

## \* Special Papers. \*

## A COMPARISON.

## DRAWING IN ONTARIO AND UNITED STATES.

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THE meeting in Toronto, last summer, of the National Educational Association, together with the excellent exhibit of school work, gave Ontario teachers some opportunity to measure themselves beside their cousins from the south, and to compare our work with theirs. While it seemed generally conceded that Canadian educators had not been lagging far behind we shall lose our share of the benefits of the meeting if we fail to note and imitate matters in which they evidently excel us. With the simple motive of trying to see where we stand, or which way we are travelling in the teaching of drawing and kindred subjects, the following comparison has been made. In considering the subject, however, it must be constantly borne in mind that drawing has been a regular school study during a much longer time in the United States than in Ontario; hence much more may reasonably be expected there than here. At the same time the highest wisdom is shown in profiting by the experience of others.

1. In Ontario the aims, theoretically, have been: (a) the training of the eye, comparison, (b) the training of the hand, (c) the cultivation of taste, (d) the development of power to produce industrial designs. In practice it is feared that much of this has never come in sight, but that the power to copy drawings has been the beginning and the end.

United States, educators seem to have had all these good purposes in view, giving perhaps less attention to the mechanical side of the subject, but laying infinitely more stress upon the development of drawing as a means of expression. This, the power to tell what one sees by outline drawings, seems by far the most important purpose of all in teaching drawing in elementary schools.

2. With broader and apparently more clearly defined aims and much longer time to work out plans, they have been able to produce a much more complete system than we have as yet obtained. In Ontario the vast majority of the regular teachers have not had proper training in this subject. They may be said to have learned their drawing from books or from those who learned it from books. In other words, the majority of those who teach drawing in the elementary schools have acquired all the knowledge and skill they possess simply by copying somebody's lines. As a natural result this is very largely the kind of drawing taught. It follows that the only power developed by drawing, in a large percentage of Ontario children, is the power to imitate lines, or to reproduce lines that have been drawn so often that memory can hold up the copy. A small number acquire more than that because they have been specially endowed with the faculty of perceiving, conceiving and reproducing form. Considerable opportunity of observing has led the writer to the conclusion that ninety per

cent. of our pupils, after taking drawing lessons regularly for five or six years, are unable to represent the simplest object placed before them. They cannot see the prominent lines, the relations and proportions of parts. Let some one see for them, and make the drawing, they can copy it with considerable accuracy.

In the United States, on the other hand, at least in all the more progressive towns and cities, they aim at correlating modelling in clay, drawing, coloring, number, geography, natural science, etc. When the children study a sphere or an apple, a cone or a pear, a cylinder or a squirrel, they make a model of it in clay to express their conception of the form, then they draw the outline to show how that is seen; finally in many cases the drawing is colored with only the object to imitate. These methods of educating the powers of perception and expression are begun in our Kindergarten classes but they seem to have been thought too difficult for the higher grades. It is more than probable that the little girl had had some of this kind of training who accounted for her skill in making pictures by saying: "Oh! I just think a think and put a mark around it." Children whose study of drawing has been limited to copying lines cannot think a form about which to put a mark.

3. Perhaps the greatest advantage our cousins have over us is in their carefully graded course of study in form and drawing. One publishing and supply company, the Prangs, Boston, have made this a specialty during thirty years and have produced a systematic course, pronounced by experts the best in the world. The work for the second year grows out of, and depends upon that of the first year. While the course for one year accomplishes something definite and complete in itself, it is a designed preparation for what is to follow. It requires but little consideration to see that these conditions are as necessary in the study of drawing as in a course in arithmetic or grammar.

The numerous excellent exhibits of drawings, form and color work at the international meeting were nearly all produced from that system or from some adaptation of it. Several of these exhibits gave teachers who studied them a clear idea of a course in these related subjects extending over twelve or fifteen years. The only Ontario city that showed a good rational course in drawing was Hamilton, perhaps the only city that has yet adopted the Prang system.

4. In mechanical drawing, taken up by our more advanced classes, we probably excel our neighbors. Many Ontario schools can show excellent work in perspective, practical geometry, machine drawing and industrial designing. This is the result of two important causes: first, those who teach these subjects have usually been pretty well trained; second, courses of work are much better arranged and more clearly defined than for the freehand work. When, however, this work is not well done the time is worse than wasted. If, in the first three kinds, the pupils are not required to work out problems for themselves, and if in the last they blindly strive to imitate other designs without even a suspicion that there are principles to be known and constantly ob-

served, nothing can be gained and much must be lost.

## Primary Department.

## NOVELTY CLASS-ROOMS.

ARNOLD ALCOTT.

"THE truest end of life is to know the life that never ends." With God and his love in the heart this bright new year, with all its responsibilities and seasons of shade, may prove one of the most satisfactory if well-spent. These thoughts came into my mind and led me, while considering an article for the Primary Department, to conclude (especially as I thought of last year's intentions) that instead of making the usual New Year resolutions, I would take the following motto for the year, "Be strong and of a good courage, be not dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

The foregoing thoughts consequently suggested to me that a description of some unique and novel ideas, from common-sense, cheery class-rooms, would be more helpful and agreeable to those interested in this department than the stereotyped yet good resolves to do better in this and in that particular branch of professional work.

A sheaf or two from the brightest and ripest corner of the vineyard must inspire and give confidence to all who see and hear.

Now to come to the point—On the black-board for homework were written the following exercises:

1. Observe the moon and make drawings of it.

2. Describe the Amazon basin and the land surrounding it.

A weather record was kept, the number of rainy days in the month, etc. On the monthly calendar in the Kindergarten, as each school day was over, a circular piece of paper was pasted over the date. Then at the end of the month, pupils could tell how many school-days there had been, for the Saturdays and Sundays were not covered. So an idea of time was being developed.

In one school, nature studies received very particular attention, a record being kept of the number of flowers which had been found by the pupils, with the dates when found. Great pleasure was taken in the first flower of the season. Collections of leaves were made, these were drawn, colored, cut out in paper, felt, etc., and what is most remarkable is that very accurate copies were cut by the pupils without a drawing being first made. Think of the accuracy of perception and of execution, in being able to take a sheet of paper and a pair of scissors and to make a tolerably accurate copy of a leaf, such as the maple.

Some schools have splendid collections of grains, stones, Canadian woods, etc.

During a conversation with some teachers about the preparation of work for their pupils, such as the ruling of paper in a certain style, the drawing of diagrams for maps, I learned that much co-operation existed between senior and junior grades.

The senior pupils prepared a great deal of the work for those a few grades below them.