

requiring only a very few lessons. The object of it is accomplished when the children respond readily by making concrete the relations expressed by the language.

*Third Step.*—This step introduces the class to the written expression. The teacher informs the children that she will now tell them things by writing,—will talk to their eyes with her crayon and the black-board. She should then, in a clear, distinct hand, *write* what has before been expressed orally, "I have a knife." Of course the child has no idea what is said. The teacher will call a child to her and put the object in his hand, when he, holding up the knife, will respond orally, "I have a knife." Let him continue to hold the knife while she writes another sentence, as, "I have a doll." Putting the object into the hands of a little girl, she will respond with the proper oral expression. This process should be continued until several sentences are written upon the board.

She may now put the pointer into the hand of one of the children, and call upon him to point out his "story," or sentence, and tell what it says. This he will readily do as he still holds the object in his hand, and will remember its place upon the board. Should he forget its place, the teacher will point it out. In like manner each child will be called upon. Mistakes will occur, but they are readily corrected without the teacher reading a word, or telling the children what is said. The children, still depending upon the object for the expression, give only secondary attention to the words upon the board, and, as a consequence, only slight impression is made by them.

The play, as the little ones themselves call it, is now made a little more difficult by the children changing objects, and each one selecting the sentence that his new thought re-

quires. This quickens the attention and strengthens the impression; still, no direct effort is made to impress the sentence or the words upon the memory. The thought formed by the object in the hands of the child is still the first object of attention; the oral expression has all the naturalness of conversation. Only a few of the forms of expression used in the preceding steps should at first be used. The exercises should be repeated day after day, care being taken to avoid monotony, and to keep the children interested. This is the critical period,—not with the class, but with teacher and parent. They are not satisfied with the apparent results. Without experience they cannot see when the children will be able to read directly from the board, much less from the printed books, without first having the thought suggested by the object.

But wait a little! Have patience, and you shall receive your reward. By an inevitable law of mind, according to which every child before you has learned to talk, each repetition of the sentence upon the board has strengthened the impression. Some day, as you write, with all the eager eyes of the class upon you, watching every movement of your crayon, you will find a little hand stretched in eager entreaty for permission to speak. Grant the request, and the child will excitedly come to you, select the object from among a number before you, on the table, and make the sentence *true*. Of course it has been read, and it is only a matter of form to give it oral expression, which he does with a degree of enthusiasm only to be witnessed in a child that has accomplished something worthy by his own exertions.

The point of greatest difficulty is now passed. One after another of the members of the class will follow, until in a short time the teacher will complete a sentence; then all the