

rugged enough without having any artificial hindrances placed in the way. Hurdles may do very well in a hurdle race, but they are sadly out of place in the race for knowledge. Let us then have the way made as smooth as possible, especially to those who are entering the race for the first time.

That we are fully ready for a change, is, I believe, very generally admitted, and I hail with pleasure the advent of a new series of readers. Two series have been authorized and a third one likely to be; the all important question is, which shall we adopt? In discussing this question I do not propose becoming the special advocate of any one of the series now before the public. We have special pleading enough in the circulars, advertisements and pamphlets issued by rival publishing houses without those belonging to the profession entering the arena and becoming special agents for any publishing-house, no matter how well they may be paid for their services. I regret very much to learn that there are those, who, forgetting or ignoring the dignity of their work and the honour of their position, have allowed themselves to become agents and have used their influence, outside of its legitimate sphere, in introducing a particular series of reading books. I feel that some of our leading teachers and inspectors have perhaps, unwittingly, it may be, allowed their names to be used in recommending every text book issued, whether in the interests of education or not. Perhaps the public will learn in time to place as little value upon these testimonials as they do those puffing patent medicines. If these books do not possess sufficient merit to be introduced without all this puffing, it might be advantageous to our schools to do without them. One has only to read these very flattering

letters of approval, and compare them with the books they praise, to learn that the writer did not carefully examine these books, or simply wrote a commendatory letter as an acknowledgment that he had received a copy of the books *gratis*. That these things should be so is a matter of regret, that they are so is a matter of fact. However much we may deprecate this indiscriminate puffing of books, yet it is the privilege and duty of every one connected with our educational system, especially those engaged in the practical work of the school-room, to discuss the principles upon which our text-books should be based, and to point out any defects observed in them.

With this object in view I propose discussing certain principles which in my opinion should form the groundwork of our reading books. But you may ask, What are we to understand by principles? It is not necessary for me to give a technical definition of the word, but simply to say that I mean, first of all, the mechanical execution of the books; secondly, the adaptation of the selections to the wants of our Public Schools, and lastly, the sentiments conveyed or the lessons taught by such selections. In the mechanical execution of the book there are several points that require attention. Of these I may mention the quality of the paper used, the style and class of binding, the size of the type, the proof-reading, the character and class of illustrations, and the general appearance of the page. The paper should be of good quality and of a tint that will be the least injurious to the eye; the type should be of suitable size, properly spaced, and leaving a clear and distinct impression. Every page, especially of the readers, with blurred or defective printing should be rigidly excluded from the make up of the book. The style of binding should