

The relation of schoolbook publishing to the schools, or to the broader subject of education, offers many interesting points. The development of the business of text-book publishing, say in the past hundred years, in the nations which are foremost in education, if its full history could be presented, would mark in detail the steps of progress in education itself; but this would be most emphatically true of the United States, which almost merits the distinction of being the inventor of text-books. When we compare the numbers and kinds of text-books published in our own country for the use of schools, say fifty years ago, with those that are published to-day—a comparison of hundreds with thousands—we realize what an increasingly large part books hold in our educational scheme, and what an enlarged influence and responsibility has come to the publisher. This great multiplication of books may not be an unmixed good, but that it is, on the whole, an enormous educational help, no one will be rash enough to deny; and this state of things has come about in response to the demand which you, as leaders of educational thought, have created; so that at the bottom the responsibility and the credit are yours.

The question of the use and misuse of text-books is wide and deep, and has itself been the origin of many books and endless discussion. Some cynic, I believe, has even raised the point whether the invention of the art of printing has, on the whole, been a blessing to the human race, but nevertheless text-books have remained and their use has increased. The speller was at one time banished from what was regarded as the progressive school; the mental arithmetic had a like fate; technical grammar has suffered somewhat of an eclipse; but books on even these subjects are finding their way back into favour with the leaders. The just criticism made upon the books of the old time and upon a certain class of books devoted to the older methods, was that they enslaved the schools and teachers by a dry routine, and furnished the letter which killeth, and not the spirit which maketh alive. But this is not true of the books chiefly in use in this country to-day. It may be stated as the truth, that books of this description are now used only by those who have not educated themselves up to the use of better standards and better methods; that the numbers are somewhat large, however, is not the fault of