

has boasted not a little, was achieved by barefaced election frauds.

There was about the convention of the National Educational association, held in Detroit last week, a flavor of plutocracy which is anything but encouraging. Not that these teachers are themselves rich or hope to be; not even that they are inclined towards the plutocratic ideal of government by and for the rich. But they evidently recognize the drift of things toward plutocracy; and, with only a few exceptions, dare not risk their livelihood by turning their faces against it.

One episode in the conference went to show that the disposition to make educational institutions subservient to plutocratic tendencies is reluctant. President Jesse, of the Missouri university, read a paper in which he declared that it was one of the functions of universities to help the people solve their social and economic problems, to understand taxation, to control corporations, etc. He was asked two questions by President George McA. Miller, of Ruskin college, a Missouri institution, situated at Trenton, which undertakes to enable students to support themselves while acquiring a high grade college education, and professes to treat social problems boldly in the public interest. President Miller asked "to what extent universities and colleges are trying to help the people to a solution of social problems," and whether, if they are neglecting this function, the Educational association can "take any steps looking toward concerted action for a proper observance of it." Replying to these questions President Jesse candidly admitted that he knew of no college or university that is doing any practical work on the line of the solution of social problems. But he shrank from proposing action by the association, because, as he said, it is always a long time after an ideal is presented to the people before they are willing to do any-

thing practical in the way of realizing it. So the matter rested about as President Miller described it, when, in asking his questions, he observed that the attitude of the colleges toward social problems reminded him of George Eliot's Mr. Riley, who "had a good knowledge of Latin in general, but no knowledge of any particular Latin."

Another episode had a similar bearing. William T. Harris, United States commissioner of education, had spoken in optimistic terms of the progress of education in the United States, mentioning, among other encouraging facts, the large increase in the number of schools and in the attendance. Mr. Harris struck a keynote, and, as usual, the docile educators began to sing to his tune. Several arose to say that these statements should send every teacher home satisfied. But there was one teacher present who knows the difference between official statistics and facts. This was Miss Margaret A. Haley, of the Chicago Teachers' Federation, which has been so efficient in exposing the tax-dodging corporations of Chicago. In what the press reports call a "rapid-fire" speech, she wanted to know how increase in the number of schools and attendance could be encouraging "when it could be shown that the amount of money available for schools was declining." Some one, she said, must suffer from this condition. Nor was she in any wise indefinite. She told of the tax dodging in Chicago; and what was even more to the point, she showed how the public domain in Chicago set aside for public school purposes would furnish an abundant revenue if it had not been sold or virtually given away. Miss Haley's line of attack bore heavily upon the plutocratic tendencies that more or less influence our educational institutions; and Mr. Harris, instead of meeting her points, evaded them with an attack upon the city from which she hailed. He called Chicago "the great storm center of the country—the place of tornado, whirlwind and fire," said it "has a morbid tenden-

cy that is always manifesting itself in trying to find something disturbing and threatening to things as they are"—a tendency amounting almost "to a hysterical mania;" and declared that "we cannot be influenced by what is going on there." In reply to this somewhat jocular tirade Miss Haley challenged Mr. Harris to debate the sanity of Chicago at a future time and an appropriate place. "If it is morbid," said she, "to look into things and see whether at bottom conditions are sound, then Chicago will not be afraid to be called a morbid city. If it is hysterical to watch not only the evidence of progress, but also to inquire into the ultimate tendency of things, then we are hysterical." Mr. Harris did not accept Miss Haley's challenge. That, however, is of no moment. It makes no difference what opinions may be held regarding Chicago hysterics. The important thing that Miss Haley did was to bring Harris's puerile boasting about school statistics into unfavorable comparison with the plutocratic conditions that threaten the independence of our free school system.

A letter from Prof. Bemis to George C. Sikes, secretary of the Chicago Transportation commission, published in the Chicago papers of the 16th, indicates that the sincerity of Chicago politicians who profess to favor a street car service for the benefit of the people rather than of the corporations, is likely to be brought to a sharp test. Prof. Bemis writes:

My contact with Tom L. Johnson and his deceased brother Albert, and some of the other street railway men associated with them, convinces me that if you can establish the fact legally that the franchises expire in a year or two, and if you can get a city council the majority of whom are prepared to do business without boodle, you can get a proposition for all you want, and a straight three-cent fare besides, although I do not at present undertake to say just who would make the proposition.

The question of expiration of franchises has reference to what is known as the 99-year claim of the Chicago street car monopoly. That question