Meeting of the Pennsylvania State Teachers' Association at West Chester.

[Reported for The Press.]

FIRST DAY.

The seventh annual meeting of the Pennsylvania State Teachers' Association was commenced yesterday morning at ten o'clock in the Horticultural Hall, West Chester. A large number of delegates were present from different parts of the state, the ladies largely preponderating.

Rev. Mr. McCarter, of West Chester, opened the proceedings by reading a portion of the third chapter of Proverbs. Mr. McCarter also made a very earnest and eloquent prayer, invoking the choicest blessings of Heaven upon the members of the association, and the work in which they were engaged.

Prof. Allen, of the West Chester Normal School, at the request of his pupils, sang a piece of sacred music with great taste and judgment. This was followed by several national airs, which were performed by a band from Philadelphia, under the lead of Dr. Cunnington, the accomplished leader of the orchestra of the Walnut-street Theatre.

Dr. Franklin Taylor, the president, made a short address. He sincerely hoped the deliberations of the association would be productive of great good. There were a number of great educational problems to be discussed, problems in which the community were deeply interested. The people of West Chester, with a high appreciation of the objects actuating the members of the association, would, extend to them a warm and generous welcome, and every thing in their power to make their stay amongst them agreeable. He concluded by introducing Wm. B. Waddell, Esq., the chief burgess of the borough.

Mr. Waddell was received with much applause. It was a duty as well as a pleasure for him to extend a welcome to the members of the association; and in behalf of the people of West Chester to give them the right hand of fellowship. He need hardly say to the ladies and gentlemen before him that the work in which they were engaged enlisted the warmest sympathies of the community. It was a work, too, in which they felt proud to give a hearty co-operation. The hill-tops and valleys of Chester were memorable as the scenes of sanguinary struggles for freedom in the era of the Revolution—the soil was rich with mineral wealth—and he felt sure she would not be less memorable in her sister counties in the educational history of our country. With such feelings as these, he, therefore, extended a hearty welcome to the members of the association. The task to which they had devoted themselves was one requiring constant care and watchfulness. Error was abroad in fascinating forms seeking to entrap the unsophisticated, while Truth stood back, modestly avoiding the foreground, and remaining to be sought. To combat error required an unremitting intellectual effort, to the performance of which he felt the members of the association were competent. He relied on every man in the county—yea, in the State—to do what he could to overthrow the power which vice was exerting. Whispering voices around reminded them of the good and the brave that had gone before, whose lives were devoted to the advancement of the cause of humanity. He hoped that the noble edifice of education they were being constructed in such magnificent proportions, would not be left incomplete. The battle of truth and error was still going on, and we must enter into the contest with undoubted zeal. The teachers should see to it, and use all their efforts for the achievement of a glorious victory. He concluded by again welcoming the members to the borough of West Chester, and hoping that God would speed the glorious undertaking in which they were engaged.

Professor Coburn, of Bradford, responded on behalf of the association. He gave a sketch of its rise and progress, saying that its origin was a matter of necessity. The teachers of the State had begun to feel that they needed an organization. They wanted a great centre around which they might cluster their energies, and to which the young might repair to learn from the experience of the old, and the old be animated by the fire and enthusiasm of youth. Township associations were formed, and finally, each county association, etc. From these the State Association received its existence. They came into the plan as men of business, feeling that their interests were concerned, and desiring to catch the spirit, zeal, and wisdom of each other. This was the seventh anniversary of their existence. It was their misfortune to have their earliest days in a sickly, and, we may add, unnoticed, and also to be misrepresented. Notwithstanding all discouragements, a few faithful men stood together. People appeared to dissatisfied with the organization, saying that its members had joined together for the purpose of increasing their wages, and making more money out of the farmers. [Laughter.] The hearty, outspoken, open-armed welcome that had just been extended by the people of Chester told them that better days were coming. Such a welcome from Chester, a county renowned for her intelligent people, and the number and influence of her literary associations, could not be too highly prized. [Applause.] It told him that there was some power in his profession, an influence that could not be equalled by any party or sect in the land. In this generous welcome the speaker not only saw a welcome, but encouragement. It would be a green spot in their lives, and in the lives of those who, like himself, had grown gray in the service, green spots never very thick. When the members left the friends of West Chester, he hoped they would leave no regrets, and take nothing away but the pleasant associations of remembrance.

The different speakers were cordially applauded.

A recess was taken in order to enable the Committee of Reception to complete their arrangements.

After the recess, the association, without transacting any business of importance, adjourned about noon, to meet at two o'clock.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

The association re-assembled at two o'clock, Dr. Taylor in the chair. The attendance was very large, the hall being crowded to its utmost capacity. We noticed in the audience, Hon. Justice Read, of the Supreme Court, Hon. Judge Haines, of the Seventh judicial district, and Rev. Messrs. McCarter, Moore, Newton, and Watkinson, of West Chester.

The proceedings were opened with prayer by the Rev. Mr. Watkinson, of West Chester.

The committee on the revision of the constitution of the State Association reported through Professor Wickersham, its chairman. The report contained a number of alterations that had been determined on by the committee.

Professor Coburn, of Bradford, moved that the report of the committee be accepted, and the committee discharged. Agreed to.

The motion being on the adoption of the report, the various articles were taken up, section by section.

A motion to combine articles 4, 5, 6, so as to remove the control of the corresponding secretary from the Executive Committee, led to some debate, and was finally withdrawn.

A motion was made to abolish the office of corresponding secretary, which led to rather an animated discussion. Finally, the whole matter, after having been overlaid with amendments, was laid on the table for the present.

A discussion arose on the article on qualification of members. The article admitted women without the payment of such a fee as is exacted from the men. Several members thought that the article was conceived in the spirit of gallantry, it was making a discrimination against the women which would be regarded as very insulting to them.

Mr. Roberts, of Philadelphia, moved to place the admission fee of ladies at fifty cents.

Prof. Allen, of Chester, moved an amendment, placing the admission fee of all members, whether male or female, at fifty cents.

The amendment of Prof. Allen was accepted by Mr. Roberts, and adopted. The article, as amended, was adopted.

On the motion to adopt that part of the eighth article, in relation to the admission of persons not teachers, another debate arose. It was contended that there were persons not engaged in teaching who possessed the right to belong to the association on account of their eminence as friends of education. On the other hand, it was held that the association being a purely professional one, persons not engaged in teaching should be excluded. By opening the door to friends of education, you invited persons of all stations and professions. They wanted the association to be made the nucleus of a great profession, and to be controlled by practical teachers. It was decided that once a teacher, always a teacher. Persons having been teachers, and retiring from the profession, were regarded by the association as being teachers. It was finally determined to admit friends of education, who were not teachers, as honorary members.

An article was proposed allowing no members to vote unless they have been members in good standing for one year. [illegible]

Pending its consideration, a motion to postpone the consideration of the report, were made by Mr. Wickersham, and carried amid great applause.

A recess of ten minutes was taken.

It is half past four, and the hall in which the association is meeting, the largest, by the way, in the county, is thronged, a great number of gentlemen standing in the aisles and vestibule. Two-thirds of the assemblage are composed of ladies. The lecturer, under Dr. Cunnington, is whiling away the time by the performance of several well-executed pieces of music.

The recess being over, Mr. H. A. Warriner, of Philadelphia, read a report on the best means of teaching English grammar. He believed the old Scripture proverb, "That words fitly spoken are like apples of gold in pictures of silver." All men that had been engaged in teaching grammar felt the truth of this. He had never heard a proposition to abolish the study of grammar made but once. That was not in Pennsylvania, but in the puritan region of New England. It was a proposition to which a most decided manifestation of disapprobation. He felt conscious that no rhapsodical dissertation on language was expected of him. They had met for a practical purpose—to enable them to impart knowledge more effectually to the children under their care.

It had been said, and generally believed, that grammar was a dry study. He did not think so. So beautifully combining in its form the riches of the Latin, Greek, Saxon, Danish, and other tongues—every word almost contained a history—possessing a capability to deeply interest, it was anything but a tedious study. It was rather the want of our ability to comprehend it. There was no better way to study our language than by studying the other languages. Particularly should we study the Latin. As a general thing, one-half the words in any article we might read are derived from Latin. A person may study English without knowing the Latin or Greek, but not perfectly. A teacher, who does not understand these languages should retire from his business. He should retire, and go either into the pulpit or bar.

He did not wish to be understood as applauding the practice of many writers like Johnson, who take so much from the Latin. He had a fondness for plain English—the English of Shakspeare—Spenser and Chaucer. Many persons would, by an effort of superior fastidiousness, rob our language of half its force. Mr. Warriner cited a number of instances of this character, in which grammarians had pandered to this desire to emasculate the good old English tongue. He continued at some length, ridiculing this propensity, and went on to indicate the best thorough method of our own language. Teachers should study the Latin, it being the most important of all, and entering into the composition of a majority of Continental tongues.

The teacher should first teach the pupil some philosophical idea of what language is. It is easily done. The language of fear, and power, and authority is sounded nearly the same in all languages. This was an axiom in elocution that was very often forgotten. He should especially teach him that the knowledge imparted by grammar was artificial. We could not commence too soon in teaching the pupil etymology. The speaker urged, at some length, the beauty and necessity of using the monosyllable characters. He then range satisfying his position by numerous beautiful quotations from Shakspeare and Byron, where the monosyllable was almost invariably used. A pupil should first learn to analyze a sentence before attempting to parse it. [illegible] Papers were often confounded by a multiplicity of adverbs, adjectives, nouns, and pronouns. The main object of the pupil's object was not to analyze sentences, but to put them together properly. Every man of original thought has his own style of it. It is of vastly more consequence to the pupil from his studies than what he studies. We [illegible]

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