The cause of progress and reform in New York City schools received a great impetus last Wednesday, when the Public Education Society submitted, through its committee, a memorial to the Board of Education on the state of the schools. This memorial was received and referred without comment to the committee on reform, to whose own report we have recently made reference in these columns. The memorial opens with the statement that the Public Education Society believes the New York City schools, as at present organized and conducted, to be deficient in respect to accommodations provided, in respect to courses and methods of instruction, and in respect to administration. In support of its belief, the society submits a number of facts. From the perusal of these we learn that during the past year there were 150,212 pupils registered in all the schools. Of this number, 55,018 were registered in the grammar schools, and 95,204 in the primary schools. For the grammar schools there were provided 1,575 teachers, and for the primary schools 1,741 teachers. From this the society goes on to show, that, although the conditions in the grammar departments are bad enough, those in the primary schools and departments are infinitely worse. The primary schools or departments are invariably placed on the lowest floor of the school-building, where there is the least light, the greatest amount of dampness, and the greatest amount of exposure to foul and unpleasant or unhealthy surroundings. It seems that in the lowest primary grade the classes average in size 87 pupils to every teacher. This fact is in itself astounding, and a sufficient indictment of the entire system. It must be borne in mind that these children are the youngest and most impressionable in the schools, and that many of them are not six years of age. In the next lowest primary grade the classes average 58 pupils to the teacher; and in the grade above that, 56 pupils to the teacher.

It is then shown, that although the regulations of the Board of Education call for very mesmeric allowances of floor space and cubic air space per pupil, yet the law is violated in hundreds of instances. A list of 185 school-rooms is given in which members of the society, by actual inspection, have found the law to be violated to an alarming extent. For instance: school-rooms meant to hold 52 pupils are found to have 75 in average attendance, and one room which was meant to hold only 44 had 73 little children crowded into it daily. In spite of this overcrowding, 3,873 pupils were denied admission to the schools during the first week in September, 1888. The lack of play-grounds is adverted to, and an admirable suggestion made that the authorities should follow the example of London, and place the play-grounds on the roofs of the school-buildings in cases where the value of real estate does not permit the purchase of ground adjoining the school-houses. In illustrating the deficiency of the courses and methods of instruction, the memorial is very forcible. It shows, that, while the school-children in New York City are hard-worked and the curriculum overcrowded, the progress is not nearly so great as it is in the elementary schools of a number of European countries. It is chargeable, too, against the New York City system, that the course of study is arranged for the sole benefit of those who pursue it throughout, whereas not less than 60,000 children annually leave the public schools before they reach the age of twelve years. These children have had no