

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES.

The editors of the *EDUCATIONAL REVIEW* — a journal for which I both desire and anticipate a most successful career—have asked me to furnish in some detail impressions produced by the recent meeting of the National Educational Association of the United States, at Chicago. The subject is a worthy one, demanding for its proper treatment time and care; but I can send only a few hasty jottings, with the hope that they will be accepted as redeeming a somewhat hasty promise.

By way of preface: I was fortunate enough to secure passage in the special train of Pullman cars which conveyed the great body of New England delegates from Boston to Chicago. If education be not a fraud, one does not often fall in with a caravan transporting such a weight of wisdom as did those eleven superb "sleepers," which in two days and nights carried us through Massachusetts, Vermont, Quebec, Ontario, Michigan, and little corners of Indiana and Illinois, into the most wonderful city of this wonderful continent. "All classes and conditions" of the educational service were represented in our company of nearly four hundred souls—college presidents, principals, professors, superintendents, and a solid contingent of "the rank and file," in which, as is usual now-a-days, the "fair women" outnumbered the "brave men" three to one. I see that I have omitted to specify "the Generals," of whom we had two or three, one combining with that august military distinction the reverend appellation of D. D., and the principalship of one of the leading New England Normal schools!

An exceedingly well arranged and well appointed excursion was that! A courteous official of the Grand Trunk accompanied us throughout the entire journey, and both personally and through his subordinates, anticipated every want. On the whole route but one meal had to be taken at the ordinary railroad restaurant, such hostelry as the Windsor and St. Lawrence Hall, at Montreal, and the Queen and Rossin at Toronto, opening their doors to the hungry pedagogues at most moderate rates.

The first impression produced by the Association itself was that it was a huge affair; so large, indeed, as to threaten to become unmanageable. The central location of the city where the meetings were held, exceptional travelling facilities, and the growing influence of the body itself, combined to attract an attendance far surpassing that of any previous session. It was authoritatively announced that upwards of ten thousand teachers were recorded as present! Soon,

however, I had the pleasure of seeing that if any danger of disorder or disintegration existed it must have its basis in the mere fact of *number*; nowhere could one discover any visible lack of earnestness or enthusiasm. In every quarter there was abundant evidence of a controlling unity of purpose and aim.

The opening session was held in the great hall of the Exposition Building, that famous scene of momentous political gatherings, where Blaine and Cleveland, and so many other Presidential candidates have been nominated for either victory or defeat. This meeting was of a more general character than any that followed. How many were crowded into that vast hall, with its far-reaching spaces and enormous galleries, I cannot say. The papers of the next morning variously estimated the attendance at from fifteen to twenty thousand. A gentleman beside me remarked that he had never seen the hall more crowded at one of the great political conventions. But the occasion was one perhaps better fitted to arouse enthusiasm than to promote intellectual edification. For the opening hour Thomas' splendid orchestra lent to the gathering the inspiration of music. Then came a gratifying display of the pride taken by the American people in their system of public schools. The state, the city, and the county, through their representative officials, all came forward to welcome and do honor to a profession to which the progress of American civilization owes so much. The literary exercises, while intrinsically excellent, were somewhat marred in their immediate effectiveness by the intense heat—for, unfortunately, the sessions of the Association synchronized with the hottest week of the hottest summer the western prairies have ever felt—by the rustling of ten thousand fans, and by the difficulty of hearing involved in the vast distances of the great auditorium.

The regular work of the Association was mapped out somewhat thus:

1. During the morning and evening sessions the Association met as an integral body and discussed the general questions of the programme. Each of these questions was brought forward by some five or six speakers, each dealing with some one of its special aspects or relations. These general heads included such lines of thought as these: "The Psychological and Pedagogical Value of the Modern Methods of Elementary Culture;" "The Relation of the University, College, and Higher Technological Schools to the Public System of Instruction;" "The Means and Ends of Culture to be Provided for the American People beyond the Ordinary School Period;" "The Place Manual Training should occupy in a System of Public Schools;" "What can be done by Educators to