

them clear. We might give many evidences of this but we will content ourselves with two.

On page 25 he thus speaks of Definition :—"We hope we have shown that a definition instead of preceding a lesson, as it often does, should be the conclusion of a lesson or of some definite part of it. Consider what a definition is ; it is not the giving of additional knowledge, it is the summing up, the gathering into a few words of all the ideas that have been obtained by a careful comparison of a number of objects by the abstraction of their common qualities which are grouped so as to represent a class ; nor can the terms of a definition be of much use before these ordinary processes of thought have been performed." In our second extract he shows his independence of thought in a manner that may startle some of our readers who are accustomed to regard paraphrasing as one of the best aids to composition.

He says on page 61, "Paraphrasing or reproducing a passage of poetry in their (the scholars') own language is impossible, if the passage is involved and difficult ; if the passage is easy and simple, the poet will have chosen the best words in the shortest form, and his language could only be changed for the worse."

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ELEMENTARY ANATOMY, PHYSIOLOGY, AND HYGIENE ; for the use of Schools and Families. By Edward Playter, M.D., etc. Toronto : Hart & Rawlinson, 1879.

At the first sight of this book of 168 pages we were struck with the suitableness of its title, for the elementary works of similar character which have heretofore appeared for use in our schools all bear the simple title of *Physiology*, while at the same time they necessarily treat, at some considerable length, of *Anatomy and Hygiene*, some acquaintance with both of which being absolutely requisite for the correct understanding and the practical uses of *Physiology*.

We agree with the author in the opinion that a "want has been much felt for an elementary work suited to the youthful portion of the people" on the above subjects. But, that his book is calculated to supply the want is another question, and one about which we

entertain some doubts. Dr. Michael Foster's little Primer is admirably adapted to the requirements of very young persons, being written in language easy to be understood by children. Huxley's "Lessons," on the other hand, is suited only for students of advanced years who already possess some knowledge of the subject ; though it is a somewhat expensive book for the majority of boys and girls to purchase. Something intermediate is needed that will be neither too brief and simple on the one hand, nor too detailed and technical on the other. This want Dr. Playter's book in part supplies ; but, not to mention several omissions, it appears to us that some corrections and alterations, and many acknowledgments ought to have been made before the work was permitted to pass through the press.

Without stopping to dispute the assertion, and others of equal importance, that all living bodies are organized, we cannot help thinking that it is a great mistake in an *elementary* work to reverse the usual order of subjects by introducing the brain and nervous system first to the young beginner. It can hardly be sensible to ask the pupil at the outset to enter upon the study of so complicated an organ as the eye or the ear ; or to study the animal organs and functions before he has made himself in the least acquainted with the less difficult study of the organs and functions of vegetation. Nor do we think sufficient reason is given for the change by the statement that the brain and nervous system are "most closely connected with the mind." However, the book seems to contain very much of what is required in a text-book for schools, and, upon the whole, it is tolerably accurate, and is likely to prove useful in the hands of a properly qualified teacher. But, it is impossible to peruse the book without feeling that much of its accuracy is due to extensive quotations from such great authorities as Huxley and Foster. In vain have we sought however, for an acknowledgment of the sources whence those extracts have been taken. In saying this we do not mean to imply that the great established facts of the science must not be the same in all works on *Physiology*, no matter by whom written. The foundation, the essence of the work, so to speak, must re-