

# School Notes.

## The Value of Art Education.

"When Napoleon decreed that every child in the schools of France should be taught to draw, he gave such an impetus to the artistic life of France that, in this respect, no nation has since approached them."

It would scarcely be possible, in the space allotted, to review the history of art education in the public schools nor to present an argument for the introduction or retention of drawing; nor would it be necessary; for drawing as a part of public school education, has become so engrafted into the system that the school which does not offer in its curriculum some kind of systematic art instruction is an exception and is open to the criticism of being lacking in its duty and still worse to that dreaded opprobrium of being "behind the times."

Are there direct advantages to be derived from a systematic drawing course? Beginning with the Primary Grades, the child is lead unconsciously to follow the principles which he will study consciously and definitely in higher grades. He is lead to reason things out for himself and thus becomes a happy, thinking, reasoning pupil with a capacity of understanding his work and enjoying it. Drawing deals with life in the most fascinating way—the life of the child and his friends; the animals and birds; the flowers and toys; the days and the folks of his happy world. The tools used are the tools he loves; the brush, the scissors, the chalk and the pencil.

In the Grammar and Intermediate grades definite principles are presented. The pupil learns why certain colors and forms properly combined, produce beauty, and he learns to express this with brush and pencil. He learns something of the history of art, and thus comes to know how great a factor it is and has been in the life and development of mankind.

If the mission of art were no higher than to lead the child to see "beauty in common things"—in the sunset, in the flowers and grasses, in his daily surroundings, it would indeed be high. But the great purpose of this work is to lead him to see beauty in some phase of his environment. His insight is deepened, and his ideals shaped by associating what he himself sees with what others have seen and expressed in pictures and in literature. His ambition is stimulated and he is prepared for the higher enjoyments of life.

But we cannot "make bricks without straw," so we must ask for the cooperation of the parent in the matter of materials. We trust that the added enjoyment in his daily work and the benefit received may more than compensate for this slight expenditure.

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