

programme. Since nearly the same subjects are treated of in all the text-books, "the teacher can assign a rule in Arithmetic, a part of speech in Grammar, a country in Geography, a fact in Natural Science, or a period in History by topics," and the pupils can learn them from the different text-books. But such a mode of reciting would greatly add to the teacher's labour, confuse the pupils, and clog the recitations; but it is a less evil than an excessive multiplicity of classes which would result from having each class recite from their particular text-book.

For upwards of thirteen years the present Readers have been used in the schools. Has experience proved that they are poorly adapted to the teaching of reading? Has the gradation from the easy to the more difficult parts of the subject not been regarded in their compilation? Are the selections not of a character to cultivate purity of thought and a taste for reading? These are questions which form the basis of an intelligent discussion of a revision or a change of Readers, and which I shall leave in the hands of this Association to deal with.

In comparing the various elementary Arithmetics, it is seen that the same rules are discussed in almost the same order—evidence that the authors of them agree as to what parts of the subject naturally follow one another, and conform to the development of the minds of the pupils. In every one of them the leading principles are so presented that there need be no great difficulty in teaching their application. To serve as a guide, a number of questions are added indicating the course that may be pursued. Much, however, is left to be supplied; and the best questions are usually those occurring in practical life. Any one of the authorized Advanced Arithmetics contains so much theory and practice as is requisite to become a good arithmetician. There are, undoubtedly, omissions in every one of them.

With respect to Grammar and Geography, there is certainly no lack of good text-books. If objections have to be formulated against them, they will partake of the nature of their being too diffuse rather than of containing too little. In these two subjects it may be well to follow the maxim, "Learn how to forget wisely."

With the exception of the Readers, which are open to a good deal of criticism, I maintain that the present series of authorized text-books is fairly adapted to the requirements of the Public Schools. Whenever any great advances have been made in any department of knowledge, and whenever it is found that the text-books are badly deficient in that department, then they ought to be revised, or new ones ought to be prepared. But in the ordinary course of events no great advances need be looked for that materially affect school life. It is true that great advances have been made in science; but it is not science, properly so termed, that has to be taught to about ninety-six per cent. of

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