

moment an educational board may not find itself confronted with the plausibilities of an interested advocate of substitution. But the temper of those who govern the adoption of text-books appears to be sound, and it is described in the report in a passage which must be quoted. "The Committee," writes Professor Adams, "is fully alive to the importance of maintaining a certain stability in the list of authorised text-books, and there is no trace of any desire on their part to make capricious changes, or even to enforce the immediate adoption of a new book that they find it advisable to recommend. All their regulations in this connection are eminently reasonable, and are based on a full knowledge of the prevailing conditions." Such is the tribute paid to a body of men who are undertaking a task beset with difficulties of every kind and demanding the exercise of many virtues.

On turning to what Professor Adams has to say about English, we find ourselves in agreement with his general position. The main difficulty lies with the subject that goes by the dignified name of English Composition. Important as it is to give children direct knowledge of the classics of their own literature, the attainment of ability to write correct and simple English is more important still. There is only one method that will result in ability to write well, and that is practice. The didactic exposition of the principles of so-called style is undoubtedly profitable up to a certain point, and in the case of those whose footing is tolerably sure in elementary things. But the danger of falling into artificial and stilted modes of expression is a very real one when the text-book of Composition, with its puzzles and niceties, is made to do duty for practice in simple writing. The English that comes of such training is often laboriously produced—laboriously because certain stylistic phantoms are constantly flitting before the writer's mind and checking his thought—and it has also a decided tendency to become anæmic—a thing that has no glow, that has, indeed, no life. Its page is smooth, it is true, but its smoothness may be the smoothness of a stagnant pond.

The English question, like the Eastern, is always with us. In 1612 John Brinsley, the elder, the master of a school in Leicestershire that may be taken as a fair specimen of an English grammar school in those days, touches on the study of English. "There seems unto me," he says, "to be a very main want in all our grammar schools generally, or in the most of them; whereof I have heard some great learned men