

have so far been produced, those designed for the teaching of history are the best. The idea of teaching grammar philosophically is a very fascinating one, but it breaks down in practice. The moment you go beyond verbal definitions and fixed rules, you find yourself in difficult regions of logic and metaphysics into which an intelligent child here and there will follow you readily enough, but not a whole class in any school. The Reading Book inevitably goes beyond the line of formal statement, and fails to give an explanation that can satisfy intelligent curiosity. The Geography Reader is not of much use either. No child can learn geography by reading about it in class. Names of countries, towns, rivers, etc., must be learned by heart, as they always used to be, and identified on maps and globes; and whatever more children are capable of learning will come best in the way of spoken commentary on the lesson. All of astronomy that it is possible or necessary to teach children can be learned from diagrams and such a rude model of the solar system as any handy boy can make with the help of a turning lathe; and it can be learned in no other way. Children may read about rotation, and revolution, and eclipse, in a dozen little books, but they will never realize what they have read unless they can see the processes going on, and handle something that represents the bodies that revolve and rotate and are eclipsed.

Supposing, then, that all special subjects, except history, grammar and geography (including astronomy), were given up; that history was taught in a set of special Readers, and grammar and geography reduced to strings of questions and answers, which might all go into one Learning Book together, with whatever other miscellaneous facts could be cast into the same form—it remains to be considered

what should be done with the General Reading Book, which till lately was the only book used in the schools. In one or two quarters it has been suggested that since the invention of the Science Reader, the General Reading Book has become unnecessary, and that instead of considering what we shall put into it in future, we had better make up our minds to do without it. In my opinion, to abolish the General Reading Book would be a very unfortunate course. In the rivalry between the General Reading Book and the Special Science Reader we have only another manifestation of the antagonism between literary and scientific culture that divides educational opinion on more imposing platforms. The General Reading Book represents literature, and the Special Reader science. And because I believe children to be capable of a great deal of the culture that comes through literature, and of very little of that which comes through science, I should be extremely sorry to see the book that represents literary culture wholly displaced by a crowd of little books pretending to teach special science to minds incapable of learning it. Unfortunately, however, the General Reading Books now existing represent literature so badly that, except for the purpose of a battle cry, they must rather be said to misrepresent and caricature it, and, by so doing, to render it the worst possible service. In passing this wholesale condemnation upon these books, I am not unmindful of the good intention and careful labour that have gone to compiling them, nor of the many difficulties attending a work of that kind. The General Reading Books used in our elementary schools ought to be an introduction to the whole field of literature. They ought to introduce the scholars gradually to all those great names and great ideas which represent the common stock of