

**REPORT OF THE DELEGATE TO THE
EDUCATIONAL CONVENTIONS OF BUFFALO
AND BOSTON, TO THE COMMISSIONERS OF
PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BALTIMORE, AND
ADDRESS ON THE
TEACHER'S CALLING NATIONALLY
CONSIDERED, DELIVERED AT BUFFALO**

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Report of the Delegate to the Educational Conventions of Buffalo and Boston, to the Commissioners of Public Schools of Baltimore, and Address on the Teacher's Calling Nationally Considered, Delivered at Buffalo by J. N. M'Jilton

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J. N. M'JILTON

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DELIVERED AT BUFFALO,

BY J. N. M'JILTON.

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1860.

PREFACE.

The present pamphlet is the result of a suggestion made by a number of friends with whom the writer has conversed, that a report of his observations as delegate to the Educational Conventions recently held at Buffalo and Boston, should be prepared and presented to the School Board. The reason assigned for the performance of such duty is, that the embodied views of experienced educators, as they are contained in their lectures and expressed in their debates, may be of service to the friends of education generally, in affording them, in brief review, the plans and purposes of active and efficient agencies that are operating in the cause of enlightenment and human progress. Especially, it is said, that such may be the result in regard to persons actually engaged as co-laborers in the great enterprize.

The efforts of all intelligent and experienced teachers, tend to the development of the true basis upon which our educational systems are founded, and the manner in which they ought to be conducted. There are important principles that underlie those systems, and it is necessary that they should be known. Although but few, they are varied in their forms and features, and require research and examination. Their illustration in the exhibition of the theories based upon them, and their adaptation to practical use, must always be matters of interest to the intelligent mind.

It is true, the mere rehearsal of acts performed and sentiments expressed, may not be as effective as the actual witnessing of the scenes in which they occurred, which were as inter-

esting to the mind and the heart as they were attractive to the eye and the ear. But the enlightened imagination, which is always ready for its work, in the appropriation of whatever it is allowed to act upon, will supply deficiencies, and realize much more than is contained in the mere record. It is in such view, that this report has been prepared, and it is now submitted to the Board in the hope that its embodiment of experience with the well-matured theories of practiced educators, may be of use in removing difficulties and objections from less practiced minds, and encouraging the application of energetic labor in a cause involving so many of the dearest interests of humanity.

*Office of the Commissioners of Public Schools,
Baltimore, September 20, 1860.*

To the Board of Commissioners of Public Schools.

GENTLEMEN:—

The undersigned, having been appointed a delegate to represent the Board in the American Normal School and National Teachers' Associations, in accordance with the resolutions of August 1st, attended the Conventions of these educational bodies for the year 1860. Having witnessed and participated in the proceedings of those conventions, I am satisfied of their importance in their relation to the cause of education generally, and believing that some knowledge of the subjects examined and the results attained, in the interchange of thought by some of the best minds of the country, will be of service in our own locality, I have prepared and now present you this brief review of the labors of the associations. The desire of the Board to be represented in our national educational conventions, as it appears in my appointment, suggests the propriety and duty of my embodying briefly, the views and sentiments of gentlemen of enlarged experience in the instruction of youth, upon the subject of education, which at the present time is, at least, of equal importance with any other that can engage the public attention. I proceed with the more interest in the performance of this duty, because I am sensible of a certain degree of apathy on the part of a portion of our citizens, who seem to be willing to leave the cause of public instruction entirely to those who are more immediately engaged in it, without considering that their own personal services may be of consequence, and of the lamentable indifference that prevails among the people of the state outside of the city. Did not this apathy and indifference exist, the state of Maryland would not now be without a uniform system of public instruction, while the states that were last admitted into the Union, have preceded

her in the enterprise. It must be mortifying to the patriotism of a state boasting its connection as one of the original thirteen, that wrought so nobly together, in their united wisdom and strength, for the success of the declaration of their independence, that her younger sisters, which are so far behind her in years, should be so many years in advance of her in the work of education. While the state is without a general law regulating the labor of public instruction, and while the people of Baltimore are not willing to enter more heartily in support of their excellent system of public schools, there is need that some unusual effort should be made to excite the interest of the population of both city and state, and cause a more general activity on its behalf. Among a portion of the citizens of our city and state, public education is popular and very highly estimated, and there are thousands of persons who may be numbered among the friends of the cause, who are patronizing it, and laboring in various ways for the advancement of its labors and prosperity. But the portion of our people that are thus disposed, is small in comparison with the population, a large majority of whom are either opposed to public instruction, or indifferent in regard to its success. The number is limited even among the friends of the admirable system, which is working so harmoniously and successfully in the city of Baltimore, who are heartily engaged in its support. Were it not for a few among the multitudes of the city, who are actively and energetically laboring for the advancement of the system, the public schools of Baltimore would be a thorough failure. If proof of the truth of this declaration is required, it is to be found in the fact, that while there are between fifty and sixty thousand children of school-going age in Baltimore, the highest number that has ever been enrolled at any one time upon the public school records, is less than thirteen thousand.

In view of the condition of matters thus presented, the necessity appears to be absolute, that exertions of extraordinary character be put forth, in order to awaken the public interest in a still greater degree, and excite the people to united and energetic action in the support of our system of public instruction—an institution, which next to our religion, is most necessary in sustaining our free government, as well as in the perpetuation

of our prosperity and happiness as a nation. In fact, if rightly considered, our intelligence is but a part of our religion, which finds a potent adjunct in the schools, and may be rendered yet more efficient through their agency.

It is ardently hoped that the brief comparison presented in this paper, between the educational labors and resources of our city and state, and other localities, may be in a degree effective in directing the attention of our people to a greater extent to our system of public schools, which they may be assured is second to none in this country, in the practical working of its various departments. In extending the interest of our fellow-citizens in our public schools, and engaging their personal services in their support, we secure their popularity, their prosperity, and enlarge the sphere of their usefulness. It is in this way that the success of our efforts may be rendered effectual, in the provision of a general and uniform system of public instruction for our state.

JOINT OPENING OF THE AMERICAN NORMAL SCHOOL AND NATIONAL TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS.

The American Normal School and National Teachers' Associations, commenced their operations in convention, at Buffalo, on Tuesday, August 7th, at 10 o'clock A. M., in the spacious rooms of the Young Men's Christian Association, which are situated on Main street, and in a central part of the city. The two bodies were present at the opening, and were welcomed to the city by his Honor Mayor Alberger, who delivered an appropriate address on the occasion, expressing the interest of the people of Buffalo in the great cause of education, and his pleasure in using his best efforts to encourage and sustain it. He was pleased that the city over which he presided as Chief Magistrate, had been selected as the place at which the joint meeting of the two associations was to have been held, and hoped that the effort to be made by them on behalf of the interesting subject of their concern, would be successful and satisfactory.

The address of the Mayor was responded to by Professor W. F. Phelps, Principal of the Normal School of the State of New Jersey, and President of the Normal School Association, and by J. W. Bulkley, Esq., Superintendent of the Public Schools

of Brooklyn, New York, and President of the National Teachers' Association.

Seventeen States were represented, and there was a delegate present from the City of Mexico, and one from Canada. Delegates were in attendance from Texas and California. The number of Teachers that were present is estimated at twelve hundred. Two hundred were from Massachusetts, and twenty-seven from Maryland. Nearly all those from Maryland are connected with the public schools of Baltimore.

The meetings of the Convention were well attended, and generally opened with prayer.

FIRST SESSION OF THE NORMAL SCHOOL ASSOCIATION.

Immediately after the preliminary exercises in the opening of the session, Professor Phelps took the chair, and organized the convention of the American Normal School Association for business. His introductory address related especially to the history of the association;—its objects and aims were considered, and their importance and necessity to the success of education in our country. The former labors and future work of the body were alluded to, in connection with the difficulties to be overcome, and the future prosperity of the enterprise. The discourse was founded entirely upon the extensive practical experience of its author, and its arguments were conclusive upon all the points considered.

DISCUSSION ON THE TRUE ORDER OF STUDIES.

The first order was the previously appointed discussion of the question, "What is the true order of studies?" Considerable talent was elicited in the debate, during which the order of the sciences was presented, together with the order in which the human faculties are developed. The lack of adaptation of the one to the other, in the work of education, was clearly shown. The operations of the school-room were represented in the manner of recitation as generally admitted. The conclusion was inevitable that there is no well defined system of education founded upon the philosophy of mind, and adapted to the mental faculties in the natural order of their develop-