

SELECTION.

THE PERPETUATION OF NESCIENCE.

THE plague of books has long been upon us ! Author after author has come forward, having "felt a want"—with rare exceptions, only to show that he has no new ideas to communicate and that he is in no way conscious of the true nature of the void within his soul. There can be little doubt that if text-book writers were collected in the Albert Hall and asked to sing the chorus, "All we like sheep are led astray," they should be able to do so with greater fervour than almost any other body of men. As the *Self-made Merchant* says in one of his *Letters to his Son* : "Doing the same thing in the same way year after year is like eating a quail a day for thirty days. Along towards the middle of the month a fellow begins to long for a broiled crow or a slice of cold dog." This represents our feelings towards the modern text-book of science ; we sigh for cold dog by way of relief.

Stop the flow we cannot ; therefore, if possible, it must be diverted into useful channels—but how ? Should we not ask the Civil Service Commissioners or the Oxford and Cambridge Joint Board to arrange for the examination of Publishers, Editors, and Authors, so that those may be selected who are fit to publish, edit, and write ; or still better, perhaps, should we not, in the interests of education, petition Government to entrust, say, the Consultative Committee with the task of framing regulations for a register of libertines chartered to take part in the preparation of scientific text-books ? Of course, training in method would be insisted on, and there should be a period of probation ; even some real knowledge of the subject treated of might be considered desirable. At all events, some understanding should be arrived at as to what should be a sufficient justification for the publication of a new book on an old subject.—SCHOOL.