

which there is a perpetual sameness, and that a dreary monotony as deadly in its effects to the mental strength as carbonic gas is to the physical. Now and then we find a man, possessing some talent and skill as a teacher, employed in urging forward the older and more advanced pupils, while he scorns and neglects the abecedarians as beneath his notice.

Are not these faithful pictures? Do you not recognize in them the representative school of the town and of the country? If you inquire for the result of this teaching, you will learn that children who have read scores of school-readers, containing a large amount of information, common and uncommon, have no *real* knowledge of the *things* they have read about. Children who have "gone through geography," as the phrase is, yet cannot describe the source, flow, and discharge of the nearest spring branch; who can do every sum in arithmetic, yet in the counting house are non-plussed at the first settlement of accounts; who have learned by heart every principle of grammar, yet cannot write a page without a grammatical blunder. It is not that these subjects are difficult, but the child has never been taught to *observe*, to *express*, his knowledge, and to apply it to the reality of life. The words of books may have become familiar, but the language of books has not been learned, simply because no language can be learned till the things, acts, and relations it represents, can be learned. Every where we find the younger children, whose plastic minds are so ready to receive impressions—who could so easily, under wise and earnest teachers, be led into virtuous ways, and whose faculties could so readily be trained and made fit to receive instruction in the *sciences*, crammed with hard words that stultify their intellects, and inured to vicious habits of mind, body and heart, that no amount of care, skill and talent, on the part of the teacher of the higher school, can wholly irradiate, but which demand his most patient and persevering efforts in abating before he can fairly begin to teach; while in the more advanced schools for the older pupils, who are supposed to be able to think abstractly, material representations are sometimes furnished in abundance.

Now, does it not occur, as we witness the increasing efficiency and excellence of the higher schools, to doubt the consistency and wisdom of this distribution of favors? We are aware that the necessity of more efficient primary schools is no new idea.