

way in which a little child naturally learns oral and written language.

A system of language lessons will also teach a child to acquire and produce knowledge as well as to express it. It cultivates the habit of observation and comparison; and thus leads a child to think as well as to express thought. Subjects should be assigned that require attentive examination, that call the judgment into activity, and that lead the pupil to investigate and discover facts, and thus gain knowledge for himself. The pupil will also be taught to classify the knowledge obtained from reading, to sift its true meaning, and to express in his own words the thoughts of the writer he has studied.

The fundamental principle of these lessons is that pupils are to be taught the practical use of the language by the use of language rather than by a study of the principles of language. There should be an imitation of models, and a free and spontaneous expression of ideas, without any thought of the grammatical rules or principles involved. For example, the pupil should express himself in sentences without any thought of the subject and predicate of a sentence, and use the different parts of speech without any knowledge of them as parts of speech. He should use nouns and verbs without knowing that they are nouns and verbs; form plurals without any rules for numbers; use cases, modes, tenses, etc., without knowing that there are such things as cases, modes, tenses, etc.

The system of language lessons aims to teach the use of language by imitation and practice rather than by the study of rules and definitions. The object is to give children a knowledge of the uses of words and the power to express their ideas, without clogging their memories with grammatical terms which are to them often only abstract sounds without any content of meaning. The pupils are brought into contact with living language, and not the dead, dry skeleton of grammatical definitions and rules, and this living spirit becomes engrafted on their own language until it becomes a part of their nature.

According to this principle, a knowledge of language should precede a knowledge of grammar. This is the historical order of development. The ancients knew language and could use it in literature, but they had very little knowledge of grammar. Homer sang in immortal verse, and probably hardly knew a noun