

Textbooks

THEN AND NOW

A brief narrative of the progress in text-
book-making in the past century and
of Ginn and Company's development
as a national institution

THIS BOOKLET

was prepared in connection with Ginn and Company's exhibit at Chicago's Century of Progress exposition, and, like the exhibit itself, aims to give educators and the general public a glimpse of some of the important developments in the field of education during the period from 1833 to today. The old textbooks in the exhibit are from the extensive collection of Mr. George A. Plimpton, a member of the firm of Ginn and Company.

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Textbooks THEN AND NOW

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1833 Andrew Jackson began his second term as President . . . treaty made by the Federal government with the Seminole Indians . . . the first serious railroad accident in the United States on the Amboy and Bordentown Railroad . . . Antislavery Society organized . . . Clay's "Compromise Tariff" Bill passed . . . Chicago incorporated (population, 550).

* * *

FAMILIAR to nearly every child in the elementary school of a century ago were such lines of admonition as these in Webster's famous speller, "Boys and girls that mind not their looks, and love not the church and school, but play with such as tell lies, curse, swear, and steal, will come to some bad end, and must be whipt till they mend their ways." Materials of instruction were rigorous and dull, and methods of teaching gave little or no heed to the interests of the pupil. Benches were hard, the wood of schoolroom fires was frequently green, and always there was the master's ferrule, threatening like the sword of Damocles. Learning was a hard and dreary road.

To those familiar with our modern textbooks it seems as if more than a hundred years must have elapsed between

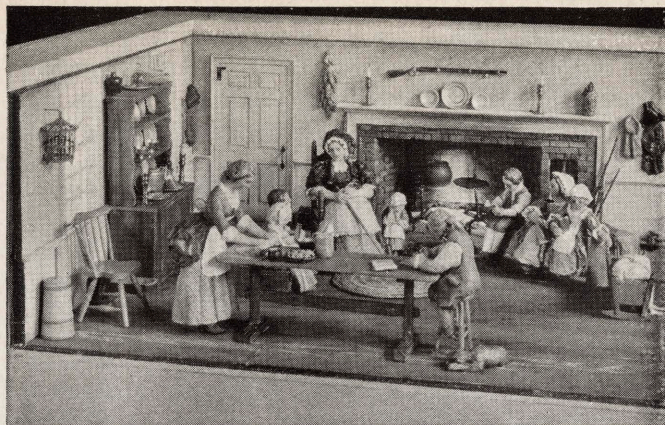
them and Webster's famous "Blue Back," Goodrich's "History of the United States," and other books in use in 1833, so marked is the contrast in method and appearance. The New England Primer, which served to teach "millions to read and not one to sin," dominated the colonial period and was still in wide use in the early nineteenth century. Although its vogue was not as great as it had been, its strong moral and religious flavor was retained in its successors. A few of these will serve as typical examples of the times.

Early Nineteenth-Century Books

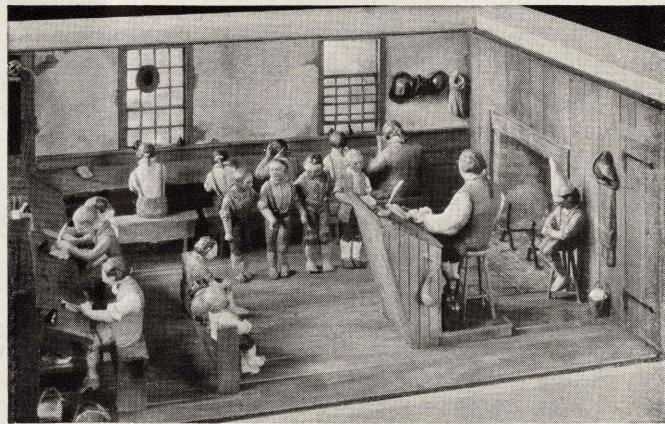
Webster's "Old Blue Back," the most famous of all early spelling texts, served not only as speller but as primer, reader, moral instructor, and guide. The reading lessons in it were intended "to combine, with the familiarity of objects, useful truth, and practical principles." The first-edition copies had a back of leather and sides of thin oaken boards pasted over with blue paper. Like other books of the time, the paper was coarse, the ink poor, and the print varied from muddy blackness to a faint illegibility.

Readers for beginners were few in number previous to 1825. Most of them were concerned with presenting to the youthful mind the sharp contrast between right and wrong.

The illustrations on the opposite page are from two models constructed for Ginn and Company's exhibit at Chicago's Century of Progress Exposition. The Dame School existed from about 1650 until the nineteenth century. From it developed the public primary school. The Colonial School was the forerunner of our grammar schools. One-room schools make up 60 per cent of our school buildings today.



A DAME SCHOOL OF EARLY NEW ENGLAND



AN EARLY COLONIAL ONE-ROOM SCHOOL

Evil suffered prompt and severe punishment. Good was promptly rewarded and reforms were surprisingly sudden and complete. A certain amount of attention was given to instruction in the "proper loudness of the voice" and other attributes of good reading. Illustrations were crude; color in the pictures, now generally considered essential in readers for the primary grades, was unknown. By 1851 Town, McGuffey, Russell, Swan, and others had firmly established the idea of series of readers.

Perhaps nowhere is the early eighteenth-century ignorance of child psychology more noticeable than in the teaching of arithmetic, which occupied then, as now, a very important place in the curriculum. Calhoun's "First Lessons in Intellectual Arithmetic" (said in 1856 to be "the only faultless schoolbook that we have"), Dilworth's "Schoolmaster's Assistant," and the works of Pike and Jess were used extensively. Pike's, first published in 1788, was the first book of "its kind composed in America." Its content was comprehensive and exhaustive, including, in addition to the usual arithmetical processes, such items as, "a table by which Easter could be calculated from the year 1753 to the year 4199," "the time of the moon's southing," and "the proportions and tonnage of Noah's ark." It was too difficult for the lower schools but was widely used in the more advanced stages of learning. Here are two of its problems, which were supposed to have much disciplinary value:

An ignorant fop wanted to purchase an elegant house; a facetious gentleman told him he had one which he would sell him on these



18. The blind man then gave him a thousand thanks, and told him he could grope his way home; and James ran on as hard as he could, to prevent being too late.

IX. LESSON NINTH.—*The rest of the same Story.*

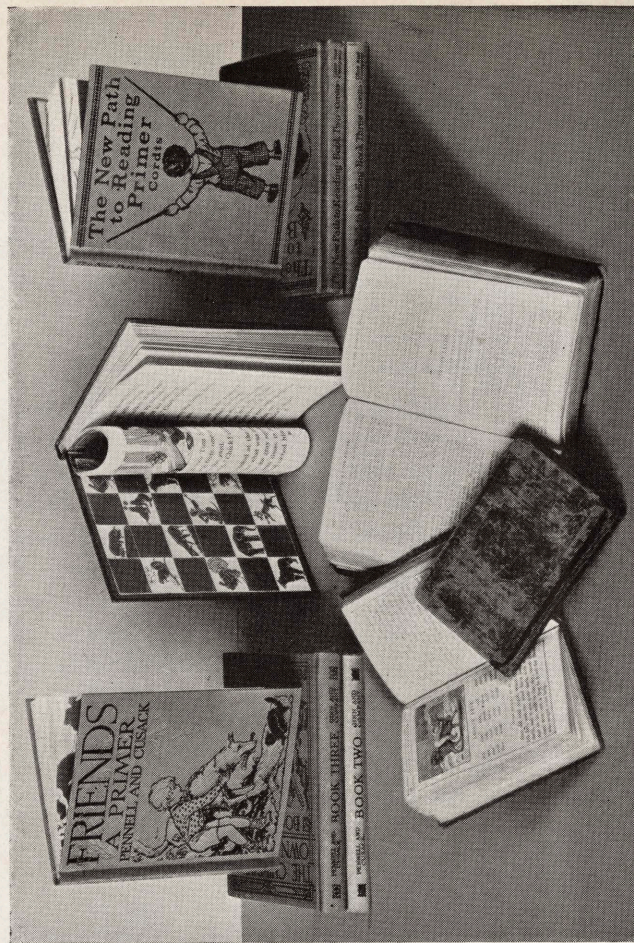
1. James had not proceeded far before he saw a* poor sailor, who had lost both his legs in a battle at sea, hopping along on crutches.

2. "God bless you my little master," said the sailor; "I have fought many a battle in my country's defence, but now I am crippled, as you see, and have neither victuals nor money, although I am almost famished."

3. The little boy could not resist his inclination to relieve him; so he gave him all the victuals that he had left, and said, "God help you poor man! this is all I have, otherwise you should have more."

4. He then ran along, and presently arrived in the town he was going to, did his errand, and returned to-

* See note on p. 17.



THREE OF THE FAMOUS MCGUFFEY ECLECTIC READERS, IN FRONT, AND SOME MODERN READERS

moderate terms, viz. that he would give him a penny for the first door, 2d. for the second, 4d. for the third, and so on, doubling at every door, which made 36 in all: It is a bargain, cried the simpleton, and here is a guinea to bind it; pray, what would the house have cost him?

How many minutes since the commencement of the American War, which happened on April 19, 1775?

A large number of texts in grammar were sold annually about the middle of the nineteenth century but they were used for the most part in schools of the "larger and more prosperous towns, and only occasionally in smaller communities." Lindley Murray's "Grammar" (1795) was popular in both England and America though one of his friends is said to have remarked to its author, "Of all the contrivances invented for puzzling the brain of the young, your grammar is the worst." It went through fifty editions and an abridgment of the original work had more than a hundred and twenty editions of ten thousand copies each.

History also was somewhat late in entering the curriculum. It was not generally taught before the Civil War. As Goodrich's "History of the United States" (1828) and Webster's "History of the United States" (1832) show, history was not looked upon then, as it is now, as a means of furnishing a broad interpretation of the world or of developing enlightened patriotism. Its function was conceived of as partly ethical and religious.

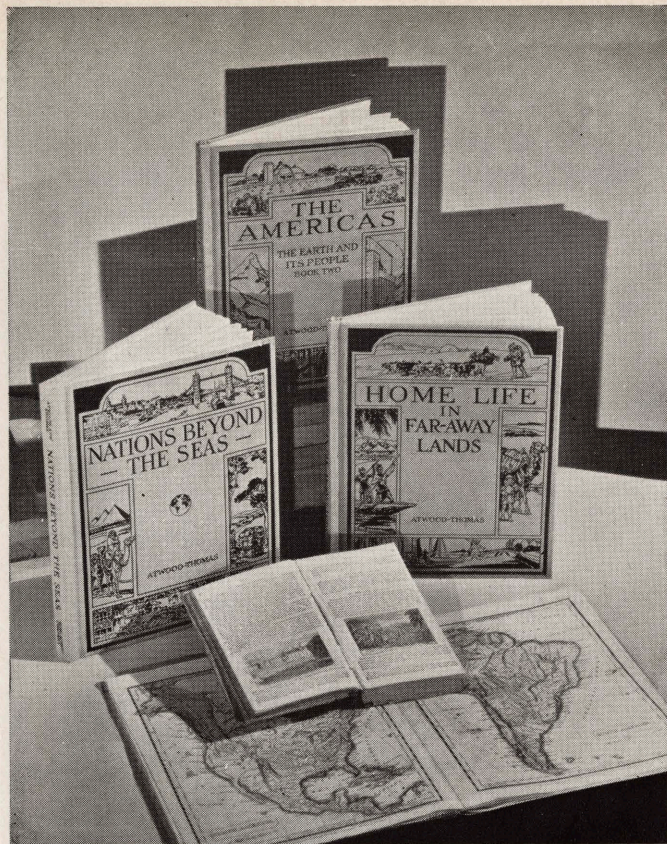
Geography was slow in acquiring a high position in the course of study. Not before the second quarter of the nineteenth century did it receive much attention. When it first appeared in the lower schools it was not treated as a

separate subject. Far from assisting boys and girls to understand man's adaptation to his environment and the interdependence of the world, the early texts were encyclopedic in character and their material was used largely as memory exercises. Accuracy was evidently not considered too essential a virtue, for all sorts of imaginative travelers' tales crept into these early geographies. The pioneer text was by Jedidiah Morse in 1784, and a few years later his "American Universal Geography" appeared. Jesse Olney, whose "Geography and Atlas" was published in 1828, helped to initiate the idea of home geography. Peter Parley, as well known as any among early textbook writers, was one who used geographical rimes to make geography interesting, such as:

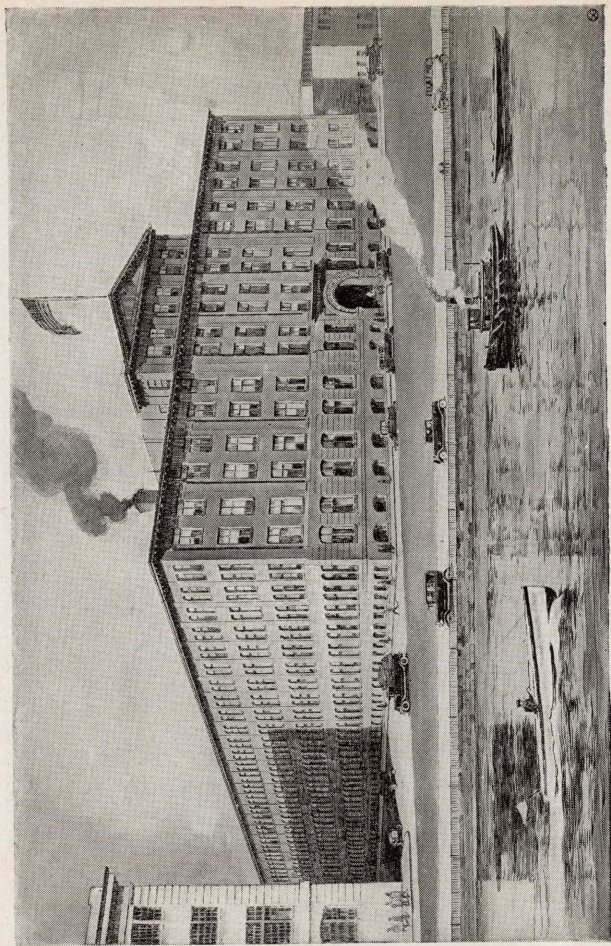
Massachusetts, so they say,
Has Boston East upon its bay.



1867 Nebraska admitted to the Union (37th state) . . . Department of Education established by act of Congress . . . Cyrus W. Field awarded a gold medal by Congress for services in laying the Atlantic Cable . . . George Peabody awarded a gold medal by Congress for the promotion of education . . . International Exposition at Paris opened . . . Alaska ceded to the United States . . . Gold discovered in Wyoming . . . the founding of Ginn and Company



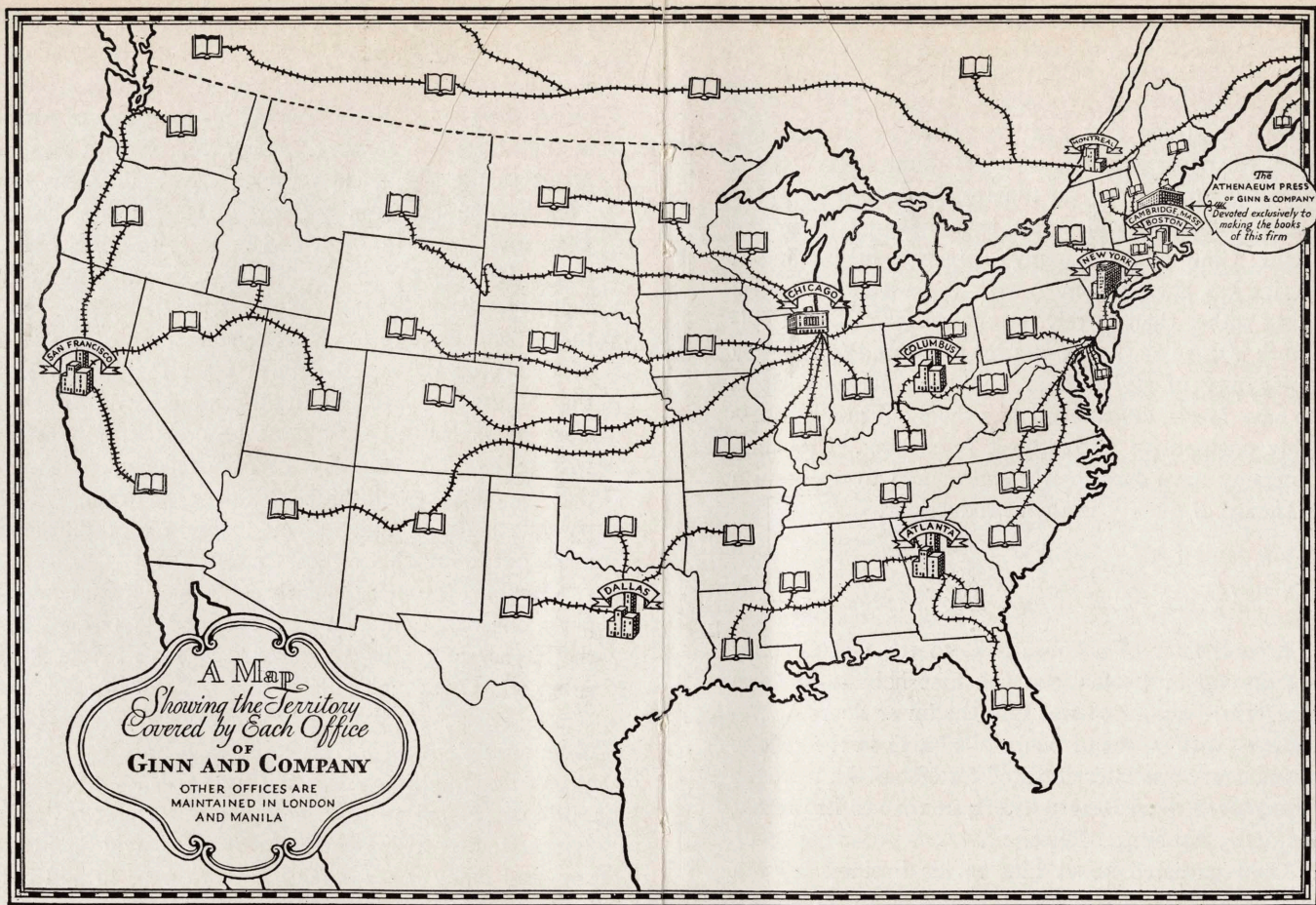
THE MALTE BRUN GEOGRAPHY (1836) AND ITS ATLAS, IN FRONT, ILLUSTRATE THE EARLY PRACTICE OF SEPARATING TEXT AND MAPS. BEHIND THEM, A SUCCESSFUL SERIES OF MODERN GEOGRAPHIES



THE ATHENÆUM PRESS OF GINN AND COMPANY

Horace Mann, crying "popular education at public expense," Henry Barnard, advocate of better schools and Pestalozzianism, Caleb Mills, Calvin E. Stone,—these and others were the pioneers working for the cause of education in the nineteenth century. Pioneering, too, to give better books to the schools was Edwin Ginn. With his brother Fred he founded Ginn Brothers in 1867, to be changed to Ginn and Heath in 1876, and in 1885 to Ginn and Company. To the publishing business Edwin Ginn brought sagacity, vision, critical judgment, and idealism. He saw that if schools were to progress, something of the measure of that progress would depend upon textbooks. He saw that if the much-talked-of ideas of educational thinkers were to be fruitful they must be embodied in textbooks written by understanding, capable teachers. He realized that the publisher's business was not only to supply the best possible material that he could obtain to fulfill specified needs but to anticipate those needs.

Thumbing through the early catalogues of Ginn and Company one comes upon many outstanding publications in the history of textbook-making—Mason's Music Readers, Allen and Greenough's Latin Series, Goodwin and White's Greek Series, Hudson's Shakespeare, Myers's Histories, Montgomery's American Histories, Wentworth's Geometries, Frye's Geographies. After the turn of the century Robert Millikan, Nobel prize winner, James Harvey Robinson, James H. Breasted, Charles A. Beard, David Saville Muzzey, and many other famous authors were to add notable books to this illustrious group.



Editorial Ideals

"From the very first I have sought the best men to make our books. Our books I have always tried to have a little better than anything that had yet appeared on the subject, and, whenever possible, to avoid duplication." Thus Mr. Edwin Ginn outlined the nineteenth-century policy of Ginn and Company, which has been adhered to in the twentieth. Ginn and Company's practice in judging a manuscript has always been to seek the advice of several specialists rather than to rely on one reader. Careful editorial work is done on the manuscript to secure the accuracy and uniformity of style which textbooks demand. It is easy to have ideals, difficult to carry them out in a business as highly competitive as textbook publishing. Yet Ginn and Company have consistently endeavored to maintain a high standard of quality in their productions.

Growth from Small Beginnings

The ground floor of a house next to the Old Granary burying ground in Boston was the first habitat of Ginn Brothers. First expansion was into the lower floors of two more houses, with stocks of books piled high in the cellars. The second story was later acquired for offices. In 1901 the office was moved to 29 Beacon Street, in 1916 to its present location at 15 Ashburton Place.

Mr. Ginn gathered about him as his business grew a growing circle of able associates. Founded as a partnership,

the firm of Ginn and Company today includes eighteen partners. Sales offices are maintained in Boston, New York, Chicago, Atlanta, Dallas, Columbus, San Francisco, and Montreal, to attend promptly to the orders for Ginn books from every part of the country. There are offices in London and Manila. The affairs of each office are in the hands of one or more of the members of the firm. This form of organization has made it possible for Ginn and Company to keep in touch with educational developments everywhere, and to meet in their books the requirements of many different localities. The firm's list of publications, covering practically every subject from the first grade through the four years of college, includes books by authors from nearly every state in the country.

During the early years books were made in a small manufacturing plant in Boston. Growth was so rapid after 1885 that larger facilities were required, and the Athenæum Press in Cambridge was built. It is today the largest single plant devoted exclusively to the manufacture of textbooks. Here the sole aim is the production of the best textbooks that can be made. The requirements for textbooks are not those of novels and general trade publications. A textbook made like a novel would have but a short life. Sturdiness, high quality of workmanship, and inexpensiveness must all be combined in a textbook. The expert printers and binders at the Athenæum Press give constant study to the problem of making better textbooks for lower prices.

1933 The inauguration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt as thirty-second President of the United States . . . "a new deal" . . . economy budgets . . . Chicago's Century of Progress Exposition



From about 1880 dates the modern development of the American school system which has led to an enrollment of approximately 29,000,000 pupils in our schools and to a teaching force of 1,000,000. In 1800 the average American citizen received *in his entire lifetime* less than a hundred days of schooling. Boys and girls of today receive more schooling in one year than the citizen of 1800 ever received.

New Problems for the Publisher

Accompanying this spread in education came a broadening of the curriculum and a change in methods of teaching. New educational ideas require new instructional materials. The publisher often serves as the means of disseminating through his representatives and textbooks improved methods of teaching which otherwise would spread slowly. Not always do the textbooks based on new methods prove profitable. Like other pioneers the publisher must take his chances in new fields, and in view of the large investments in new books which are necessary today, he is quite sure to fortify himself with the best editorial advice obtainable. He must endeavor to distinguish between permanent and transient values. He must select authors whose talents ex-

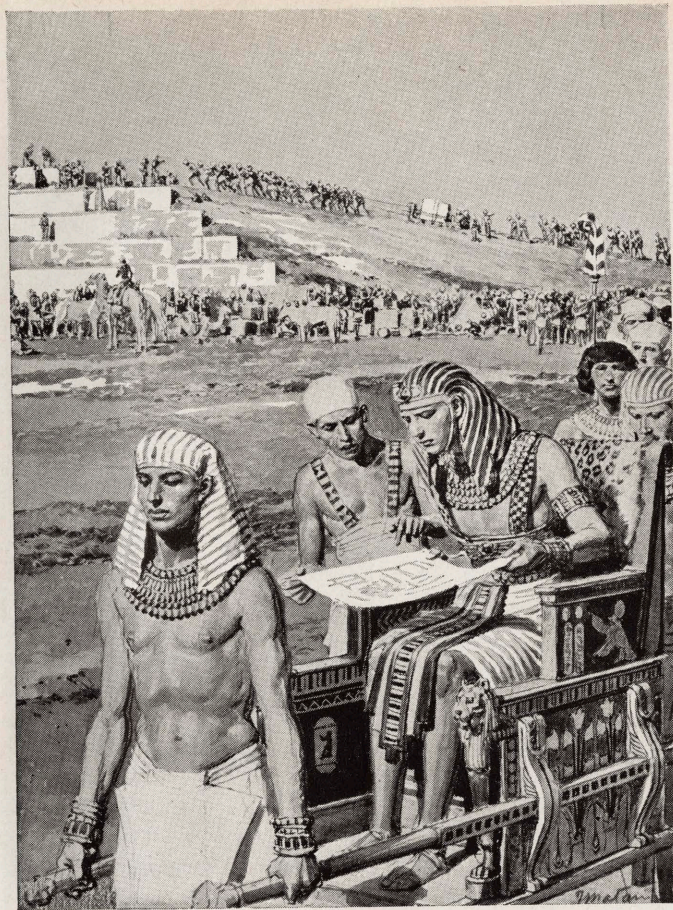


"THE TEXTBOOK IS UNDENIABLY A BETTER TEACHING INSTRUMENT
TODAY THAN IT HAS EVER BEEN"

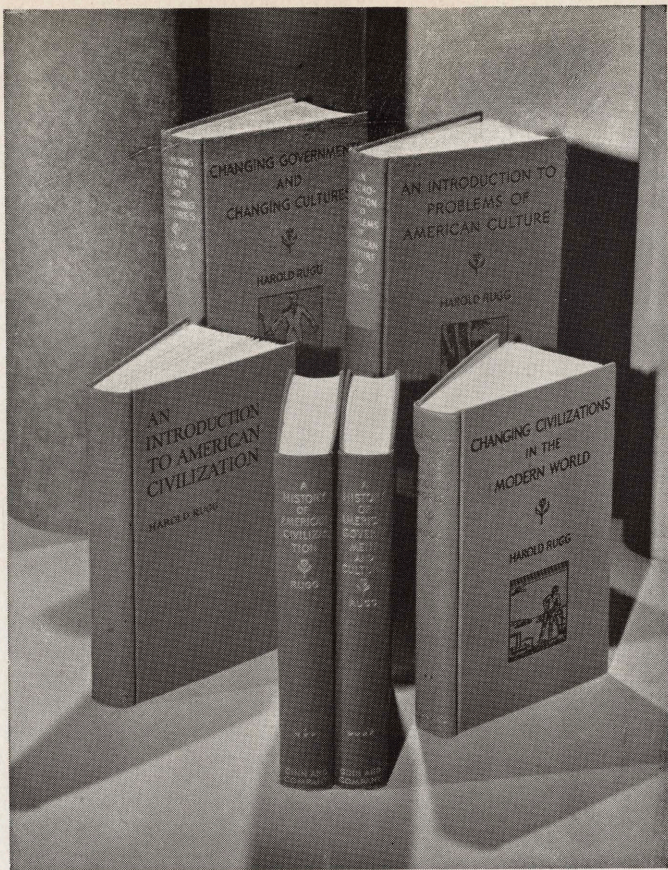
tend beyond the mere ability to write well, for the successful textbook of today, in addition to being well written, must fit the accepted methods of classroom instruction. Often it is the result of long and expensive classroom experimentation. Gone are the days when D. H. Montgomery, happening to be in a restaurant in Boston with the proofs of "Leading Facts of American History" in his pocket, picked up the acquaintance of a schoolboy of twelve or thirteen, the son of a policeman. Judging him to be a boy of average intelligence he intrusted the proofs of his book to him, telling him that if he would mark every place that was not clear to him he would buy him the biggest dinner he could eat and give him a copy of the book to boot. No less than 50,000 children and 1500 teachers contributed to the nation-wide investigation that determined the content of one of Ginn and Company's recent series of readers!

Methods of selection, including the use of a rating scale, have become more scientific, and although the publisher cannot make his books to fit a specific rating scale, he must have in mind the probable use of some such measure.

With emphasis on instruction for the individual child grade placement has become more important than heretofore. A book must be neither too easy nor too hard. It must fit the grade for which it is intended. Scientific checking of vocabulary is widely used. Not only do Ginn and Company employ the usual word lists for this purpose but to almost all elementary-school books they apply a special graded list of some 15,000 words to determine the degree of difficulty of the vocabulary.



AN ILLUSTRATION MADE FOR PAHLOW: MAN'S GREAT ADVENTURE



A NEW SOCIAL SCIENCE SERIES WHICH WELL ILLUSTRATES THE FACT THAT "TEXTBOOKS HAVE BECOME LESS TEXTBOOKISH"

Textbooks More Attractive

"Something, whether it is science or common sense, or intuition, has caused schoolbooks to improve vastly during the past twenty or twenty-five years. The textbook is undeniably a better teaching instrument today than it has ever been. It does things that the books of earlier days never even attempted. In its treatment it dares to be free to a degree that never used to be allowed. Its greater length (made possible by better teaching of reading) permits the inclusion of attractive approach, concrete data, episodes, illustrations, applications, comparisons, summaries—in short the inclusion of all the characteristics of the best books of any sort. Textbooks have become less 'textbookish.' In the old days no one ever read a textbook unless he had to. Now the textbook need not be dull to be acceptable."*

Hand in hand with this improvement of content and presentation have gone enormous strides forward in physical appearance. Covers are strikingly designed and are in bright, gay colors that have an instant appeal. Color is abundantly used in books for the early years, so that it is not uncommon to have it said that they are as attractive as trade books (the trade books of equal size sell, it may be added, at almost three times the textbook prices). Illustrative material is lavishly used—more than 550 pic-

* B. R. Buckingham's "The Scientific Development and Evaluation of Textbook Materials," delivered at the joint meeting of the Department of Superintendence and the American Educational Research Association held at Minneapolis, Minnesota, February, 1933.

tures and maps in a new world history, to give a single example. Many sources are used to obtain fresh, interesting pictures, and the best illustrators are employed to make drawings for many of our schoolbooks.

Textbook Costs

Textbooks have been made more attractive. They run to many more pages per book than they did in times past. With the increased number of courses, and the intense competition within the industry, no book sweeps the field today as did The New England Primer, or Webster's "Old Blue Back." Yet textbook costs are remarkably low. In 1913 textbooks cost 2.7 cents of the school dollar. By 1928 they were 1.6 per dollar of school expenditure. Today they are under this figure. During the expansion period from 1913 to 1928 when the costs for public education mounted rapidly with everything else, expenditures for textbooks did not rise proportionately. Elementary-school enrollments in this period increased 21 per cent; high school, 225 per cent. Total costs of education were multiplied by four. But the total sum spent for textbooks was multiplied by only two and one half.

Economy Measures; Today's Menace

Yet in spite of the small part that textbooks play in the annual educational bill and in spite of the fact that, therefore, cutting them cannot effect any major saving, textbook



ARE THESE BOOKS GOOD ENOUGH FOR AMERICAN CHILDREN ?

In many schools today worn, obsolete, and incomplete books make learning a disheartening business

appropriations have since 1928 been drastically cut. Old books, books with pages torn and missing, dirty books, menacing the child with disease, are in service today. Beautiful buildings stand with empty shelves in their libraries, with inadequate books in their schoolrooms. Aware of the acuteness of the situation the Commissioner of Education issued the warning "Administrators who think they can introduce a saving by not purchasing as needs arise, but instead try to get along with ragged, torn, and

sloppy books, will ultimately face a serious replacement bill involving very large expenditures." And again, "How many in the general public remember that with them the textbook was an extremely important item and that cutting it is taking away from the children a very large part of the educational benefit which they could get from school attendance? . . . What is needed today with the added pupil load, is not less schoolbooks, but more schoolbooks." Educational journals through special articles and through editorials have emphasized the unfortunate publicity that dirty, old, and worn books are bringing to the schools at the very time when desirable publicity is so essential. Letters of complaint from parents are appearing now and again in the newspapers. It is also wisely pointed out that if we are approaching, as many think, a period when there will be more leisure for all, surely few things will give the individual more solid satisfaction in such a period than a love of books and reading cultivated during the developmental years. "The human spirit can no more lift itself without books than the bird without wings—and the opening of the mind to books begins with the textbook."

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SAN FRANCISCO

45 SECOND STREET

