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**RECENT ARTICLES ON EDUCATION.**


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The work and progress of the public schools is discussed by U. S. Commissioner W. T. Harris, in the April number of *Harper's Magazine*. In the twenty-four years since 1870 the attendance at the public schools has increased from 7,000,000 to 13,500,000. The expenditures have increased somewhat more — namely, from \$63,000,000 to \$163,000,000 per annum, an increase from \$1.64 to \$2.47 per capita. To account for this *pro rata* increase of 50 per cent in the cost of the common schools one must allow for an increase in the length of the term and an increase of enrolment of from 17 to 20 per cent of the population. But the chief items of increase are to be found in teachers' wages and the cost of expert supervision. The remainder is due to better apparatus and more commodious school buildings.

Mr. Harris argues that great advancement in the average skill and efficiency of teachers has resulted from their professional training in normal schools. "Briefly the population is becoming urbane, the schools are becoming 'graded,' the pupils of the lowest year's work placed under one teacher, and those of the next degree of advancement under a second teacher," thus making a division of labor greatly to the advantage of the schools.

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In the April *Scribner's* Mr. Robert Grant discusses "Education" from a parental and domestic point of view. He pokes fun at the worthy American citizen who takes every opportunity to affirm our public schools the bulwarks of freedom and civilization, while he is practically certain to refrain from sending his boys to them if he can afford to get them into a private school. So long as school boards, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, are composed mainly of political aspirants, without experience in educational matters, and who seek to serve as a first or second step toward the White House, our public schools are likely to remain only pretty good so long as people with axes to grind, or, more plainly speaking, with text-books to circulate, are chosen to office, our public schools are not likely to improve.

Speaking of girls' high schools, he says, "I am confident—at least if we as a nation really do believe in obliterating class distinctions—that it won't be long before those who control the public schools recognize the value of manners more universally and the other traits which distinguish the woman of breeding from the woman who has none." When that time comes the well-to-do American woman will have no more reason

for not sending her daughters to the public schools than her sons.

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In the *Century* for April is an article on "Religious Teaching in the Public Schools," which deals with the subject from a liberal standpoint. It is by Lyman Abbott. Among other principles, he lays down the following: That the State cannot relegate the duty of public education to the church or to private enterprise; that if it is the primary right and duty of the State to give whatever education is necessary for good citizenship, it is self-evident that it is primary right and duty to give education in moral principles, and training to the moral impulses and the will; nor is it possible to give such moral instruction and training without involving something of the religious spirit, if not of religious education. This recognizes the fact that "the public school is a moral institution; that no one but persons of a profoundly moral nature have any right to appointment on the school boards or as school teachers; that moral power is a first requisite of a school teacher." A quotation appended to Dr. Abbott's article is as follows:

"A school is not made a Christian school by taking up a good deal of time in doctrinal instruction, or in devotional exercises. . . . What above all makes it a Christian school are the moral atmosphere, the general tone, the surrounding objects, the character of the teachers, the constant endeavor, the loving tact, the gentle skill, by which the light and spirit of Christianity—its lessons for the head, for the heart, for the whole character—are made to pervade and animate the whole school life of the child, just as the good parent desires they should animate his whole future life in all its manifold duties and relations as man and as citizen. This is the kind of school which a parent, anxious, as in duty bound, to give his child a thorough Christian training as possible, will naturally choose."—*Right Rev. John J. Keane, "Denominational Schools," p. 9.*

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"The Basis of Our Educational System, by James Jay Greenough, the well known author of Latin textbooks, is the title of an article in the April *Atlantic*, of which it is impossible to give the gist in a few sentences. It is thoughtful and full of sound educational maxims. He would have the ancient classics remain as the basis of our educational system, because no other branch of study contributes so fully to give mental power and breadth as these do. But he points out clearly that the old methods of studying Latin and Greek must give way to methods more in unison with the spirit of modern teaching—that other essential topics of study need not crowd the classics from the schools, but time must be so economized that every sentence of Latin and Greek translated by the student must afford him material for constant gain in thinking power.