

by the parents quite as much as by the teachers. Not only was there a marked improvement in attendance, but the attendance was cheerful."

The method of teaching seems to be that, before books are used at all, words, the meaning of which is known to the children, are written down on a blackboard and the children taught first to recognize and then to imitate them. Not until after the words are learned singly and composed into sentences are they decomposed into their letters and these letters taught. In other words, one symbol for a known thing is used instead of two, and children are brought one step nearer to a fact which it is possible for them to understand and to take an interest in. No doubt this is a great improvement. The three R's and geography are the only studies pursued in the primary schools. In geography, something like Pestalozzi's method is adopted, and quite young children are taught to model continents and to indicate contours in clay. In arithmetic, Mr. Adams admits, no considerable improvements have been made on the existing methods. This is what we should expect, since figures are arbitrary symbols of abstract properties of things, and it is quite impossible for a young child to take an interest in the relations of figures unless he can be made to connect them at once, as in Quincy he is taught to connect the alphabetic symbols with things themselves. Mr. Adams's paper does not go into detail, except about the primary schools. He says that a system essentially the same as the primary system is carried through all the grades, but it would be interesting to know how this is done. The Quincy Committee cut down the number of studies, upon the ground that "smatter" and "veneering" were the products of the ordinary methods, and aimed at nothing beyond "a thorough grounding in the elements of

knowledge," a phrase which may mean either much or very little.

The text-books of the Boston schools do not constitute so much of a revolution as the Bostonian writers had led us to suppose. Superintendent Eliot's collection of poetry for class reading indicates that the people who got up text-books under the crumbling system knew what they were about. Nearly all the poems of which it consists are to be found in American school readers of a generation ago. Those which are now first collected for the use of schools are some of them good straightforward ballads, but more of them selections, from Wordsworth and Tennyson and Coleridge and Charles Lamb and Lowell and Emerson, of poems of a studied simplicity of language, but full of a brooding self-consciousness which is at once incomprehensible and revolting to a healthy child. It may be that we are wrong to limit in this way the intellectual capabilities of the Bostonian child, but for children of less favored climes there is a good deal of deadwood in the book. The other books are excellent in their way, both the collection from the "Arabian Nights" and Mr. Lodge's selection, which comprises "Cinderella" and "Jack and the Beanstalk" and "Blue Beard," and several other of the stories in which well regulated children have taken delight from time out of mind. There does not seem to be any revolution in them. Children can scarcely read them at an earlier age than that at which children have always read them. The difference is, that they are to be read, not by children sprawling prone on the floor with their chins in their hands and their abstracted legs waving in the air, but by children sitting in rows in class-rooms. The trouble about them for teaching is the notorious fact that what is a task in childhood very seldom becomes a pleasure. Mr. Adams relates that his father put him through