

EDUCATION.

IT would have been indeed strange if communities so prosperous Progress of Education. as the Australasian Colonies had neglected the important matter of Education, and in every province of the group it will be found that the State has taken the subject in hand—to an extent, in some instances, far beyond what has been done in many of the countries of the old world. In each colony provision is made for primary education, and in all of them there are grammar and high schools, by means of which those who have the ability may raise themselves to the status by which they will be qualified to pass on to the Universities. And so bountiful has been the provision made by the State that in most cases the cost of education is merely nominal, and the poverty of the parents ceases to be an excuse for the ignorance of the children. No doubt in the very early days of colonization there was but little attention paid to education; but as soon as the sharp struggle for bare existence was over, attempts were made to provide in some degree the means of instruction for the rising generation, and the foundations were laid of an educational system that is in the highest degree creditable to these young communities. The denominations were naturally the first to build schools and provide teachers, but there was always a large proportion of persons who objected to denominationalism, especially those who belonged to denominations not subsidized by the State; and hence there arose a National or non-sectarian system, which has in the course of time very nearly driven the denominational element out of the educational field. This has been well exemplified in the case of the parent colony of the group.

In New South Wales there was for many years a dual New South Wales. system in existence. The four State-aided denominations—the

State aid to
Denominational
Schools.

Church of England, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, and Wesleyan bodies—had schools supported by annual votes from Parliament, administered under the control of the head of each denomination for the time being. There were also National schools, equally supported by the State, but under the control of a Board appointed by the Government. This plan was found to be costly and wasteful in the extreme, for in many of the country towns there were four or five small and inefficient competing schools, where the total number of children was not more than sufficient for one well-conducted establishment. So strongly was this evil felt that changes in the law relating to education were made from time to time, until at length the denominational system was abolished altogether, and one general and comprehensive plan of Public Instruction adopted in its place. This was not brought about without much agitation, lasting over a considerable period. A League was formed, having for its object the establishment of education, secular, compulsory, and free. The League so far succeeded that the system of education now in force in New South Wales is non-sectarian, though facilities are afforded to clergymen to give religious instruction to those children whose parents desire it. It is compulsory, and free to all who cannot afford to pay, while a merely nominal fee is charged to those who are in a position to contribute towards the cost of the teaching of their children. In New South Wales in 1888 there were 2,271 public schools, with an average attendance of 112,220 children out of 186,692 enrolled. For secondary education there are high schools and grammar schools receiving support from the State, and intended to act as feeders to the University. Bursaries are now being established, with this object in view. Educational affairs are in this colony under the direction of the Minister for Public Instruction.

Victoria.

In Victoria a system of free, compulsory, and secular primary education is in force, under a Minister for Education, who is responsible to Parliament. The compulsory clause is said

to be very strictly enforced, especially in the large towns, and education is entirely free as regards the ordinary subjects of primary instruction, while the teachers are allowed to impart additional subjects, for which a small fee has to be paid. At the end of 1888 Victoria had 1,933 State schools, with an average attendance of 128,958 scholars, out of 197,115 enrolled. Secondary education is principally in the hands of private or denominational establishments. The higher education is supplied by the University with its affiliated colleges.

The office of Minister for Education in the Government of Queensland, is associated with some other office, usually that of the Postmaster-General. The Act now in force is of a tolerably liberal character, primary education being secular and free. The compulsory clause has not been adopted, as it would be a very difficult thing to enforce its provisions in the scattered and sparsely populated districts of the interior. The primary schools at the end of last year were 544 in number, with an enrolment of 58,738 pupils, out of whom 38,926 were in average daily attendance. Secondary education is provided for by means of grammar schools, which are liberally assisted by the State. Queensland as yet has no University of her own, but sends a fair proportion of students to the Universities of Sydney and Melbourne.

The South Australian system of primary education differs somewhat from those already described. It is presided over by a responsible Minister, with an Inspector-General and other officials. Provision is made in the Act that in every locality where there is a sufficient number of children whose parents are willing to pay a small fee, the State provides a schoolhouse and pays the salary of a teacher, besides providing books and apparatus. There were about 530 primary schools at the end of 1888, with 45,741 children on the rolls, and an average daily attendance of 28,180. Compulsion is in force to the extent that children of school age are not exempt from attendance unless they have attained a certain

standard of instruction. Parents who are unable to pay are entitled to have their children instructed free. Religious instruction is not allowed to be given except out of the ordinary school hours. State aid is given to establishments where secondary education is imparted, and the University at Adelaide, is efficient, though small.

Tasmania.

In Tasmania there is no separate Minister for Education, but the department is under the control of the Treasurer, who has especial charge over matters relating to primary instruction. There are public schools in every country town throughout the colony, and several in Hobart and Launceston. They now number 220 in all, the average attendance being 8,730, out of an enrolment of 12,002 children. The principle of compulsion is nominally in force. Secondary education is encouraged by means of superior schools and a system of scholarships; and annual examinations are held at which successful candidates may gain the degree of A. A., or Associate of Arts. There is no University in Tasmania.

Western
Australia.

Quite a different system of education prevails in Western Australia, which does not yet possess Responsible Government. The public primary education is imparted in what are called elementary schools, which are entirely supported by the State, and provisional schools, which are subsidised to a less extent. Private schools are also assisted from the public purse, on condition of submitting to Government inspection on secular subjects. There is a high school at Perth and a grammar school at Freemantle, and further encouragement is given to secondary instruction by the institution of scholarships which are open for competition. At the end of 1888 there were ninety-three elementary and provisional schools in the colony, with 4,699 scholars on the roll, and an average attendance of 3,659. The local boards have power to enforce compulsory attendance.

New Zealand.

New Zealand has an educational system which is entirely secular and free. There is no separate department of education,

but matters of this kind are looked after by one of the members of the Cabinet. The whole colony has been divided into school districts, each presided over by a local board, and a capitation grant of £3 15s. per head is paid by the State for every child in average attendance, with other grants for school buildings, training of teachers, support of scholarships, &c. At the close of 1888 there were 1,459 public schools thus supported by the State, with an average attendance of 90,840 scholars out of a total enrolment of 112,685. High schools, colleges, and grammar schools provides the means for acquiring secondary education, and there is an University, which, like those of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, is empowered to confer the same degrees as the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

In addition to the schools supported wholly or in part by the State in each of the colonies are to be found private schools of more or less merit. The Roman Catholics have schools and convents of their own in all the colonies, where a superior class of education is given.

Technical instruction is given in the capital cities of each of the Australian Colonies, and there is every probability that instruction in such matters will before long be very much extended. Other educational establishments exist in most of the colonies for the instruction of the deaf and dumb and the blind, besides which there are industrial schools and reformatories of a semi-penal character. During the year 1888 the Governments of the Australasian Colonies expended altogether the sum of £2,000,852 on primary education. There were in all 7,050 public or State schools, with 617,672 children on the rolls, and an average daily attendance of 411,513 pupils.

Striking evidence of the rapid progress made by these colonies in regard to education is afforded by a comparison of the educational status of the people as disclosed by the census of

Educational progress since 1861. 1861 and of 1881. In these years the numbers who could read and write, read only, and who were unable to read, were as follow :—

Australasia.—Education of the People.

	1861.				1881.			
	Read and Write.	Read only.	Cannot Read.	Total.	Read and Write.	Read only.	Cannot Read.	Total.
New South Wales	188,543	46,024	116,293	350,860	507,067	49,372	195,020	751,468
Victoria	327,800	56,945	155,577	540,322	651,567	49,535	161,214	862,316
Queensland....	17,181	3,714	9,164	30,059	136,718	13,631	63,176	213,525
South Australia..	72,207	18,629	35,994	126,830	200,057	15,267	64,541	279,865
Western Australia	8,446	1,559	5,585	15,590	19,697	2,429	7,582	29,708
Tasmania.....	48,281	13,137	23,559	89,977	74,967	9,605	31,133	115,705
New Zealand	67,998	8,922	22,101	99,021	346,228	27,323	116,332	489,933
Total.....	730,456	148,930	373,273	1,252,659	1,936,301	167,162	630,087	2,742,550

The proportions of educated and illiterate were, therefore :—

Australasia.—Percentage of total Population.

	1861.	1881.
Read and write	58·31	70·60
Read only	11·89	6·10
Cannot read	29·80	23·30

Proportions of educated and illiterate.

The figures in the two preceding tables refer to the whole population; and although 1881 presents a more favourable record than 1861, yet it must be considered that the proportion of the people who are under five years of age naturally swells the number of those who are unable to read. The following tables, containing

similar information, but dividing the population according to ages, will give a truer picture of the advance of education :—

Educational
Census of 1861
and 1881.

Australasia, 1861.

	Under 5 years.	5 years and under 10.	Over 10 years.	Total.
Read and write.. ...	117	37,322	693,017	730,456
Read only	5,022	51,337	92,571	148,930
Cannot read	204,344	51,503	117,426	373,273
	209,483	140,162	903,014	1,252,659

Australasia, 1881.

	Under 5 years.	5 years and under 10.	Over 10 years.	Total.
Read and write.....	190	175,921	1,760,190	1,936,301
Read only	5,867	75,583	85,712	167,162
Cannot read	395,504	104,507	139,076	639,087
	401,561	356,011	1,984,978	2,742,550

Omitting, therefore, all children under the age of 5 years, the proportions of educated and illiterate, in 1861 and 1881, were :—

Australasia.

Percentage of persons over 5 years of age.

	1861.	1881.
Read and write	70·00	82·70
Read only	13·80	6·89
Cannot read	16·20	10·41

Looking at the matter still more closely with reference to age, it will be seen that the improvement in education is most marked in the case of the rising generation, and as a natural result the

Education of the
young.

proportion of uneducated of more advanced age is not only smaller than it was years ago, but promises in the future to be smaller still.

	1861.		1881.	
	5 years and under 10.	Over 10 years.	5 years and under 10.	Over 10 years.
Read and write.....	26·63	76·75	49·41	88·67
Read only	36·63	10·25	21·23	4·32
Cannot read	36·74	13·00	29·36	7·01

Marriage Registers.

The Marriage Register affords further proof of the advance of education :—

Marriages, Australasia.

	1861.		1871.			1881.			1888.			
	Marriages.	Marks.		Marriages.	Marks.		Marriages.	Marks.		Marriages.	Marks.	
		M.	F.		M.	F.		M.	F.		M.	F.
New South Wales	3,222	596	389	3,953	573	768	6,284	347	525	7,844	307	280
Victoria	4,434	*	*	4,693	342	650	5,896	171	245	8,946	154	162
Queensland	320	*	*	970	o	*	1,703	84	169	3,254	98	162
South Australia...	1,158	*	*	1,250	*	*	2,308	100	159	2,084	50	51
Western Australia	149	*	*	159	*	*	197	*	*	304	*	*
Tasmania	717	*	*	598	*	*	856	*	o	951	*	*
New Zealand	878	*	*	1,864	*	o	3,279	105	190	3,617	60	91
	10,878			13,487			20,523	807	1288	27,000	669	746

* Information not available.

Signing by Marks.

Information is not to hand for the numbers who signed by mark in Western Australia and Tasmania in 1881 and 1888, but for the other Colonies the percentages were :—

Proportion of persons signing by mark.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
1881	4·14	6·61	5·38
1888	2·60	2·90	2·75

Contrast this with the records of 1861 and 1871 for the only Colonies for which the information is available and the wonderful improvement is abundantly manifest.

Percentage of persons married who signed by mark :—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
1861.....	18.50	30.69	24.60
1871.....	10.58	16.40	13.49

The number of children attending school has increased at a far greater rate than the population, showing that the advantages of education have been of late years more within the reach of the masses than formerly :—

Number of Children attending Public and Private Schools.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
1861	68,987	61,073	130,060
1871	165,082	147,048	312,130
1881	344,310	326,466	670,776
1888	397,827	379,318	777,145

Population from 1861 to 1888 nearly trebled itself, but the number of school children in 1888 was about six times as great as in 1861.

The Post Office returns point indirectly to the spread of education :—

Letters and Newspapers (in thousands).

	1861.		1871.		1881.		1888.	
	Letters.	Newspapers.	Letters.	Newspapers.	Letters.	Newspapers.	Letters.	Newspapers.
New South Wales ..	4,370	3,384	7,510	3,992	26,356	16,528	48,086	31,722
Victoria	6,110	4,277	11,716	5,173	26,308	11,441	47,701	21,703
Queensland	515	428	1,793	1,135	5,179	4,530	12,897	10,347
South Australia	1,540	1,090	3,163	2,212	10,759	5,927	17,013	7,885
Western Australia ..	*		*	*	995	715	2,105	1,233
Tasmania	836	890	998	891	2,994	2,050	4,716	4,319
New Zealand	1,237	1,428	6,082	4,180	26,430	12,248	42,052	16,203
	14,603	11,503	31,262	17,583	99,021	53,429	175,470	93,412

* Information not to hand.

Increase of
Letters and
Newspapers.

The above table shows a wonderful advance in postal business. In 1851 the numbers of letters and newspapers that passed through the post were only about two millions of each :—

Australasia.

	Letters.	Newspapers.
1851	2,165,000	2,150,000
1861	14,608,000	11,503,000
1871	31,262,000	17,583,000
1881	99,021,000	53,439,000
1888 ..	175,470,000	93,412,000

Letters per
inhabitant.

The following are the numbers of letters and newspapers per head of population in each of the years above mentioned :—

	Letters per Inhabitant.	Newspapers per Inhabitant.
1851	4·74	4·70
1861 ..	11·81	9·30
1871	16·46	9·26
1881	36·10	19·48
1888	48·61	25·88

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES.

Establishment
of Universities.

The advance of education is hardly more clearly indicated by the institution and success of Colleges and Universities, than is the progress of wealth or the attainment of leisure. In Australia the earliest attempts to provide for what may be termed the luxuries of education, were made in New South Wales in 1852, and in Victoria in 1855, when the Universities of Sydney and Melbourne respectively were established. No other Colony of Australasia was at that time sufficiently advanced in wealth and population to follow the example thus set, but New Zealand in 1870, and South Australia in 1874, each founded an University; the first that of New Zealand, and the second that of Adelaide. In all cases the Universities are in part supported by grants from the public funds, and in part by private endowments and the fees paid by students.

Attached to the University there are in Sydney three Colleges, while a fourth is in course of establishment for female students. In Melbourne there are also three Affiliated Colleges, and in both capitals these are connected with different religious bodies. In New Zealand there are four Affiliated Colleges—at Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington, and Auckland, but, except in Christchurch, these are wholly undenominational in character. In Adelaide there are no Affiliated Colleges attached to the University; and in New Zealand the University itself is an examining and not a teaching body, founded mainly on the principles of the London University.

The number of students at each of these Universities and Colleges was at first small, but the increase on the whole has been steady and satisfactory. The University of Melbourne has now upwards of 500 students attending lectures, all of whom are matriculated and studying for degrees. Sydney only numbers about 250 regular students, although nearly 700 attend lectures. In New Zealand there were last year more than 900 matriculated students attending lectures at the Affiliated Colleges. The number at the University of Adelaide is much smaller as yet, but considering the smaller population the attendance of students is not less satisfactory than in Sydney.

Since its institution the University of Sydney has conferred degrees upon about 800 students as the result of examinations, that of Melbourne upon upwards of 1,200, and that of New Zealand upon nearly 300. The average number who annually qualify themselves for degrees in the Australasian Universities already exceeds 300, and the number is increasing year by year.