Since, even when we admit the case of assassination, there is a large falling-off in the years of life, the question presents itself, whether this is due mainly or wholly to the arduous character of the duty which the President is called upon to perform. Of course it is impossible to answer this question from statistics: in fact, it must be admitted that the above summary does not prove the diminished viability of the class under consideration to any greater extent than to render it somewhat probable. Statistics can at the present stage do nothing more than disprove or substantiate *a priori* conclusions from physiological considerations. If we eliminate from the statistical results the probable effect of the lack of out-door recreation, as well as the lack of incentive to adopt that regimen best suited to a sedentary life, we shall probably find no such discrepancy as would justify the view that a President is liable to die from the arduous character of his duties. S. N.

THE SCHOOLMASTERS' CONVENTION AT PHILADELPHIA.

IN answer to a call issued by the heads of prominent preparatory schools in or near Philadelphia, more than one hundred teachers engaged in preparing boys for college assembled on Nov. 26 in the building of the University of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia. The address of welcome was given by Dr. Pepper, provost of the university, who laid great stress on the waste of time and energy caused by the sudden break between school and college. He said that to devise means to fill up this gap, and make the preparatory school an organic part of the education that ends in the college or university, was the object of the convention.

Professor James of the University of Pennsylvania made a strong plea for the technical education of teachers. The teacher's position should be considered as an end in itself, not as a stepping-stone to more permanent employment. In Germany this requirement was fully recognized. There, with few exceptions, the teachers have received a technical training, the result of which was to give them not only some information which they could impart to their pupils, but also some knowledge of how to impart it. They are acquainted with the history of education, know something of the long line of thought of which they form a link, are taught what their place in the existing educational system is and how they can best fill it. The one method and the best method of elevating the teaching in this country is to make teaching a real and an honorable profession. For this purpose the teachers must be trained to be teachers, and an essential part of this training is the study of educational history and systems.

Mr. MacAlister, superintendent of public schools of Philadelphia, warmly upheld Professor James's position, and testified as a man of practical experience to the value and efficiency of the study of pedagogy as a science.

At the session on Nov. 27, Professor West of Princeton college presented an admirable paper on the question, 'How to improve our classical training.' The classics have just survived a severe attack, and for the time being there is peace; but a second attack is sure to come, and the problem is to take such steps as will enable an effective answer to be made to it. To do this, we must improve the teaching of the classics. The classics are attacked because they are poorly taught. There is no method, or at least no rational one. In order to get a rational and elastic though definite method, it is necessary to consider the nature of classical study, the condition of the student, and the end to be gained. The problem of teaching the classics is a unique one: there is more in it than the language drill, more than the compliance with the requisites of a liberal education. It includes nothing less than the opening up of a new world: it is an embodiment not only of Greek and Roman history, but of the national history of Greek and Roman thought. The end of classical training is to enable the student to feel at home in this world, and to appreciate it. To do this, no doubt a certain amount of literature must be sacrificed and dissected in acquiring the technique. But that is simply preparatory: when it is over, then the real study of the classics begins. The main difficulty in realizing this method of teaching the classics is the lack of teachers who really know them. Teachers trained as teachers, and trained as classical scholars (not necessarily as philologians), would soon show the real educational value of classical study, and give the best possible answer to those who question its usefulness.

The next session was held at Haverford college, and was devoted to the discussion of the relation of the fitting schools to the colleges. The discussion was quite a general one, and included the questions of admitting to college on certificate from the heads of schools; the advisability of having a preliminary examination a year before entrance on elementary subjects; the uselessness of petty conditions, and the abuses of this method of admittance; and the necessity of recognizing the various interests of candidates in the entrance examinations. The discussion showed how generally the faults of our college system are felt by

the schoolmasters, and how anxious they are for changes to be made.

A constitution was adopted by the teachers present, and it was decided to hold quarterly meetings. The Rev. Dr. Robins was elected president, and Mr. George F. Martin, secretary.

The meeting was eminently satisfactory, and the organization has come to fill a real want in our educational system.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

THE American association for the advancement of physical education held its second annual meeting at the Adelphi academy, Brooklyn, on Nov. 26. This association was organized one year ago under the auspices of such well-known men as Professor Hitchcock of Amherst, Dr. D. A. Sargent of Harvard, Dr. Hartwell of Johns Hopkins, Mr. William Blaikie, and others. By the terms of its constitution, it consists of active members who are directly engaged in physical education, of associate members including all who are interested in the cause of physical education, and desire to be associated with the society, and of honorary members, who shall be well known as patrons of the cause of physical education. Its membership is nearly one hundred, and is constantly and largely increasing. The general interest which it has aroused is shown by the fact that delegations from various societies throughout the west, including St. Louis and Milwaukee, were present, and took an active part in the proceedings. At the opening of the session, Mr. Charles Pratt read an address of welcome, in which he said that the ten thousand teachers of New York and Brooklyn had one of the most magnificent promenades in the world, and that, if they would walk the length of the Brooklyn bridge both ways every day, their health would be much benefited. He would have every one sign a pledge that he would solemnly observe all the laws of health, and do what he could to lead others to do the same. He believes that if each individual should take proper care of himself, not only in matters of exercise, but in other respects, the work done in five hours would be of more value than that now done in ten. Prof. E. Hitchcock of Amherst college followed with a paper on 'The need of anthropometry in physical training.' From the earliest times an effort had been made to establish some foundation upon which observations could be scientifically made. Such an attempt could be traced back to India. The same was true of the Greeks. Thus we have the various systems, some regarding one foot of the height as a standard, and others the length of the hand and the vertebrae. The basis of all must be a knowledge of the human body, what it can do, its various temperaments, and how it can be kept up to the most perfect condition. The largest men are not necessarily the men who can endure the most fatigue, or who best resist disease. Into the problem many things enter, — the pedigree, including parents and grand-parents; did they live to old age, and did they die of disease or accident? what is the condition of the individual's heart? of his lungs, his eyes, his ears? It is a very difficult matter to ascertain just what a typical or ideal man should be, and therefore it is difficult to select a standard of comparison. The author thinks, however, that the height of individuals is the best basis, and would suggest a centimetre or one-half inch as the unit for charts of anthropometry. At Amherst accurate measurements are taken of each student who enters college; and these are repeated occasionally, so that now there are records of one thousand students. It is the practice at this institution to examine each man with great care, and to advise him as to the exercise which he should take. Professor Hitchcock, in closing, said that every instructor should take such measurements, and be satisfied with simply recording them. The data which we have now are very crude and incomplete, and no deductions can be made from them. We must continue our observations as opportunity offers; and, though we may not live to obtain much that is practical from them, let us nevertheless do our work accurately and well, that succeeding generations may profit from what we have done. The next paper on the programme was 'The physiology of exercise,' by E. M. Hartwell of Johns Hopkins university. Dr. Hartwell laid great stress on the point that exercise had more in view than the simple development of muscle. While this was in a sense important, it was only half the truth. Proper exercise trains the nerve-centres, the brain and the spinal cord, as well as the muscles. And this is exceedingly important, and should never be lost sight of. The following papers were read at the afternoon session: Physical training of public school children, by W. C. Joslin of Staten Island academy; Educational gymnastics, by Prof. Carl Betz of Kansas City, Mo.; German system of training teachers at the Milwaukee normal school, by C. G. Rathmann, St. Louis, Mo.; and Physical training from a medical stand-point, by A. M. Starkloff, president N. A. Turnerbund, St. Louis, Mo. Very interesting exhibitions of gymnastics were given by classes from the Brooklyn normal school of physical training, the turnvereins of New York and Brooklyn, and the Adelphi academy.