

SCHOOL BOOKS AND SECTIONALISM.

The appointment of a committee of the Grand Army of Kansas to investigate the readers and histories in use in the Kansas schools, in order to ascertain if they are up to the proper standard of loyalty and patriotism, will probably result in the discovery that there is no such standard.

School books are written to be sold in all parts of the country, and the design of the compilers is to accommodate the prejudices of all sections, or at least to offend the sensibilities of no section. This, by the way, has always been the case. If one will pick up a copy of the once popular McTUFFLY'S Fourth Reader, published in the old slavery days, he will notice an introductory note to the effect that nothing in the work can be construed as reflecting on the institutions of any section of the country; and the same disposition, caused by the same apparent necessity, exists among the school book-makers still.

How individual and private feelings are subordinated in this work of writing history for "general purposes" is shown by the fact that it was discovered that a common school history violently accused by some partisans of being "rebel" in its tone, or at least guilty of underrating the achievements of the Union arms, was really the work of a very gallant officer of the Union army, whom no

one who knew him personally ever suspected of any lack of attachment to the flag under which he shed his blood. He was merely trying to be impartial and unoffending. The G. A. R. committee will find, probably, that the word "rebels" is not plentifully sown through the pages of the school histories in use, and may find the omission objectionable, just as a fierce ex-Confederate committee of revision might notice the absence of "Yankees" and "abolitionists." Thoughtful and reasonable people will, however, conclude that the histories and the readers are well enough as they are, especially as no school reader and no school history now inculcates any lesson other than that of attachment to the common country and the symbol of its perpetual unity.

It should be known, moreover, that the school books do not settle historical questions. A man's theories of historical truth are usually born with him; they are bred in his blood and his bone; they are woven in his brain by tradition; they are imbibed before he can read at all; they are inherited like the features of his face. Thus and so will he believe, whatever the brief compilations called school histories may say, and however these may be revised by committees and commissions.