

EDUCATION.

CONTINUING our review of the school reports, we find that our space will permit us but few statistics. The yearly cost of each pupil in Chicago is \$14.93 to \$32.54 in Boston, the average *per capita* in the high schools of the latter city being \$79.51. In some of the primary schools of Chicago there is a half-time system which is said to work perfectly for the children, but which frequently breaks down the teachers, owing to their having two classes daily of sixty pupils each, making one hundred and twenty in all! The superintendent therefore recommends half-time teachers for such schools as well. In compliance with the wishes of their board, the Chicago teachers are making great exertions to do without corporal punishment in their schools, and with "decided success," but the same difficulties with "persistently disobedient and disorderly pupils" appear here as in New York. The superintendent observes that in the grammar schools the increased amount of written work is injuring the handwriting of the children. We believe ourselves that our schools will yet have to retrace their steps on this whole question, nothing being more wonderful in the history of pedagogy than the persistence with which educational authorities ignore the distinction between childhood and youth so much insisted on by Rousseau, and cling to the belief that what is suitable for the student (as for instance this written work) is suitable also for the child. The number of women to men teachers in the Chicago grammar schools is as thirty to one, a proportion far too large, as it cannot be good for either sex to be so exclusively taught by one. Such being their numbers, however, we almost wonder they did not "strike" when the board effected a saving of twenty per cent. in its expenses, by cutting down their (not the men teachers') salaries! It is really moving to see the cheerfulness with which American citizens spend money on costly school-houses, and the equal good faith with which they scrimp the teachers, as if a good school-house without a teacher inside of it could be anything more than a body without a soul. In the grammar schools of Chicago there are seventy-five recitations each of grammar, arithmetic, and spelling, to twelve of United States history; and in the high

school historical examination, out of ten questions, four were on the late civil war. None were on general history!

The twenty-ninth semi-annual report of the superintendent of the Boston schools is peculiarly interesting, as being a history of the educational work carried on in that city for the eighteen years during which he held the office he has just resigned. Of much of this he was evidently both the originator and the promoter, and his city may well say to him in gratitude, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." His aim throughout has been to make and keep the public schools of Boston second to none, and, if possible, the first in the country. Owing to the wealth and liberality of the Boston taxpayer, he has succeeded in the former, and doubtless would have done so in the latter ambition, could he have risen earlier above the pedagogical traditions in which he probably gained his own training. For it is surprising to learn (p. 73 *et seq.*) that the primary schools of the "Athens of America" had no systematized scheme of instruction until 1863, and the grammar schools none until 1868.

In Mr. Philbrick's own candid language, "Boston cannot claim to have taken the initiative" in the matter of programmes, and yet, as we have before intimated, it is the matter the most important by far of any within the range of an educator's responsibility. So little was this understood by the Boston school committee, that when, after "a year and a half of discussion and contention," a programme was at last decided upon, "None of us then connected with the schools," says Mr. Philbrick, "fully appreciated the value and importance of that action of the board." Nor was it until *after* the adoption of this new programme that he "studied the most approved courses of study in foreign countries, where the science is vastly more advanced than it is in this country," and was "gratified to find that our course for elementary instruction is so nearly up to the standard of the best existing models. . . . We built better than we knew!"

Since Mr. Philbrick's election to office in 1856, the salaries of school officials in Boston have increased seventy-four per cent., against one hundred and twenty-five per

cent. of other city salaries. The attendance on the schools has risen ten per cent., the number of pupils has doubled, but that of the teachers has trebled, thus reducing the average number of scholars to a teacher from 54.4 to 37.6. In admitting drawing, music, and sewing,¹ and otherwise enlarging the elementary curriculum, Mr. Philbrick wisely contends that the old common-school studies have not been crowded out, as so many persons fancy, but that they have been only curtailed of some of their disproportionate time; and he further denies that the "high pressure" system of excessive tasks and unwholesome competitions exists at present to any great degree in Boston, as great efforts have been made to suppress it. There are no home lessons for the primary schools, and the boys only in the grammar schools are allowed to study at home for one hour a day. No competitive medals or other prizes are awarded, graduating diplomas having been substituted instead. The music in the primary and grammar schools is under the charge of three able masters, they themselves being under a general musical director, who also teaches the girls in the high and normal schools. We have very grave doubts whether the Boston system of changing the Do with the tone is the one which will enable the largest proportion of children to read simple music at sight after leaving school, and it is to be hoped that some other of our large cities will try with equal thoroughness the old way of regarding Do as invariably C, Ré as invariably D, etc., and let experience decide which plan is the better. We believe that in the German public schools the New England system is unknown. In the high schools the boys are drilled in military exercises and the girls in Swedish gymnastics, but "a thorough system of physical training has not as yet been attained for the Boston schools, though there exists a general recognition of gymnastics as a branch of school culture. In Vienna one hundred special teachers of gymnastics are employed in the public schools," which perhaps accounts for some of the personal beauty for which that city is famous. The number of high-school scholars has increased one hundred and seventy per cent. since 1856, that of pupils in the primary schools only fifty per

cent., though the whole number in the high schools is only five per cent. of all the schools taken together. Mr. Philbrick emphasizes what we also in these reviews have endeavored to enforce, namely, that the common school is always feeble and inefficient where high schools are wanting. He says that in Vienna, whose population exceeds that of Philadelphia, but is less than that of New York, there are sixteen high or secondary schools for boys alone, of which the apparatus of a single one cost over twenty thousand dollars. He fears that it will be a late day before America can boast such school-houses as those of that splendid metropolis, where they are built under the direction of the highest official architects and pedagogues, who after many years of experimenting have reached a type of school-room which is supposed to combine the requisites of light, ventilation, and convenience, in the highest degree. If all the grades of schools required by any city locality could be grouped round a quadrangle, and the inclosed space devoted to the play-ground, would not all the interests of beauty, use, and health be better served than by the present isolated buildings?

We are obliged to this report for calling attention to the unpleasant fact that "the great American nation is the only one whose citizens speak through their noses and not through their mouths." It is a fond delusion with our countrymen that because we have no dialect and do not drop our *h*'s, we therefore speak the English language better than the English themselves; whereas, as the report says, "no civilized people at the present day is so deficient in agreeable and finished speech as our own. . . . What we want is the *music of the phrase*, a clear, flowing and decided sound of the whole sentence," etc. But when nearly all the best educated men and women of Massachusetts say "stoopid" and "dooty" and "sooperb" for "stewpid," "dewty," and "sewperb," and when all Americans say "dawg" and "gawd" and "Bawston" for "dogg" and "godd" and "Bosston," it would seem as if something were wanted more elementary still, and this is, that the *English* pronunciation of English words according to the best authorities be insisted upon, at least in the spelling and reading classes of the public

¹ Mr. Philbrick seems inclined to dispute a statement of ours, in a previous number, to the effect that the sewing at present taught in the Boston schools is due to the quiet efforts for many years of a small knot of Boston ladies. If Mr. Philbrick will

apply to the lady who wrote a letter on the subject to Mr. John Codman, which was printed in the appendix to the Boston School Report for 1849, he will find that we are entirely in the right about the matter.

schools, and in the school and college declamations.

The report complains that the provision for examining teachers in Boston is exceptionally inadequate for a city of its size and prestige, and the manner of their dismissal seems to be as arbitrary and inconsiderate as that of their appointment. The under teachers meet semi-occasionally with the superintendent or with their own principals for "advice and instruction in teaching," and the grammar masters from time immemorial have held a monthly social meeting, at which, over a "modest supper," educational topics are discussed, and "freshness and enthusiasm" gained for the ensuing month; but the women teachers, though six times as many as the men, are not spoken of as holding any common consultations, though, if they did so, any joint decisions and suggestions that they might make to the board could not but be of great value. Mr. Philbrick holds up to the board the strength and thoroughness which the device of a head superintendent with several assistants has imparted to the New York city school system, and recommends a similar arrangement for Boston. He wishes also that "the teachers could be more encouraged by the school authorities in their efforts to inculcate good morals and manners." The latter recommendation comes none too soon, for the manners one often observes in the shops, cars, etc., of Boston, are not such as belong to persons who, in the old-fashioned phrase, have been "well brought up" in childhood. As for morals, how they are to be successfully inculcated without any reference to a moral lawgiver is a problem that has not as yet been solved for the American public-school educator, though, owing to the Roman Catholics, it is rapidly becoming the most formidable one in his path. The sexes were separated in the grammar and high schools of Boston over forty years ago, though they continue together in the primary grades. In all the lately annexed suburbs of the city, however, our indigenous system still prevails. The

evening high school also is attended by both sexes, with strange inconsistency, as it seems to us, for if there are any real objections to the co-education of the sexes, they must exist in such a school in their fullest force. Whether co-education be better for the pupils or not, there is no doubt that it is harder for the teacher, as bringing in another element of care and responsibility, and that rather than procure and pay teachers who are up to the requirements of their position in judgment and dignity, school boards are inclined to abolish it. The programme of studies in the Boston schools is not given in this report, and therefore we cannot much comment upon it. Like the national curriculum generally, however, it probably contains much too large a proportion of the disciplinary studies, *i. e.*, mathematics, physics, and grammar, to the humanitarian ones of history, literature, and the beautiful and good generally. There is too much "rule and compass" work throughout, even in the music and drawing, and memory and intellectual acuteness are developed without a corresponding development of the heart, the judgment, the character, and the taste. Notwithstanding these defects, a remarkable testimony to the public schools of Boston is to be found in the fact that whereas in 1817, with a population of forty thousand, there were but twenty-three hundred and sixty-five pupils in the public schools to forty-one hundred and thirty-two in private schools, in 1873, to a population of two hundred and fifty thousand, there were thirty-five thousand nine hundred and thirty pupils in the public schools to thirty-eight hundred and eighty-seven only in private ones. This verifies the boast of her school superintendent in the beginning of the report, that in no city in the country do all classes more patronize the public schools than in Boston. It is indeed to the glory of Massachusetts that within her borders the day schools are so noble, and that boarding schools form so slight a feature of her educational system.

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THE superintendent of the St. Louis schools, Mr. W. G. Harris, stands at the head of American school superintendents for philosophical thought and investigation on the subject of education, and his annual reports merit the most serious attention of the intelligent educator. He thus opens the one for 1872-73: "In previous reports I have discussed the questions of discipline, moral education, proper grading, and classification. In this report I desire to treat under its various aspects the question of a proper course of study for public schools, and more especially to investigate in this connection the relation of the system of higher education in this country, as carried on in colleges and universities, to that of our public-school system." We summarize his position on the latter question as follows.

Much thought, he says, has of late been expended on the question of adapting the course of study in the common schools to the actual demands upon the citizen in after life, and now the higher education is being challenged in the same interests also. It is an unfortunate fact that at present there are two systems firmly established in our land, with radically different theories as to a proper course of study. Some contend that public schools should give a semi-technical education, and avoid the purely enlightening and disciplinary studies, which should be reserved for the private academies and preparatory schools that exist for those who can afford to patronize them. According to this view, the higher education which completes itself in the colleges and universities of the country should have no organic relation whatever to the public-school system, but only to that of secondary schools supported or endowed by private wealth. Now, explains Mr. Harris, "The growth of the demands of the age on the intelligence of the individual requires the school in our time to give not only discipline but insight, information, and to some extent technical skill. The common schools have yielded to this demand, and harmoniously expanded their course of study throughout so as to adapt it to the age of the newspaper. The college has likewise yielded, but not to the same extent nor in the same way. It has introduced the ex-

pansion into the last half of its course, and by elevating its standard of admission solely in the disciplinary branches has completely broken its organic connection with the common-school system of the country. That its requirements are not in accordance with the spirit of the age nor with sound psychology is a startling proposition, but nevertheless true, if the thoughts of the profoundest psychologists and educational writers from Pestalozzi down to Froebel are to be accepted." Mr. Harris thinks that the public-school system of the country (in its best examples) is substantially the right one, and that our higher education should adapt itself to it, since to take up natural or other science only in the junior and senior years, and without previous school preparation, is far too superficial a way of entering those vast realms of modern thought and discovery. The true education, whether for culture or for business or for the professions, is that which, "whatever section of it be cut off from the beginning, furnishes the best course up to that point." The mind should grow from infancy in all its cells and "with all its windows open." Thus "there are five departments in the course of study which should be always represented from the first year in the primary school to the last year in college: nature in its two aspects of organic and inorganic; man in his three aspects of theoretical, practical, and aesthetic. While the common school represents each department in its course of study, the classical school or academy, with its mathematics, Latin, and Greek, represents but the first and third chiefly, and the second, fourth, and fifth subordinately. My conclusion has, therefore," says Mr. Harris, "been this: let the colleges and universities demand from their candidates for admission the outlines of universal history, English literature, and natural science, together with as much mathematics and slightly less Latin and Greek than now, and then change their courses so as to continue each of these departments through the first two years as required studies, after that allowing pupils to elect, although still requiring the election of a representative study from each department to entitle them to a degree."

Besides the discussion of the course of study, Mr. Harris gives an elaborate statement of his views on the co-education of the sexes. His influence has introduced co-education throughout the St. Louis schools, and no opponent of the system should in fairness omit to read the very forcible presentation of most of the important points in its favor here given.

The normal-school course in St. Louis is for two years, the first being devoted to "culture study," the last only to the review of the branches which the pupils will have to teach. Latin is required throughout. General history is studied in the first year, and American history in the second, as it should be in all schools, this being its natural sequence. There are in the St. Louis schools eight grades below the high school, each of which is arranged to occupy one year. German is taught in every grade, with the proviso merely that any child who desires to learn it must begin it when he enters school. Music and natural science are also taught in all the grades, and drawing in the first five. History, however, and to us most unaccountably in an educational scheme so otherwise judicious, is put off until the very last of the eight years of the course, and then is confined to a condensed (though highly admirable) summary of American history for three quarters, and a study of the Constitution of the United States for the fourth quarter.

The statistics presented by Mr. Harris give not only the number of pupils but their age, where they were born, and the employment of their parents. Thirty-seven per cent. of the latter are foreigners, though only six per cent. of the children were born out of the country. The normal school is exclusively for girls, and in the high school there are two fifths more girls than boys. The neglect of academic education by boys is certainly one of the grave short-comings of American education. In Chicago, after reaching the age of thirteen years, the boys who remain in school are to the girls as fourteen to nineteen, a proportion which we suspect would be found very common throughout the United States, owing to the early age at which many boys are expected to begin to get their living, while their sisters are *not* expected to do likewise at any age. If the daughters of the trading and working classes from the age of eighteen could relieve the family purse by their earnings, to the extent of their board and clothing

merely, it is probable their brothers could stay a longer time at their books, and thus the American voter be better prepared for his political and social responsibilities.

The St. Louis School Board has lately established a kindergarten, as, unlike many superintendents, Mr. Harris encourages the sending of children to school under seven years of age. In school, he says, the little child can secure the companionship he hungers after with less danger to himself than on the street. The training in good habits which he gets in a good primary school or kindergarten are of priceless value to the community, and these habits can be molded far better between the ages of three and six than between those of six and nine. Besides this, it is well known that the average attendance of the children of the poorest classes is less than three years when begun at six or seven years of age, whereas, if they were taken into school at four years of age, the period of attendance would be lengthened to five years. Mr. Harris advocates frequent re-classification in order to do justice to bright scholars and to avoid discouraging slow ones. This principle of "sifting up instead of sifting down" can hardly be too much commended for our graded schools, where the practice too generally is to keep a class as much as possible on one level, and to "drop" those who do not equal the fixed standard. Mr. Harris's plan has further the advantage of keeping the classes of the upper or highest paid teachers full with the promoted scholars, and of not overcrowding those of the under teachers with degraded ones.

The astonishing growth of the public-school system in St. Louis, under Mr. Harris's régime, appears from the fact that in 1862 there were seventy-six teachers, and in 1873 six hundred and thirteen. The place it fills in that city may be inferred from its large and growing public-school library, the reading-room of which is open all days in the week, and directly connected with which are the following organizations: the Art, the Medical, the Historical, and the Microscopical Societies of St. Louis, the St. Louis Academy of Science, an institute of architects, an engineers' club, and a local steam engineer's association.

The St. Louis teachers are required to meet on the second Saturday of each month during the scholastic year at ten o'clock A. M., for the purpose of promoting the interests of the schools by the discussion of matters pertaining to the profession of

teaching generally. On the Wednesday preceding this meeting, the principals of the schools are required to meet the superintendent for similar objects. The principals examine as often as practicable the schools of the assistants under them, but they have also to hear not more than four nor less than two recitations daily themselves. This is not the case in Boston, nor, it may be remembered, in Brooklyn, and the superintendent of the latter city thinks that the boys especially suffer from the absence of teaching by the head master. The principals are allowed much freedom in the internal government of their schools, provided their methods are not inconsistent with the general regulations of the board. There has never been any reading of the Bible or other religious exercise in the St. Louis schools since their foundation, and to this the president of the board partly ascribes their popularity with all classes of citizens. Nor have "partisan politics ever developed in the board to such a degree as to influence even slightly the direction of the schools." Only white males, however, vote for officers of the School Board. "The mildness of their discipline" the president gives as another cause of the popularity of the St. Louis schools, for though corporal punishment has not been abolished in them, the teachers who most advantageously do without it, other things being equal, are preferred for promotion. A final reason for the success of the schools is to be found, he says, "in the branches intended directly to refine the taste and increase the general information, that have been added to the three R's, as music, drawing, and natural science."

— A singular text-book, which belongs in the category with books on etiquette, on the way to be successful, on ready making of appropriate speeches, on correspondence, etc., is Mr. Gow's *Good Morals and Gentle Manners*.¹ According to his plan there are three divisions of human duties, which belong to the moral law, the municipal law, and the social law, respectively, and this handbook shows how all are to be observed. The faithful student will learn to avoid homicide, profanity, the duel, white lies and black, slander, intemperance, plagiarism or literary theft, amusements of doubtful propriety, chapped hands, tight lacing, with which even boys are charged, whispering in

¹ *Good Morals and Gentle Manners*. For Schools and Families. By ALEX. M. GOW, A. M. New York and Cincinnati: Wilson, Hinkle, & Co. 1875.

company, national vanity, uncleanness in church, coughing and spitting at table, etc., etc. His zeal will be encouraged by appropriate anecdotes, and running under every page the teacher will find suggestive questions and commands, such as "Repeat the anecdote;" "What is the moral of this anecdote?" "Why should a gentleman not come to his meals without his coat?" "What is the napkin for?" "Why not use the handkerchief?" "What does whispering in church arise from?" "Why is gambling wrong?" "Why should the moral sentiment of the school despise and condemn the tattler?" "Is it lawful to buy my neighbor's ox?" They would seem to cover almost every case possible to human experience. The defect of such a book as this is not that some possible human actions are omitted, but that it is taken for granted that education can be accomplished by text-books. It is the great fault of our public-school system that the pupil is taught, not to think, but to apply certain rules, to be found on such or such a page of his arithmetic, or his *Good Morals and Gentle Manners*, and that he cannot be blamed if the case in question does not come under the rules.

This little volume of course gives wise and excellent instruction, but as to its method we have nothing but blame.

— The notice of the Ladies' Society for the Encouragement of Studies at Home, which we printed in the September number of *The Atlantic*, has attracted wide attention in the very quarters where it was most desirable that its information should be received, and we have had the pleasure of answering a large number of communications from women in many States asking for more direct means of obtaining information than had been supplied by our first writing. The ladies who preside over this excellent enterprise have been scrupulous in the avoidance of giving publicity to their names, preferring to work quietly and effectively, and as far as might be out of the region of mere display; so that it seemed desirable, while opening wider opportunities for membership in the society, not to trench upon the privacy which the managers had reserved to themselves. In view, however, of the frequent demands of which we have spoken, we are authorized to say that all who wish to gain further and more particular information may address themselves directly to the Secretary of the Society for Study at Home, 9 Park Street, Boston, Mass.