

education. Teachers have a right to ask that the text-books which they are obliged to use shall be of such a character that the best interests of the school are subserved; but they should hesitate to ask for frequent changes, which must necessarily increase the burden of taxation, which is already heavy.

It may now be proper to consider the mechanical arrangement of text-books. The materials used in their making should be of the best available quality. The paper should be of reasonable thickness and tenacity, and of a colour that least wearies the eye to follow the printed page. The present authorized series fulfils these conditions in a fair degree. The binding should be *light*, so as not to give undue weight to the book; *strong*, so as to last as long as the printed page; and of *such materials* as not to make the price too high. According to the present prices, the public are justified in complaining that the binding is, in too many instances, of a rather questionable character, and that durability is by no means insured. Superior workmanship should be guaranteed; but whether this is to be secured by open competition or by direct interference of the Education Department, it is not my purpose to determine.

Permit me briefly to touch upon the purposes which text-books serve. It is evident that knowledge communicated by the lips of the living teacher has a freshness and vitality which no text-book can give it; consequently no text-book can remove the necessity of having a living teacher. Still, good text-books may be used with advantage to a school, more especially in the ungraded rural schools, where primary and advanced classes assemble to receive instruction from the same teacher. They present the object-matter of a branch of knowledge in a proper form for study, which is available to all the pupils, regardless of the irregularity of attendance of a large number of them. Where no text-books are used, much time is lost by the pupil in writing out the facts and principles orally communicated by the teacher. Since oral expression is of necessity rapid, misconceptions are liable to arise in the minds of the pupils, and occasionally statements are found in their note-books which were not communicated by the teacher. Besides, note-books are of a somewhat ephemeral character. Although young pupils do not necessarily require text-books, it is a convenience if they have them, as they have then the means of preparing what the books contain, in addition to the matter which the teacher presents. A very material consideration in teaching is the proper order of presenting the subjects of which the text-books treat, and a well-written series does that. In some schools where text-books are dispensed with, facts and principles are simply jumbled together, thus clogging the memory with disconnected fragments of knowledge, without language to make it known or power to use it for the accomplishment of important practical ends. It is advisable not