

spoke for one particular house, while other members followed the fortunes of another house. When the storm would break, at last, it always seemed as if there would never be any more sunshine in the Boston schools, and that the members of the board must be mortal enemies for life. As for the text-book men, one could imagine them trooping off with a crowd of seconds to some sylvan dell; but, quite to the contrary, I found them, early one morning in early summer last year, sitting and chatting together on the piazza of the Maplewood Hotel, watching, as they talked, the fleeting shadows of fleecy clouds as they chased up the great slopes of Mt. Washington and went into nothingness over the summit. I was glad to meet them again, for, after I had made it known that I would invariably vote to sustain the expert Board of Supervisors in text-book controversies, I missed them, and was very sorry. They had come to attend the annual meeting of the American Institute of Instruction, availing themselves of this opportunity to call the attention of teachers and educationists to their books and to secure written commendations where possible. I have found school-masters and even supervisors rather free in doing this sort of thing, and they, too, are not unlikely to "stand in" with one particular house through thick and thin. While I do not know that this is altogether wrong, I do know that I was embarrassed, and found my position with regard to expert advice made almost untenable, through the practice of supervisors themselves of launching text-books of their own upon the market through some favored houses, which promptly invited the school committee to put these books on the authorized list. I do not believe it possible to secure from a small, close body like this an absolutely fair, and certainly not an

unquestionable, professional opinion on the value and applicability of a book produced by one of its own members. And this brings me back to the school committee itself, whose members, like the text-book men, soon see the shadows flee when the controversy is closed. I have suspected log-rolling in some instances, but probably there was nothing in this, though I very distinctly recall a remark made in a sub-committee room one afternoon by a member toward whom reform associations are particularly tender. The memorable fight over Frye's *Geography* had taken place; the book had been defeated. The member (whose sex it would perhaps be unfair to state) was indignant, and exclaimed: "If we can't have Frye's *Geography*, they shan't have Metcalf's *Grammar*." This was not said during the stress of battle, but several days after it. The books mentioned came from rival houses that have had a long struggle for supremacy in Boston, and the "we" and the "they" in that sentence of eleven words bespoke the position of the Boston School Committee on the whole text-book question.

This kind of mischief done or averted, the board soon settled down to the discussion of some other form of patronage. The teachership is still a spoil of office. It is more difficult, at the present time, for a Catholic than for a Protestant young woman to get a place, but, nevertheless, some Catholics secure appointments, for "trading" may always be done, while each side has a wholesome fear of the other assailing it in the open board. A member said one day, in my hearing: "I must have my quota of teachers in — — —, anyhow." (The dashes represent the district in which he resides.) It turned out that he got at least a good part of what he demanded, and there was a remarkable sequel. One of the