

For the REVIEW.]

## Education in the United States.

A Pictou lady, who has been a very successful teacher in the United States for several years, on being asked her impressions of their schools, replied thus: "What do I think is the difference between the common school educational systems of the United States and Canada? I do not consider myself qualified to speak of the comparative values of the systems of the two countries, but judging by my knowledge of the educational systems of several of the provinces and the States, I should say that the education given by the States is more practical than that given by the provinces.

"In general, what the American child knows, he *knows* he knows; what the Canadian child knows, he often does not know whether he knows or not. My experience of American common school text-books, convinces me that while they do not go to such depths as Canadian common school text-books, the unutterable depths of small print, exceptions and variations,—1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc., followed by or interspersed with (a), (b), (c), (d), etc., indefinitely, that lie between the thin, treacherous surface of a line or two of large print at the top of a page, they nevertheless furnish the pupils with a general, practical knowledge of the subjects presented. Let me try to illustrate: I go to the board and sketch, with a few rapid strokes, the outline of a cow standing at ease in the most natural position—not a stroke of shading, no surrounding objects. It is simple, plain; the pupils would recognize the creature anywhere. Now suppose that instead of doing this I make an elaborate drawing of the same animal, giving as great a multitude of details as a camera, and all with equal prominence; or suppose, in my anxiety for particulars I fail to emphasize the characteristic points, my pupils will either have their attention dissipated by the many things, or they will have a hazy contorted idea of the object which I am endeavoring to represent. The simple drawing would in several respects represent my impression of the States' system; the more elaborate design—the Canadian system.

"In their results they impress me something like this: A Canadian and an American boy are sent into a garden to pick fruit. The Canadian boy does his work thoroughly—picking every berry deformed or green, and sells for a low figure. The American boy discriminates in favor of the largest and best fruit, fills his basket soonest and gets the high price. The American has the better idea of perspective—of relative values.

"The foregoing is in a general way my impression of the respective systems and results. My experience of the United States school system has been of the energetic, practical west, where in my opinion the methods are superior in many respects to the more precise, sit-still, grow-tired methods of the Eastern States."

Nux.

## Academic Diplomas.

[Read before the N. S. Provincial Association by Prin. Geo. J. Miller.]

An academic diploma would be a document granted by an academy to pupils who should attend for a specified term, and who should, at the expiration of such term, succeed in passing an examination in the subjects embraced in the academic course of study, the range of which would be under the control of the proper authorities, as also the length of term.

We have already, in the course of study for academies, a four years' programme, but how many of our pupils take the full course? I think I am within the mark when I say that the majority do not complete the third year course. Let us examine a little. The pupils who attend our academies may be classified into three groups. First, those who attend because the academy is the best school, simply to obtain a good, sound, every-day education. Second, those who are fitting themselves for license to teach; and third, those who are preparing to enter college. Of the first class, few or none will go farther than the end of the second year. By that time they have, or think they have, acquired a sufficient education for the purposes of ordinary life. It is time to begin doing something for a living. There is, moreover, no inducement for them to remain longer. They will not be in any better position to solve life's problem if they stay two years longer. Public opinion possesses no criterion by which to judge them. The merchant or the mechanic, or whoever it may be, will not place a higher value on their services. They have absolutely nothing to show for it. It is clearly to them a waste of precious time, and so they drop out, one by one, into the great tide of humanity, and the school-room knoweth them no more forever. They launch their frail barks upon life's rough billow and are lost to our view. We do not know how they prosper, but we do know that they would have steered better and made more progress if they had tarried a little longer and taken aboard a little more ballast. Then we have those who are studying for license. Will any of this class take the full course? Not one. They have, in their own estimation, quite a sufficiency of subjects to occupy all their time and attention, without periling their prospects of success by devoting any of it to branches, which