

be neat and tasteful, so as to attract rather than repel, while the quality should unite strength with durability. Those who purchase school-books have a practical acquaintance with the flimsy nature of the binding of some of them, and justly complain of the small value they receive in return for the money expended. Careful proof-reading is indispensable, for nothing is more annoying to the teacher, or more perplexing to the pupils, than to find sentences differing in construction; words used in one edition that are not in another, and some of these incorrectly spelled. In our present Readers these defects are altogether too prominent, and the utmost caution should be exercised on these points in selecting a new series.

Another feature in the mechanical work that should receive careful consideration is the character and class of illustrations. Children who see none but high-class engravings, or superior works of art, unconsciously form a correct taste, and learn to appreciate the good, the true and the beautiful in nature and art. In and around the school-room everything should be neat and tasteful and the illustrations in the text-books should form no exception to this rule. These should be of a high order of artistic merit, and apt in illustrating the subject matter of the lessons. The general appearance of the page, though not of the same importance as some other features of the mechanical work, is yet worthy of attention. Some please the eye as you look at them, while others, to say the least of them, are by no means attractive. Good taste should be shown in arranging the paragraphs, placing the illustrations, and giving a symmetrical form to the whole page. Now that we are to have a new series of readers, the opportunity presents itself of rising to a higher level both in

regard to style and quality. The general standing of the community, in regard to wealth, is such that we should have a class of school books that are attractive in appearance, strong and durable in workmanship, and worthy of the high position our educational system occupies among those of the most advanced nations of the world.

There are, however, other considerations that challenge our attention in determining the value of a series of reading books. One of these is their adaptation to the wants of our Public Schools, for without this none should find a place among our text-books. It is true that some very excellent books have been prepared for other countries, but I have grave doubts as to their fitness for our schools, even after they have been rehabilitated. I am free to confess that I cannot see the necessity for going abroad for what we can produce as well, if not better, at home, nor have I any sympathy with that feeling that prefers the productions of other countries to those of our own. It is, however, an unpleasant reflection upon our boasted educational progress that Canadian enterprise and Canadian talent are unable to cope with the difficulties of preparing a series of readers that shall reflect credit upon our school-system, and be in accord with the spirit of our institution.

* To have any series of readers properly adapted to the wants of our schools, it is necessary that both books and lessons be carefully graded. Before discussing this question, it might be well to consider the number of books that should constitute a series. Most of those that I have examined consist of five books, while some have six. I can see no real necessity for more than four, especially for our Public Schools. Admission to the High Schools, on the one hand, and the large number of the