

the side opposite the class, so that just the point is visible over the convexity of the orange, asks, what part of the pencil they see. "The point," is readily given. Moving it further on, she asks, "Do you see more or less of it now?" continuing in this way till the whole of the pencil becomes visible. Next she takes some plane surface, and placing the pencil upright on it, asks how much of it can be seen—"The whole." Moving it farther on, she repeats the question. Still, "The whole." Then why," she asks, "is it that when I move it toward you on the orange, you see, first the point, gradually more and more, finally the whole, while on the slate you see the whole at once?" Because the orange is round and the slate is flat," will be soon obtained. She makes use of a few more illustrations, in each case requiring the children to account for the gradual appearance of the pencil. After firmly fixing in the minds of the children the proposition, "If we are on one side of a round body, and anything is moved toward us from the opposite side, it will come into view gradually," she develops the converse of the proposition by using any familiar illustration, drawing the idea from the children clothed in any words they may suggest.

Now she proceeds to apply these propositions to the form of earth, taking the proof of the appearance of an approaching vessel. After the gradual manner in which it comes into view has been stated, she goes back to the converse of the proposition just proved, asking, "If the ship comes gradually into view, what must be the shape of the body over which it is moving?" "Round." "And what is the body over which it is moving?" "The earth." "Then what is the shape of the earth?" The children will be forced from their previous observation to reply, "Round," but not, probably, with a very firm conviction of the truth of what they utter. The teacher, without corroborating their assertion, next places a ball so that it will cast a shadow on the floor; asks the shape of the shadow; shows by experiment that only a round body will cast a round shadow. Then she tells the class that sometimes the earth gets between the sun and the moon, just as the ball gets between the sun and the floor, and asks what would then be seen, probably, on the moon. "A shadow." "Yes, and this shadow is round. Does this," she inquires, "make you more nearly certain that you were correct in thinking the earth round?" The answer will be in the affirmative, and after allowing a few of the class to state again their reasons for holding such an opinion, the teacher corroborates it. One difficulty remains, however, viz., the 'kind' of roundness,—whether the earth be spherical or circular. To elucidate this point, the teacher holds a cent— or, better, some larger circular object—in different positions, leading the children to notice and state that sometimes the shadow cast is round and sometimes not; then leads them in a similar manner, to notice and state that, in whatever position a ball is held, it still casts a round shadow. Next, giving the information that the earth always casts a round shadow, she asks which of these objects it might be supposed to resemble in shape. "The ball."

Now the class have all the ideas necessary for a good definition; one or two well directed questions will draw out that definition, and the subject is finished. Is it not much better thus to allow the truth to dawn gradually on the minds of the children; to awaken doubts as to the correctness of their preconceived impressions on the subject of the earth's figure; by proceeding cautiously from step to step, to make these doubts deepen into conviction,—and then, and not till then, when they are awake to the subject and ready to believe, to say decidedly, "You are right,—the earth is round?"

Has there not been much more intellectual growth here, than can possibly take place in the minds of children whose firmly fixed opinions are suddenly met and rudely overthrown by the statement, on authority too high for them to doubt, "The earth is round." Probably, after gazing at it a few minutes in mute surprise, they mentally ejaculate,—at least, those who have been fortunate enough to retain any degree of originality of thought,— "Well, I suppose it is, if the book says so," and forthwith pro-

ceeded to prepare for the inevitable parrot-like repetition of the fact. Is not this a step, nay, a prodigious stride, towards that much-to-be-dreaded, always-to-be-fought-against habit of mind, taking on trust, learning by rote?

After the subject of the form of the earth has been taken up, the next in order would be Continents and Oceans. The first would be easily taught, by directing one or more members of the class to point out on the globe the two largest bodies of land entirely surrounded by water, represented there; asking if there are any bodies equal to these in size. A negative answer being obtained, the children are asked for a description of what they have just observed, which will probably be given, after a little questioning, something in this wise: "A body of land, larger than any island, entirely surrounded by water." As they now have the idea, nothing is wanting to complete the lesson but the term, which is given by the teacher.

Oceans would be taught in a similar manner, and, as with this subject, the consideration of the natural features of land and water concludes, we are ready for the next subject in order—The Political Divisions of the Continents.—*Massachusetts Teacher.*

Letter from Barthold George Niebuhr to his nephew, on Philological Studies.

[NIEBUHR, the historian, diplomatist, and philologist, addressed the following letter, while residing at Rome as Prussian Minister, to his nephew then nineteen years of age. It is a precious manual of advice from a ripe scholar and an eminent statesman, not only on the intellectual processes of education, but on the true ideal of conduct—simplicity, energy, truthfulness—in every walk of life.]

When your dear mother wrote to me, that you showed a decided inclination for philological studies, I expressed my pleasure to her at the tidings, and begged her and your father not to cross this inclination by any plans they might form for your future life. I believe I said to her, that, as philology is the introduction to all other studies, he who pursues it in his school years with eagerness, as if it were the main business of his life, prepares himself by so doing for whatever study he may choose at the university. And besides, philology is so dear to me, that there is no other calling I would rather wish for a young man for whom I have so great an affection as for you. No pursuit is more peaceful or cheering; none gives a better security for tranquillity of heart and of conscience, by the nature of its duties, and the manner of exercising them; and how often have I lamented with sorrow that I forsook it, and entered into a more bustling life, which perhaps will not allow me to attain to any lasting quiet, even when old age is coming on! The office of a schoolmaster especially is a thoroughly honorable one; and, notwithstanding all the evils which disturb its ideal beauty, truly for a noble heart one of the happiest ways of life. It was once the course I had chosen for myself, and it might have been better had I been allowed to follow it. I know very well, that spoiled as I now am by the great sphere in which I have spent my active life, I should no longer be fitted for it; but for one whose welfare I have so truly at heart, I should wish that he might not be spoiled in the same manner, nor desire to quit the quietness and the secure narrow circle in which I, like you, passed my youth.

Your mother told me that you wanted to show me something of your writing, as a mark of your diligence, and in order that I might perceive what progress you have already made. I begged she would bid you do so, not only that I might give you and your friends a proof of the sincere interest I take in you, but also because in philology I have a tolerably clear knowledge of the end to be aimed at, and of the paths which lead to it, as well as of those which tempt us astray: so that I can encourage any one who has had the good fortune to enter on one of the former, while I feel the fullest confidence in warning such as are in danger of losing their way, and can tell them whither they will get unless they turn back. I myself had to make my way through a thorny thicket, mostly without a guide; and, alas, at times in opposition to the cautions given me but too forbearingly by those who might have been my guides. Happily—I thank God for it—I never lost sight of the end, and found the road to it again; but I should have got much nearer that end, and with less trouble, had the road been pointed out to me.

I tell you with pleasure, and can do so with truth, that your composition is a creditable proof of your industry; and that I am very glad to see how much you have studied and learnt in the six years