ANY ONE WHO CAN LEARN TO WRITE CAN LEARN TO DRAW

and, as writing is not taught to those only who are destined to become authors, but as forming an essential part of general education, so is drawing equally important to others besides professional artists. To write—to draw a form or figure that shall be recognized as the representative of a letter or word, is one thing; and to be able to design, draw, or write such forms, upon principles of grace and accuracy—to understand the Art of writing—is another. Thus it is also with Drawing, another mode of expressing ourselves, not less useful or necessary than that by letters.
or words. To draw a horse, that shall not be mistaken for a man, is one step; but to draw a horse, with all his just proportions and developments, movement and expression, is an Art to be acquired. Any one can make something on paper to look like a tree, a cottage, a road, a brook, or a mountain; but Art goes farther, investing nature with charms often more impressive than the reality, even to the comprehension of the most simple-minded cow-boy, who may have gone that road, and waded that brook a thousand times, unconscious of the beauty that surrounded him, until thus developed to his intelligence and appreciation by the hand of art.

Who has ever hesitated to teach a child to write, because it was not intended that he should be an author? How many regard the art of Drawing as being of no practical importance, as a branch of education, to any but professional artists; and consider it, in its most favorable light, as a mere accomplishment—a pursuit only for the man of leisure? The resources of our schools are often exhausted in “finishing” our youth with “every accomplishment;” laid on so lightly, that, for all real and practical purposes of after-life, they are as valueless to the possessor as to society. Smatterings of languages, living and dead, are heaped upon them, while the great, universal language, the language of Design, is forgotten; or only thought of in the production of some huge “castle and ruins, with a man and a boy with a stick; and a dog”—painted by the teacher, under the scholar’s direction, to hang in the parlor, as the veritable, first, and last, and only production, of the latter: who at once acquires, therefrom, an oracular authority in all matters connected with the Fine Arts, and leaves admiring friends in wonder, at what “he might have done, had he not given it up.” To such, it may be said, “You have never begun.”

It is not only as a beautiful accomplishment, or a source of amusement for leisure moments, that the art of Drawing should be cultivated. It has its practical uses, in every occupation of life. It opens to all inexhaustible sources of utility, as well as pleasure; practises the eye to observe, and the hand to record, the ever-varying beauty with which nature abounds, and spreads a charm around every object of God’s beautiful creation, unfelt and unknown to those who have failed or neglected its cultivation. It does more: it gives strength to the arm of the mechanic, and taste and skill to the producer, not only of the embellishments, but actual necessities of life. From the anvil of the smith and the workbench of the joiner, to the manufacturer of the most costly productions of ornamental art, it is ever at hand with its powerful aid, in strengthening invention and execution, and qualifying the mind and hand to design and produce whatever the wants or the tastes of society may require.
INTRODUCTION.

Many are deterred from attempting the art of Drawing, from an idea that they lack capacity, or, what the world calls genius. But have they ever made the attempt? Let them recall to mind their first steps in knowledge of every kind, and judge not unfairly of their capacity, until they have tried this also. Before they knew their A, B, C, they could tell a man from a dog, by the picture. The impressions of form are the first made on the infant mind; and were it taught, betimes, or even encouraged to trace these impressions, there would be fewer incapable of expressing the language of Design. The untaught savage thus records the story of his battles; as the traditions of his fathers have come down to him from generation to generation. He directs the traveller on his way, by marks in the sand; tells him, by his rude outline, of mountains and rivers to be passed; and no one can mistake his meaning. Who is there, in civilized life, that may have been familiar with works of art from childhood, that can not do this? If he can, he can do more. He possesses the germ within him, and needs only proper cultivation, for its successful development.

As in other arts and studies, all can not expect to be equally perfect, so all can not expect to rival the master-spirits in the arts of Design. The work of an artist is that of a lifetime of arduous toil and study. Of the thousands who delight themselves and their friends in music, how few have composed an opera, or even achieved the composition of a single air? Yet, what would the world lose, were none to attempt the cultivation of this refined and charming accomplishment, but those who devoted themselves exclusively to its pursuit! Were music neglected as a study by all except those who make it the business of their lives, even they would find few to admire and sympathize with them, in their greatest productions, for want of taste and understanding.

In the elementary portions of this work, the smile of the professional artist may be moved, when he finds the author dwelling on what some may think trifles, and giving instruction in the methods of sharpening a pencil and making a pen. But let him remember the day that such instruction might have helped even him. When the pupil in Drawing has attained a proficiency to place him in the position of an artist, his course of study will require a direction beyond the means of these pages to afford him. This he must obtain elsewhere, and pursue, with that fixed determination and singleness of purpose, by which excellence is only to be achieved; and he will find that, could all that he requires be placed at once within his reach, it would be, in a measure, valueless, for want of that strength to appreciate and appropriate such advantages, which is best acquired by patient search and progressive attainment. Short-cuts and easy roads to
knowledge give but little real aid to him who has a long and arduous journey to pursue; though it is scarcely worth while to hazard an experiment, by which the spirit may be broken down with toil, in a path into which we occasionally diverge, as a recreation, or an accessory to other pursuits.

From the delight, as well as profit, that awaits them, all may be safely invited and tempted to the study of Drawing. They may find difficulties; but they will find pleasures, also, of the richest kind. They will find flowers blooming along their way, and fascinating enticement at every step: nature unfolding her ample volumes, and displaying combinations of beauty and delight, beyond the power of words to tell them of. It may be theirs, to record the ever-changing pictures of earth and heaven; to give them body and form, in which others, less favored than themselves, may participate through them: theirs, to preserve the image of some cherished object long after it has ceased, in its reality, to exist—or, perhaps, to call forth some priceless treasure from the world of poetry and thought.

To those who have in view more than mere pleasure and amusement in the pursuit of the art of Drawing, may be fairly promised advantages which they will surely realize. Most of the difficulties constantly experienced by artificers, in the execution of their handiwork, will be obviated, when the hand that executes can design. Let our mechanics have their apprentices instructed in Drawing, and the effects will be soon evident in their workshops, for the arm of the boy will thereby become nerved with the strength of the man; and masters will themselves be emancipated from dependence upon foreign inventions, that are rarely adapted to the wants, tastes, and habits of our people. Let these wants be supplied by articles more useful and equally ornamental of home production. Let them learn to value and use rightly their own strength, and their reward will follow.

The manufacturers of Europe are drawing closer and closer the connexion between the artist and the workman. At first, they borrowed aid; now they are acquiring knowledge for themselves. For the promotion of this object, schools have been long established on the continent, under government protection and support; so much importance is attached to their existence, as a measure of national policy. The influence of these schools was so strongly felt in England, to the detriment of English industrial art, that it became a subject of alarm to her statesmen. All the capital, energy, and strength, the superiority in material and mechanical facilities of England, could not contend against the higher excellence of her foreign rivals. As the voice of one man, her mechanics and manufacturers confessed the truth, and demanded
protection from the government—not by tariffs, but by education. Her legislators saw the evil, and at once applied the remedy, by the establishment of Government Schools of Design. These have been attended with such beneficial results, that there is now scarcely a manufacturing town in England that has not claimed, and shared, the advantages of provincial branches, and the manufacturing interests of the continent have been so obviously affected thereby, as to demand increased facilities of education in Design, which has been consequently extended, as well by private and practical combinations, as by government patronage and support—not only in the lyceums and institutions for advanced education, but also in provincial and elementary schools. Our mechanics can and must do for themselves what our state and general governments have hitherto shown such indifference in undertaking for the promotion of the vast national interests involved in the perfection of our systems of popular education.

While foreign arts and manufactures have inundated our markets, to the detriment of our own enterprising mechanics, and politicians have convulsed the land with schemes and plans, and measures of protection, all seem to have lost sight of one of the great and primary causes of the evil—the want of artistic education among our workmen. They are taught to read and write, to hammer and to saw; but to design—the first motive, the very genius of all arts—is utterly neglected. While it is so, we must compete with the old world, especially in the production of articles of taste, on most unfavorable grounds. The spirit of independence, that will one day cover the western continent, seems not, as yet, to have entered our workshops. We are, in this respect, comparatively, still a colony of Europe; borrowing and adapting, but doing nothing for ourselves; waiting for every novelty to cross the seas, to imitate it—creating wants by reproduction, and burdening society with anti-American tastes and caprices, instead of supplying them with objects no less useful for being beautiful. A few imported pattern-books, of little value, because not adapted to our purposes, constitute the resources in design, of most of our mechanics. Require them to make something to suit a given purpose, that shall be at the same time ornamental, and you ask an impossibility. Even if the workman may have a vague idea in his mind of what is wanted, he can not give it form: perhaps he may have the spirit to make the attempt, but he can not satisfy himself—all goes wrong—his pattern-books fail him; he looks around for something to begin from, and gives it up in despair; or, what is worse, produces some deformity that disgusts his employer, who will not venture on a second experiment, but sends abroad, and gets what he desires. Can the mechanic complain that home manufactures are not encouraged? Had he possessed even an elementary knowledge of
Design, he would have done better; had he cultivated and perfected that elementary knowledge, his difficulties would have all vanished, and the beginning and end of his labor would have been placed at once before him. Make them artists, or, better still, artist-workmen, and, with their proverbial energy, intelligence, and enterprise, no limit can be placed to what our mechanics may achieve.

A knowledge of Design, even in copying, gives great advantages. If he understands the principles upon which the original is produced, there is no fear of the copyist committing offensive variations. How often do we see the most beautiful designs distorted into deformity by the variation of a single line; an error of ignorance that must continually occur, until our mechanics are better instructed in this branch of education. It is a vain hope, that a work so limited as this, will supply all the information the artisan should require; but should it lead him to make a beginning, he will so soon find his advantage in it, that he will be induced to pursue it farther. He will have his children and apprentices instructed; he will urge the establishment of schools and collections of models, to which they can be directed; and he will in his own time see the fruits, in the advancement of our manufactures to a degree of perfection that can never exist, without an intimate connexion between them and the Arts of Design.

There are those of another class of society to whom education in Drawing would prove a real blessing. Of the thousands of helpless and dependent females, who are compelled to toil night and day, in painful and ill-paid labor, to the destruction of health and life, too many are tempted into paths of vice and misery by absolute necessity, who undoubtedly possess capacity that needs but cultivation and development to secure respectability and support. The natural refinement and fertility of the female mind renders it a fruitful field for cultivation, that should be rescued from neglect. If the voice of right and mercy plead not with sufficient eloquence in their behalf, let that of interest at least prevail. Give to women the advantages of education in Design. Begin in your public schools—let them carry it to their homes, to the manufacture of articles of taste and fancy; to the early education of their children—and more, if they possess the capacity, let them take the pencil, the chisel, or the burin, and instead of broken-hearted victims of incessant toil, we shall soon see them filling the places, and with the wages of men, in departments of usefulness and industry for which they are by nature so eminently qualified.
INTRODUCTION.

Of all people in the world, we stand most in need of knowledge in the Arts of Design. If in Europe, surrounded as they are by monuments of art, the accumulation of ages, it has been found necessary to make Drawing a part of common education, how much more essential is it here, where there is little or nothing of the sort. We must learn to think, and feel, and do, for ourselves. We must begin and carry out a new system of education in this respect; and, once placed in possession of a beginning, the energy and independent character of our people, so evident in everything else, will be made available to the cultivation of national taste in art, and the just appreciation of the sublime and beautiful. Art, in its higher efforts, will no longer suffer from the pedantry of travelled quackery, but will be elevated in itself, and elevated in its efforts, by the existence of a fair, honest, and intelligent tribunal. The cast-off frippery of European garrets and workshops will no longer find place beside our home productions in the Fine and Industrial Arts. The vast resources of mind and matter with which a bountiful Providence has endowed our land, will be brought forth to add to its national greatness; and, although we have no vast cathedrals or regal palaces to fill with pictures and statues, or adorn with works of ornamental art, we have a vast, an independent and intelligent people to appeal to: who need only to be shown the truth, to know and maintain it.

That a general taste for the Fine Arts does exist, however uncultivated it may be, is evident. Where is there the humblest cottage that has not its walls or mantelpiece decorated with a picture or plaster figure? However rude may be the work of art which hangs as "the bright Palladium" of the cottage, yet the household care bestowed upon its preservation, and the pleasure it affords by its possession and contemplation, show an appreciation of its worth, a decided taste, that, if cultivated, would lead to better productions; for the supply would assuredly be improved in character, in proportion to the demand. A wooden clock sells the readier for its picture, and more especially, if that picture touch a chord of national pride. Washington and Mount Vernon, although pictured with a most libellous pencil, have saved many a worthless machine from the rubbish-loft.

What village school-girl is there, whose ambition does not reach to the imitation of natural objects in needlework? and, although it may often puzzle the most acute to discover a rose from a tulip, or a cat from a squirrel, in her worsted-picture, yet the taste, the inclination—to try—is there. Could she be able to select subjects for imitation, from the boundless resources of nature with which she is surrounded—could she have the means and opportunity afforded her, by proper instruction, of perpetuating, by her pencil or brush, the flower she has reared, the home she has
been happy in, the resemblance of friends she has loved, what a new source of intellectual enjoyment would be opened to her. And not to her alone. The influence of that refinement of sentiment and taste, that must ever follow, will extend throughout her life, and spread a charm about her, which will be seen and felt in all her associations, whatever be her destiny.

The importance of Drawing, as a part of popular education, and the want, so generally expressed, of some popular work on the subject, by which it could be introduced, not only into schools, but home instruction, has led to the publication of the American Drawing-Book. It is given to the public with the ardent hope that it may, in some degree, awaken an interest in a branch of knowledge that has been, hitherto, strangely neglected among the people of the United States; not so much from indifference to its importance, as from the want of efficient means of its acquirement.

Of Teachers, all that can be required, is, to give it a fair experiment.

Of Pupils, is to be asked, a faithful observance of the course of study recommended — not to grow weary, if sometimes they find their patience taxed too heavily. Let them be assured, that nothing more is demanded of them than is believed to be absolutely necessary to their advancement. If, at any time, a doubt should arise in their minds, as to the utility of that which is required of them, let them persevere a little farther, and they will be satisfied. There are few secrets to teach: all must depend upon their own exertions. The business of the Guide is to direct their steps in the right way, and to supply them with such information as they may require in their progress, not to bear them on his shoulders. The correction of their own errors, and the knowledge of the means of their success, will supply the rest. One promise, in conclusion, can be safely made: the gain will well repay the effort. Let them not hesitate, for fear of failure, but be assured, that the measure of their success will be in proportion to their exertions. When once they have passed through the elementary studies of art, they will need no incentive beyond the reward they will receive in its practice—a new world of enjoyment, a new sense to appreciate its worth, will be their recompense, and they will never regret the day of their beginning.