

T H E S I S.

Subject, Dr. Harris and his Work.

Name, May Stark.

Among the names of the most prominent educators of the present time, both in this country and in Europe, we find the name of William T. Harris. He was born at South Killingly, Conn. Sept. 10, 1835. He attended Phillip's Andover Academy for a time, and in 1854 entered Yale College.

Three years later he became a teacher in the St. Louis Public Schools, of which schools he became the superintendent in 1867 and he held this position until 1880. It was Dr. Harris's reports from these schools that first made him famous.

He was one of the founders of the Philosophical Society of St. Louis, which was established in 1866. The following year he founded the "Journal of Speculative Philosophy." This was the first journal of its kind published in the English language. Dr. Harris has since edited

this journal and has published in it many translations and original articles on philosophical questions.

Among the numerous translations that have been printed in this journal is found the "Philosophy of Education" by Rosenkranz. This was first printed in the "Journal of Speculation" but it has since been reprinted in a separate volume. This book is edited by Dr. Harris and in the editor's preface he says, "it is believed that this book will meet the want that is widely felt for a thorough-going Philosophy of Education." Also that "it furnishes the key to many problems discussed by the educational reformers from Comenius to Herbert Spencer."

Dr. Harris has written on philosophical and sociological subjects for different magazines e.g. The Forum, The Atlantic Month

ly, and The North American Review.

In 1875 he was the president of the National Educational Association. This association is a great benefit to teachers as they become enthused and inspired by coming in contact with other teachers. They receive aid from essays and papers, from debates and discussions, from personal conversation with and observation of fellow members of the convention, from eminent men, and from observing the country in which the convention is held.

Dr. Harris was the representative of the United States bureau of education at the International convention of education at Brussels in 1880. His present home is in Concord Mass. and he is an active member of the Concord School of Philosophy. He edits Appleton's International Educational Series.

In 1889 Dr. Harris was appointed United States Commissioner of Education by Pres. Harrison. He has kept his situation during the succeeding administrations by the wish of the people.

The Commissioner of Education is at the head of the Bureau of Education, whose duty is to collect statistics and facts concerning the condition and progress of education in the different states and territories, and to send out information about the organization and management of schools, school systems, and methods of teaching. Its reports are of great value to those interested in educational affairs. Those sent out by Dr. Harris are widely sought for and read both in the United States and Europe.

Dr. Harris is a follower of the Hegelian Philosophy "which affirms the absolute identity of thought and being and regards the uni-

verse as the self development of the absolute or universal divine idea, the primal elements being the conceptions of being and nothing, the two giving rise to and finding their unity in the higher conception of becoming. Hegel is a German philosopher who lived in the latter part of the eighteenth and the earlier part of the nineteenth centuries. In 1890 Dr. Harris published the *Logic of Hegel*. The following year he published the *Spiritual Sense of Dante's Divina Commedia*.

In an article on "Art and Literature in the Schools" Dr. Harris advocates the teaching of the highest types of them in the elementary schools. By this he does not mean that children can be taught to create such a type but they can be shown how to appreciate its motives and thus be put in a position to be benefited by it all through life. For as he says, "Once a

taste is formed for the works of a great author, a culture is begun that will go on through life." From the art and literature of a people we learn to what degree of civilization they have attained. Next to religion these are the chief means by which the civilization is preserved, or as Dr. Harris expresses it, "Art and literature preserve for us the precious moments, the elevated insights of seers who are, next to the religious seers, the greatest teachers of the human race"

By reason of the great importance of the study of natural science, Dr. Harris favors the beginning of the study of it quite early in school.

Dr. Harris is a representative of the old psychology which is distinguished from the new in that the new occupies itself with the investigations of physiological psychology and child study. He is not opposed to the results of the new psychology but

accepts them. Nevertheless he does this with critical care. While he is hospitable towards Herbartian views of pedagogy, he does not believe in the Herbartian psychology and has written very extensively in the different school journals setting forth his views on the questions involved. He thinks the Herbartian psychology is defective in its doctrine of the will. The papers which he has read at the various educational conventions, concerning these discussions, have been the cause of very earnest and lively debate, so that the views of Dr. Harris and his opponents have become interesting subjects of conversation in pedagogical circles. Things have been in this situation for many years and promise to be the same for an indefinite length of time.

Although Dr. Harris is over sixty years of age, he still holds his position

as Commissioner of Education and continues to write many interesting and valuable articles for the different journals and magazines.

Among some of his different writings we find these thoughts; "Education begins when man puts aside what is familiar and customary with him and puts on the new and strange - that is to say, begins his self-estrangement." "Education gives directive power - the power to combine things, and the power to combine men." "Education lifts us to the contemplation of the universal in each individual."

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