

generation of the most outrageous prigs on the face of the earth. Fancy the eagerness on the part of everybody who met him to shed the blood of a boy of twelve who had been for seven or eight years under a "system" designed to stimulate his originality and encourage his independent thought. In fact, long before the new departure there were boys of this intolerable variety. Consider a society of which this young miscreant was typical, and the whole community to be inoculated with his complaint at an early age and at the public cost.

Well, as we say, one is refreshed to find that Mr. Adams has no such ideal in view. Only one of these papers is about the new departure. One of the others is about "the public library and the public schools," and the third about "fiction in public libraries and educational catalogues. Mr. Adams has nothing to say which sounds anything like so large as would be imagined, nor any principle which could be printed in capitals. In fact, his main principle is that you may lead a horse to the water, but you cannot make him drink, and he applies this to the conduct of public libraries as well as of public schools. In regard to libraries he makes a very obvious distinction, which, nevertheless, we do not remember to have seen drawn before. It is that literary amusement, however harmless or even wholesome it may be, should no more be supplied at the public expense than any other form of harmless and wholesome amusement; and that to provide young readers with all the current fiction, for example, is "something which seems very like the *panem-et-circenses* principle." What he proposes is that libraries and public schools, considered as instruments of education, should both be managed with more reference than they are now to the needs and to the appetites of the people who are to be taught by them. The application of this and of

other equally practical notions to the public schools of Quincy, under the administration of a committee composed of Mr. Adams and other citizens like minded with him, and by means of an enthusiastic superintendent, has resulted in what may be called a new system, even if it cannot without an inflation of the fact be called a New System. Too many things are attempted, Mr. Adams insists, and children who can make a brilliant figure at an examination cannot read or write decently. Reading and writing are first taught, and one peculiarity of the Quincy schools, which has now apparently been extended to the Boston schools, is that the children are taught to read and write before they are taught to spell, and they are not taught grammar at all. These are not new ideas and Mr. Adams claims no novelty for them. They are commonly applied to teaching modern languages. Applying them to the arts of reading and writing English seems to have resulted in great progress in those arts at Quincy. This is Mr. Adams's statement:

"When, after three years, a class brought up under the new system was put to the test, the examiner expressed a 'doubt if one scholar in ten knew what a noun, a pronoun or an adjective was or could have parsed a sentence or explained the difference between its subject and its predicate. They could, however, put their ideas into sentences on paper with correctness and facility; and, though they could not define what they were, they showed that they could use nouns, pronouns and adjectives, in writing, just as well as they could in speech.' Out of 500 grammar school children, taken promiscuously from all the schools, no less than 400 showed results which were either excellent or satisfactory. That the scholars could read at sight, without bungling and stumbling over every unusual word the moment they left the familiar page of their Readers—that they could write a simple letter without being painfully conscious of an unaccustomed labor—these, though very considerable, were by no means the only or even the most noticeable results of a new departure. In the upper grammar as well as the lowest primary there was an entire change of spirit, and going to school was no longer what it had been. This was recognized