

the publisher, who simply fulfils the office of supplying the demand. The fountain does not rise above its source. But with increased numbers of books have come great improvements in methods, and especially a great improvement in the manner of using such books. Where formerly there were fifty or a hundred books forming a chain of routine which practically enslaved the schools, there are now thousands of books, but they are used by skillful teachers as the handy and efficient tools of their profession.

The question about text-books to-day is only one of form and method. And here there is nothing fixed or absolute; changes in methods of teaching, fashions, fads, whims, are always in evidence and moving on, not always marking steps of real progress, possibly oftener going round in circles; but they are an indication of life in education. Movement is life, and stagnation is death.

It does not follow that all old schoolbooks are bad, and that all new ones are good. What could be more foolish than not to hold on to so much of the world's experience as has been proved valuable up to the present time? Conservatism must be joined with radicalism if a wise balance is to be held. In the world's literature it is the old and standard, that which has really become crystallized, that comprises the chief value. Is it too much to say that there are old and standard text-books that can be very little improved upon, and that there are methods which have had the vogue of years, that cannot summarily be set aside because something else is simply new? Books on literature, like school readers, must present virtually the same matter; it is only their form and not their substance that can be changed. The principles of mathematics remain the same; language, literature, history, always present the same facts; political, social, and metaphysical subjects do not vary much. The natural sciences have the same basis, and only need to keep pace with new discoveries and modern discussion. And it must also be ever remembered that the text-books which make the most efficient tools, in the hands of teachers of a high degree of ability and skill, often prove very sorry instruments in the hands of another class of teachers not so intelligent or skilful.

There is also another practical fact known to publishers—that books regarded as of a very high degree of merit in one part of the country are not at all acceptable in another