

novel and praiseworthy features. Emphasis of tone is indicated as usual by printing in Italics, besides which a system of inflections will be found, though not sufficiently developed to call for special notice.

The subject matter of these Readers is for the most part original, and put into the form of a story into which extracts and adaptations have been ingeniously woven. A large amount of information has been thrown together with tolerable ease and a fair appearance of consecutiveness, and if the plan of localising events does now and then betray a loose connection, the schoolboy mind is not apt to be hypercritical about the unities. Of the literary merits of all that is not either adapted or extracted not much can be said. The information is good, but the mode of giving it puerile. Mr. Willson in endeavouring to bring himself down to the level of his readers has, strange as such an assertion may seem, fallen below it. His is evidently the pen of a ready writer. Give him a story ready made, and he can tell it in the simplest monosyllables, or put it into verse "that is not very much worse than prose, with lines correct in measurement, and with rhymes the only fault of which is that they are so obvious that they might be unendingly repeated." This to our mind is the one grave fault in the books now before us. They contain no *literature* properly so called. Information there is in abundance to stock the mind, and something that appeals to the imagination, but nothing to educate the taste and intellect. These readers seem rather to fall below than rise above the literary standard of a class, and therefore they cannot be called educational in the strict sense of the word.

The moral tone of the reading matter is unexceptionable. Truthfulness, integrity and prudential virtues are inculcated by graceful and interesting examples. The morality, however, throughout has a goody-goody smack about it. It is a soothing syrup rather than an active stimulant. We do not remember a single incident, the grand nobility of which would rouse a boy's soul for the fight, like some of Sir Walter Scott's stirring lines, and make him resolve to be not only a good man, but a great one. One rather amusing chapter there is into which some very outlandish slang phrases are introduced, in order to warn boys not to use them. The result, we think, will be diametrically opposite to the intention.

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