may pursue studies and receive instruction fitting them to pass examinations for higher grades of certificates.

SEXES.

The thirty-five Primary Schools are all mixed; of the thirteen Grammar Schools seven are mixed, three are for boys only, and three for girls alone; while the two High Schools provide one for each sex. The one Model School and the single Evening Normal School receive both sexes, while the Evening Schools are partly one sex and partly both.

NUMBER OF GRADES.

The Primary Schools have four grades—the eighth, seventh, sixth, and fifth; the Grammar Schools four—the fourth, third, second, and first; and the High schools three grades—the junior, the middle, and the senior.

In all the schools each grade may include, and generally does include, several classes of similar advancement and nearly equal rank.

TIME IN EACH GRADE.

In every grade throughout the entire course, the studies are so arranged that pupils of average capacity and ordinary diligence can thoroughly and safely complete them in one year. Hence the Primary School course takes four years, the Grammar School four years, and the High School three years. Thus the entire public school course occupies eleven years. The regulations provide, however, that pupils of unusual ability or extraordinary industry may be promoted more rapidly and complete the course proportionally sooner. Every year furnishes scores of instances of this, though it is generally true that the pupil who attempts three years' work in two years, loses more than he gains.

AVERAGE AGE OF EACH GRADE.

The age nominally required for entering the lowest Primary grade, the eighth, is six years. While some enter younger, many more come in older, so that the average age of eighth-grade pupils upon entrance is about six years and three quarters, showing that the number entering at seven or upwards, is decidedly greater than the number entering at six or under. To find the average age of any upper grade add one year for each grade. The raising of the average age in each of the upper Grammar grades, resulting from the coming in of older outside pupils, is nearly or fully balanced by the more rapid promotions of the smarter pupils already mentioned, so that the average age of any grade may be found with sufficient accuracy by the method just stated.

* By Prof. E. Knowlton, to whom we would again express our thanks for courteous assistance.—COMPILER.

STUDIES OF EACH GRADE.

EIGHTH GRADE.

The little ones of the beginning Primary grade—the eighth—learn counting, the reading of printed and written numbers, and writing numbers to 101; Roman numerals in connection with their reading lessons, and the mental and written addition of small numbers. In reading and spelling they learn the more common, easy, and simple words from the teacher's speech, the charts, and the reading book; and the proper putting together of these words into common household, school-room, or play-ground sentences. In writing they learn the small letters and the simpler capitals. They also receive oral lessons upon the five senses—their names, organs, and uses; common objects from the objects themselves, from pictures, and from the teacher's description; conversational lessons upon common domestic animals and their uses, with instruction in the primary and secondary colors, from colored objects and from colored diagrams upon charts. Besides these they learn to sing the musical scale, ascending and descending, both by the usual scale names and by other syllables; and four songs by note; and have physical exercises twice a day.

To do all this they sit in school about three hours and a half each day, five days of each week, through forty-four weeks of the year, which is seven hundred and seventy hours a year, out of the four thousand three hundred and eighty hours during which they are supposed to be awake, allowing that they sleep half the time. Thus they are in school and at study less than one-fifth of their waking time. And it must be remembered that even this time is broken by from two to three daily recesses of fifteen minutes each, and a long intermission of from one hour to an hour and a quarter at noon, besides the five or ten minutes, twice a day, spent in regular physical exercises in the school room under the lead, or at least the guidance of the teacher. Thus the little ones are seldom, if ever, kept even approximately still in their seats more than a half hour at a time. In no city on the continent, or indeed in the world, are school children confined fewer hours or more frequently and thoughtfully relieved by careful ventilation and suitable exercise. The old cry, "The Murder of the Innocents," which Col. Higginson and his zealous physiological associates used to be so fond of raising concerning the confinement of the Primary school children of Boston, can certainly find no reasonable pretext out here along the distant golden rim of their educational "hub." In fact one needs go but a very little way in his observation of the condition and care of most of the homes from which these children come to have the conclusion forced upon him that they receive a far more physiological and healthful care in their public schools than in their private homes. That there are occasional exceptions no reasonable person can deny, but these spring from the negligence, disobedience, or incompetence of an occasional teacher, or the extreme carelessness of an exceptionally thoughtful and over-physiological parent, which is still more rare than any habitually careless teacher. More parents indeed complain that the schools do not keep their children "out of the way" long enough than find any fault at their confining them so long.

SEVENTH GRADE.

Arithmetic.—Review work of eighth grade, and practice the addition and subtraction of small numbers. Spell words picked from each reading lesson; write weekly from dictation one paragraph from the regular lessons of the week; once in two weeks copy one lesson from the open Reader, as an exercise in