

best plans—the best text-books. Further, we see that the text-books provide definite work for the pupil to do, enables him to go over and over his task until he has mastered it, increases continually his power to get out of the books what is in them, which must be a great reliance for continuing to progress after he leaves school, and thus strengthens his powers of application, his self-reliance and his scholarly habits. These it must be admitted are very important advantages. Yet we must not fail to note in the whole statement the implied weakness and limitation of the teachers, and should therefore be prepared to find that as the teachers bring wider culture and more thorough training to their work they more and more dominate the school processes and subordinate the text-book to their own purposes.

It is worth while to dwell upon this for a moment. That broadening of school work which we see in the introduction and use of libraries is a manifestation of it. The text-book in history, for example, becomes merely a centre from which to push out into a larger field, or perhaps a plan on which to arrange the larger work. Laboratory methods again are ways for subordinating the text-book to the teacher. In Germany, where the training of teachers has been carried much further than with us, the elementary texts in arithmetic are little more than collections of problems designed to save the teacher's time; the geographies are mainly maps and pictures, and the language work makes the readers its chief text. The notes on notes piled up in editions of literary works prepared for schools are a temporary aid to help out incapable teachers, insufficient libraries and lazy students. They have their day and pass as soon as the teachers rise to doing the work they ought. Everywhere the strong teacher is the one who subordinates the text-book and makes it but a means to an end. On the other hand a weak teacher is usually a slave to the text-book, a mere lesson-hearer who can do little more than see to it that the pupils "have got their lessons," by which is usually meant that they are able to tell more or less successfully what is contained in the text. How formal and perfunctory such work becomes we all know. Such a teacher corresponds completely to Col. Higginson's humorous definition: "A teacher is one who makes you tell what some one else taught you."

The introduction of new studies is made difficult and sometimes quite impossible, by the text-book dependence of teachers. We have tried long and hard to bring teaching in civics into the grades. Children ten or twelve years of age can with ease and interest be made conversant with the general features of our government by one who understands them, can teach and is not hampered by a text. Moral instruction is possible and profitable if the teacher talks out of a full mind and with a genuine wish to instil sound principles into the hearts of the pupils and awaken them to moral thoughtfulness: but we all react from text-book teaching of this subject. Nature study fails because our elementary teachers must have a text-book, and we have none suited to every place and every teacher. Agriculture can hardly be got into elementary schools because of the same difficulty. Some of us are saying, "How wooden and worthless it will be after we get it," because we feel that it will so generally be mere text-book work. In these and other reforms the real difficulty is the text-bound teacher.

But the text-bound teacher is equally a misfortune in teaching grammar or arithmetic. English grammar should be taught directly from the reader and from current speech. The result desired is that pupils shall note and reflect upon common usage. They can be brought to do this by one who knows grammar and knows how to teach. We banished "formal grammar" for a time because we had come to feel how empty and time-consuming the text-book process is. We banished it but we had to bring it back again, having meantime made some progress in the art of teaching about speech from speech itself. We are cutting down the time given to arithmetic because we have awakened to the great waste of time resulting from text-book teaching of the subject. The text-book teacher, who did not recognize the ends or limitations of the subject, had perverted the study.

The text-book, then, must be wisely used. It is an instrument, valuable as contributing to the attainment of certain results, but when it becomes the master it ruins both teacher and school.—*Minneapolis School Journal*.