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THE SCHOOL READERS.*

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MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

WITHIN, the past few years the question of the fitness of the present authorized series of reading books for the requirements of our Public Schools has been vigorously discussed, and the almost unanimous verdict rendered, that they have outlived their usefulness. It is well known to every thoughtful teacher that there are many and grave defects in them, and that they are not well adapted to our present wants. The progress of our schools, the improvement in "methods of instruction," as well as the general advance in literature and science, render it necessary that our reading books should be fully abreast of the times, both as to the subject matter of the lessons, and the manner of presenting it. The improvements made in our school-houses and grounds, the high literary attainments necessary for those who desire to become teachers, and the profes-

sional training required from all candidates for teacher's certificates, demand a correspondingly high standard in our text-books, especially in the readers, otherwise, how can the improved methods of teaching illustrated and enforced in our Normal and Model Schools be carried into effect? In every calling and business of life good work can only be done with proper appliances, how then can it be done in the school-room without them? To me it seems to be the necessary complement to this age of marvelous progress and ceaseless activity, that our schools be thoroughly equipped for the great work of education. We are blind to our best interests if, from motives of false economy, we allow any but the best books to be used. It is not desirable that changes should be made for the sake of change, but when it be found by practical experience that any book is defective, it should at once be superseded by one that more fully meets our wants. The path of learning is steep and

*An Address delivered before the Wentworth Teachers' Association.