

Journal of Education.

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WITHIN a few weeks each School in the Province will be supplied with a copy of the authorized COURSE OF STUDY for Common Schools. The Course will be brought out in a form adapted for preservation and convenient reference in connection with the ordinary School register. It will be accompanied, in addition to directions to teachers, with brief explanations intended to remove certain misconceptions which have prevailed regarding its scope and object. Meantime, in reference to the alleged impracticability of a uniform Course of Study in miscellaneous Schools, we would refer our readers to the following extract from the late report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Michigan:—

"Prominent among the difficulties of ordinary School work is the lack of a proper system of grading, classification, and course of study.

"This defect is one of the most glaring in the management of rural Schools. It involves a serious waste of time on the part of both teachers and pupils, leads to a desultory kind of work which is of little comparative value, tends to lessen the ambition of pupils by a repetition of the same work, with the advent of each new teacher, begets an unsymmetrical development of the faculties, and leaves the School at the end of each term without a clearly outlined and permanent character. The introduction of a proper classification and Course of Study would remedy, or at least lessen, many of the other evils to which these Schools are subject. It would do much toward correcting the irregular attendance of pupils, aid in securing uniformity of text books, check the tendency to frequent changes of teachers by rendering the teachers more efficient, furnish a healthful stimulus to progress on the part of pupils, and by affording a well defined plan of work, the School would cease to be without certain and continuous character, depending wholly on the kind of teacher in charge, but would become an organic, definite, and progressional educational power of which any community might be proud. Such a School would inspire both parents and children with a confidence in its management, and this confidence would assume tangible form in further efforts for its improvement.

"Is the adoption, then, of such a course of instruction feasible in the district Schools? Can one be adapted to the wants of the smaller districts, with all grades of pupils and only a single teacher? In short, is it practicable in every School? All will agree, I think, that a Course of Study based on the laws of mental development arranged in accordance with the natural order of mental growth, is as essential for the youngest pupils as for those of more mature years. A natural co-ordination and sequence of studies is as desirable in a rural School as in any other, and if this can be obtained these schools will take a long stride in the way of progress. That this can be secured to them I have no doubt. It is true that a Course of Study for these Schools would need to be more flexible than for the larger Schools, with their different departments and full corps of teachers, though in them even I think greater flexibility would be a benefit; but the same general principles of classification that have made these Schools so efficient, with proper modifications, could apply here with equally profitable results. The different ages and grades of pupils in the same School with its single teacher offer no inseparable obstacles; in fact the necessity for right organization becomes all the more imperative."

THE progress made towards introducing Industrial Drawing into all the Schools of the Province, as a part of their regular programme, is to say the least, encouraging. For the past three years the students in attendance at the Provincial Normal School have received systematic instruction in this important branch. The taste and skill thus acquired have been carried into hundreds of Schools, and reproduced in thousands of children, to the advantage of all other kinds of school work, and to the permanent benefit of the country. With a wise discernment of the educational needs of the hour, the School Commissioners of the City of Halifax have provided a six months' course of instruction in the elements of Drawing for all the teachers in their employment. This opportunity the teachers have embraced with great enthusiasm. Even at this early period the seed is developing into

fruit, while before another year is gone all our Metropolitan Schools will be in charge of teachers qualified to do for others what is now being done for themselves. We must not omit to state that the Corporation of the town of Dartmouth, in the interests of its schools and teachers, is sharing with Halifax the advantage and the burden of the arrangement to which we have referred.

Meanwhile all over the Province teachers are earnestly applying themselves to *self-culture* in what will be soon regarded in Nova Scotia, as it already is in other countries, an *essential* branch of school instruction. Supervised study and practice in the principles of drawing are desirable for those who are to teach others to understand and apply those principles, yet what is being done by many teachers in the shape of private effort is in most cases the best thing possible under the circumstances. Certainly it is immeasurably preferable to doing nothing. In several schools we have had gratifying evidence of the valuable results of such effort. The old idea that a comprehension of the principles of drawing and their reduction to practice require a rare and special gift, is pretty effectually exploded. If it lingered in the minds of any of the two hundred and fifty teachers who listened to the addresses of Walter Smith, at our last Provincial Association, it must have then received its death blow. To the question, who is to teach drawing in the public schools? that eminent master of the subject returned the only rational reply, viz: "There can be no special teachers of drawing as a separate subject, any more than of writing or arithmetic as special subjects; but the general teachers must learn and teach elementary drawing to the children in the same way they learn and teach other subjects. If," he added, "elementary drawing were either an abstruse subject, or as difficult of acquisition as a new language, it would seem something like a hardship that teachers whose daily labors are so great should be expected to increase their labors, and to sacrifice their leisure to learn this new subject. But it has been found in Europe that a valuable and sufficient power of drawing can be acquired by teachers who have the desire to learn in a comparatively short time, and without any very great sacrifice of their leisure or their patience."

Another notion from which the fog has lifted, and which is now clearly seen to be a delusion, is that drawing is a mere accomplishment, of some æsthetic value certainly, but of no economic or educational utility whatever. The most civilized nations of the world are now recognizing it as the handmaid of all the industrial arts, while leading educators justly claim a prominent place in every scientifically constructed curriculum for that study which "stimulates observation by teaching the eye to perceive, and the hand to reproduce."

We have expressed doubts as to whether we have yet attained perfection in our mode of encouraging intermediate education. Be this as it may, it is pleasing to observe signs of renewed life and vigor in several of the County academies. New buildings and improved appliances at Sydney, Baddeck and Annapolis mark the progress of the past few years. The newly recognized institutions at Kentville, Windsor and Antigonish have already given a sensible impetus to the good cause. Negotiations are in progress, under law, which we hope will result in extending the benefits of the Halifax High School to the youth of the entire county. While without positive information, we write with the full assurance that the Yarmouth Seminary, more distinguished in the past for the quality than the quantity of its work, is about to take its place among the public educational institutions of the country.