

"It has ever been my opinion, and the general opinion of the friends of the Industrial League, that a Normal School, with an Agricultural Department connected with it, would be more strongly bound to the interests and feelings of the masses of our people, and therefore more popular and prosperous than if it stood entirely alone, for precisely the same reason that such institutions do not so well prosper when standing beneath the shadow of a college or university, or higher order of school; for it is a law of nature that the stronger and higher should draw from the weaker and the lower. Still, if this is not agreeable to the teachers of the State, or the friends of the Normal School, I wish them to organize it in such manner as they think best; and in any plan the Teachers' Association may devise, the friends of the League will most heartily cooperate, provided it is effectually separated from such partisan political control as would render it a curse instead of a blessing to the State.

It is high time, my friends, that you had your Normal School, whether we ever get an Agricultural Department to it or not. Let us all take hold together and try to obtain it in such form as you may, on the whole, think best.

Respectfully submitted, by yours most truly,

J. B. TURNER."

After a long and animated discussion, the Association passed the following:

"Resolved, That the educational interests of Illinois demand the immediate establishment of a State Normal School for the education of teachers: and, in the language of the Board of Education, 'We therefore recommend an appropriation, by the next Legislature, of a sufficient sum annually to support such a seminary of learning.' In the following February, the Legislature passed, and the Governor approved, 'An act for the establishment and maintenance of a Normal University.'"

Before giving a history of the University, its organization, etc., allow us to introduce a letter received by C. E. Mann at the quarter-centennial of the State Teachers' Association, held at Springfield, December 26, 1881. It contains many interesting facts respecting the

ILLINOIS PIONEERS OF EDUCATION.

CENSUS OFFICE,

WASHINGTON, D. C., December 26, 1881. }

C. E. MANN, *Chairman Executive Committee, S. T. A.:*

DEAR SIR: C. E. Hovey insists that I shall explain his failure to write and myself respond for him. He is in a great pressure of work just now, and regrets he did not begin when your note first came, when he might have written something. We have recalled many things in view of the anniversary at hand. I knew most of the men prominent in the first meeting, and I had an early part in

the Association's work. Joliet, Jacksonville, Quincy, Dixon, Rock Island, and Rockford have each been the place of meeting at least once. Decatur, Ottawa, Galesburg, and Peoria, each at least twice. Bloomington and Springfield at least three times each. I cannot locate all the war-time meetings. Mr. Hovey's reminiscences freshen up my knowledge of matters mostly known to me as they occurred, and so little wholly new to me that this may pass for our joint production, without separate credit for each item possibly due to him. Some of the men prominent in those early meetings are yet prominent. The first meeting was at Peoria, the year Hovey came west, and while he was yet a teacher of a stock school, the germ of the present school system of Peoria. There was W. H. Powell presiding as first vice-president, in absence of O. Springstead, president. Although afterward State Superintendent, his record can only be followed as a warning to teachers not to be too fond of money. Then there were men with the teachers in interest, but not in school-room work at the time. A strong force of such men was represented at that Peoria meeting by one of eccentric enthusiasm, who attracted attention by the balancing of his short name with the initials before and after it: W. F. M. Arny, D. V. M., the latter part not interpreted to this day so far as heard from. He was afterward active in "Bleeding Kansas," yet later, acting governor of New Mexico; went to England to look after one of those great estates so often left to unknown Americans, and is reported to have died after his return. Bronson Murray, active in agricultural ideas as applied to education, was there. He left the State for an eastern residence after spurring others to the work. Representing these agricultural men on the one hand, and the school-room teachers on the other, the champion of agricultural education, with broad culture, a sympathizing perception of the needs of the actual teacher, serving to check impracticable notions, with a bull-dog pertinacity, and a pride of independence in his ideas, was J. B. Turner, of Jacksonville, of whom an opponent in debate, in his vexation, said "he wanted to go in a gang all by himself." However, he was not always found alone in his many undertakings. Hovey insists that from a speech in Putnam County, delivered by J. Turner, whose ideas had gathered force meantime, came a rally and a petition from the Illinois Legislature, which inaugurated the national grants for the Industrial Colleges. It was the momentum of the movement of J. B. Turner and Bronson Murray, and their associates, that made the Normal School an early possibility, supported with the university fund, granted to the State by the general government forty years before.

The State Superintendent of that day was at Peoria—Ninian W. Edwards, first Superintendent of Illinois Public Schools, yet living to link the great State of to-day with the infant Territory, of which his father was the only Governor. At other early meetings, John F.

Brooks, yet of Springfield, and Horace Spalding, of Jacksonville, helped give form and force to the new order of things.

Uncle Sim Wright was at that Peoria opening. A wonderful man for hard work, he had made a little village school, that even yet is not reached by railroad, the nucleus for the young people forty miles around. The sense of his power was even then upon the book agents, who there showed the mighty zeal that has characterized them in greater or less degree ever since. The prospects of the new era in Illinois made them almost as zealous as in a recent year when they gathered in Missouri to aid in determining, for the good of the people, what books would be used for the next five years. Uncle Sim had good qualities for us to copy, and he would sacrifice himself to his work. He had his faults too, and died too soon, himself his own worst enemy. The school attendance of Illinois was not before, nor since, so high in proportion to population as when Simeon Wright, as agent of the State Association in 1857-8, preached an educational revival in the free school-room day and night.

Newton Bateman was at that formation meeting, and his formative influence was already shaping the first graded school of the State, and to the younger teachers the name has become so much a matter of course that they hardly know, even as a matter of history, that the system and Newton Bateman have not always been synonymous terms.

Not to dwell especially farther on the individuality of that Peoria meeting, except to notice that Charles Davis, the mathematical professor at West Point, was one of the speakers, and that Lucy Stone and Henry B. Blackwell were there, the meeting must be characterized as giving form and vitality to at least three movements of great importance. 1. A Teachers' Journal. 2. The Normal University. 3. The character of the State Superintendency. Mr. Edwards had been appointed to the office by the governor.

In the early years of the Association, questions that have passed so long that some teachers of many years experience think they were always settled, stirred up the very depths of zealous excitement. The men who met at Peoria did not represent the free schools. It was only exceptionally rich districts that had free schools, through lucky sales of their township land or accumulation of their funds. Nor were the graded schools represented, for there were hardly enough in the State to make a plural number. Many Illinois public schools were under the plan of signing a certain number of scholars to be paid for whether they came or not, and the patron received some credit for any allowance there might be on the schedule. The early public schools of the graded form even were not free. Tuition was paid in Jacksonville, in Peoria, and in Springfield for some time after the graded methods were introduced. The one idea, educate the people, drew those pioneers together, and all the questions of

how were yet fresh for discussion and possessed an intense vitality that those who come to reap the fruits of others' planting cannot realize.

Insurance and law, as well as death, have taken off some who did zealous pioneer work. There were Tabor, of Aurora, and Heywood, of the same place, and now I find my memories flashing all about till I will drive a peg at the war and dismiss most this side of it as modern history. C. H. Dupee, then at the head of the Chicago High School, has not been known by this generation of teachers, but he can help them out of legal difficulties. D. S. Wentworth still wears the armor of an old warrior. W. H. Wells yearns for schools enough even now and then to take official relation to them, as also does J. F. Eberhart. The great apostle of Egypt is known, in the benignant name of Father Roots, to the present teachers who do not know his fighting capacity of the formative days. There is N. C. Nason, long a power, not known by his face to half so many as read his name as publisher, for many years, of the *Illinois Teacher*,—a man of sound education, and rare taste as a printer. There is Willard, the painstaking professor of history in the Chicago High School, who helped more than most men know in shaping the system of Illinois. There was J. D. Low, first principal of the St. Louis High School, superintendent briefly in Springfield, of larger influence in Illinois than to be measured by the years of his teaching in the State. There was the sturdy A. M. Brooks, whose ratio of boys among graduates, in Springfield, has been rarely excelled in any similar school. A. M. Gow is now editing a paper at Washington, Pennsylvania. James Gow edits a paper and raises corn in Iowa. S. H. White, a hard-working, devoted man, finds his long form valuable in overlooking sheep on an Iowa prairie.* President Edwards was known to us as of St. Louis, when war came. He and President Hewett are a part of present, as well as of former history. Matthew Andrew and J. B. Roberts are names that come easily together as of Galesburg, where one still does good service, while the other teaches yet in Indianapolis. Trade, especially in books, has taken some strong men, as Woodard and Cook, who both sat in the Legislature, and Herrick, who did not sit in the Legislature.

Every State Superintendent of the State was identified with the record before the war. J. V. N. Standish was a faithful pioneer, of whom the present Association sees little. There were B. M. Reynolds, of Rock Island, now of Wisconsin, the earnest Kelly, of Whiteside, Wescott, most wonderful in power of minute investigation, now at the head of the Racine schools, Dr. Sewall, now in Colorado, and Ira Moore, now of Minnesota.

The Normal School was just beginning to show its results. Your

*Mr. White died March 15, 1882.



Amos Fall

presiding officer (Gastman) and P. R. Walker, who went to war in the Ninety-Second Illinois Mounted Infantry, and Gove, of Denver, who was in the Thirty-Third Illinois Volunteers, and Norton, of the California Normal School, were of the men just putting their hands to the work. There were M. L. Seymour, true to his friends, and W. B. Powell, who has won distinction at home and abroad, and almost obliterated the memory of a Powell of a very different stock.

And there were many more doing valiant service in those days, to some of whom apparent injustice may, I fear, be done. In a record of the schools many names will have high position which were not so closely identified with the history of the Association.

Chicago has done herself honor in putting the grandest old bachelor of the profession, of fine scholarship, and very long, faithful service, in charge of her schools. It needs to be chronicled as an instance of public recognition of such service. He plead the sorrows of woman to some of us before the war, and the women in the Chicago schools never had a more appreciative friend.

The story since the war is better known, but those who know only the modern history know very little of the days when personal pledges of work and of money were the means to secure general success. This Association, one year, paid \$1,500, and traveling expenses, to an agent. Pledges to *The Teacher* meant something, and among all the demands many a one put \$25 and \$50 at a time into the funds. Discussions and resolutions only pointed the way. The great school opportunities of to-day rest upon the foundations thus laid. Will the teachers and the people of to-day work with so much zeal and so much self-denial, upon the superstructure? Are the teachers, and the preachers, and the people, ready for the labor, and the sacrifices, and the self-denial, that shall make the moral and the intellectual growth of the country equal the marvelous physical development recorded in these census reports under my hand? Labor, and sacrifice, and self-denial, laid the foundation, and they are needed for solidity in the progress of to-day.

Yours, very heartily,

JAS. H. BLODGETT.