

al spirit of fraternity and nationality ; and to this worthy end, the leaders of educational thought in this country should rally to their support and hold up their hands.

There is another threatening, narrowing influence that may well be mentioned in this connection—the tendency in some states towards limiting and localizing the production and use of schoolbooks within their own narrow borders. This is the ambition of the local politician ; but the strong tendency of such a policy cannot be other than destructive to that best education which *lives* only in the sunlight of freedom. Writers of the best text-books, like the greatest teachers, are rare ; they are not to be found in every village, city, or even state. And when found, no matter where—in Kansas, in Texas, in New York, Wisconsin, or Massachusetts—no part of the country should be deprived of the fruit of their labors, and no author of merit should be content with a less field of competition than the whole country. It is by such freedom, and a fair field for all comers, and by such a market, restricted by no sectional or state line, that the scale of merit is raised to the highest attainable point and the best results achieved.

For some unaccountable reason there is a widespread misapprehension in respect to the cost of schoolbooks to the school patrons, and of the total amount expended for text-books in the different states and in the country as a whole. This false idea has taken such a strong hold on certain states and communities that under the hot breath of a certain class of politicians it has been fanned into a flame of passion, until the single aim has seemed to be to get *cheap* books, irrespective of all other considerations. The gravity of this evil necessitates its mention, and calls for the dissemination of correct information on this subject.

According to a series of investigations in different states, based upon statistics and reliable information, the conclusion has been reached that the consumption of schoolbooks in the public schools from year to year amounts, in cost to the purchaser, to a sum which would be equal to ten cents for each inhabitant, or about forty cents for each enrolled pupil. This includes high-school books and all.

According to Commissioner Harris's latest report, the total expenditure in the United States for public education for the school year 1894-1895 was \$178,215,556. This, of course, does not include money expended for schoolbooks, except in the few states which at that time furnished free books. It is thus seen what a very small proportion the cost of text-books bears to the sum of other educational expenditures. It is less than three per cent. of the total.

Something can not be had for nothing, and it is for you, the makers of public opinion on educational matters, to say whether the relatively small outlay for the best text-books that wide and free competition can furnish is not about the best-paying investment for its schools which the public can make. Is it not, therefore, your duty to direct the public mind back from the mere consideration of cheapness to the higher and more vital considerations of intrinsic merit and a suitable adaptability to desired educational ends ?

I have assumed throughout this paper the existence of a most active competition, in this country, in text-book making and publishing. In an experience of thirty years of active connection with this business, I have seen no period of ten years in which the competition to produce the best books—and no end of them in numbers—has been greater, or the enterprise to get them into use has been