

discovers the word, and finally reaches the letter. Which is simple, word or sentence? Which abstract, letter or sentence? Which definite, sentence or syllable? Mr. Spencer's attractive style wins our consent to his statements, but leaves us with our difficulties. The older psychologists had few doubts about the beginnings of knowledge. Under their instruction, we break our idea of an apple, for example, into sensations of taste, color and touch; then we reconstruct our idea by adding taste to touch, and color to both; and believe that we have discovered the secret of our knowledge's growth. Sensation is added to sensation until the structure of our knowledge rises like a building by adding brick to brick. If this be so, the letter must come before the word, the word before the sentence.

Is this a true account of the way our knowledge grows? As the steamer approaches land, the lookout spies a small bank of something, a little darker than the usual cloud that hangs upon the horizon. Nearer comes the vessel, the cloud becomes darker, and its outline sharper; now the edge of the bank becomes broken into peaks and hollows, and the dark body takes a more definite shade; now hills appear, and greens and blacks and grays emerge from the shadows; now trees and fields and groups of buildings show themselves; gradually, from out of the pile of buildings the white house, the gray barn, the smaller buildings emerge; the white house breaks into windows, doors, roof and chimney; before it appear moving figures; a man, a woman appear distinct, and near them smaller beings; a dog playing with children, busy hens and hungry ducks, fill in the growing scene; and now, nearly every larger detail of the pleasing scene stands out clear and distinct, and our idea is complete. Is it thus our knowledge grows? Is the dark mass on the horizon the simple, and the full picture of the farmyard life the complex? We are sure the bank of land is the indefinite. Is it the concrete? According to Mr. Spencer, nature proceeds from the simple or the indefinite or the concrete. Let us appeal to the little child.

To the little child with its second birthday

in sight, every woman in the distance is "mother," every man "daddy." The approaching dog, the moving cow, the trotting horse appear as "pos" (puss). The green apple, the white bun, as well as the colored ball, are recognized as "ba" (ball). Green peas, gray tablets, join the interesting family of marbles. It is true the little scientist will not peacefully accept the colored ball for the coveted bun, nor nestle contentedly in the arms of the woman that looks like mother. His little face will show signs first of doubt, then of bewilderment, then of discontent. Things are not what they seem, and yet what are they? Again, after weeks of separation, the child does not resent being taken in the arms of the old nurse. The face lacks the light of recognition, but the fear of the stranger is also lacking. In its place appears a quiet expression of contentment, with a touch of wonder which seems to say, "Surely I have been here before, but when and where?" By degrees the shadowy recollection ceases to baffle, and the shadow disappears in the clear light of recognition.

Do not these facts tell us that the child's knowledge begins with a vague something, which gradually takes shape and decks itself in the definite qualities, that give color to the eye, sound to the ear, taste to the tongue, and touch to the hand. Our snap shots of the progress of the child's knowledge have shown, first the stock, then the ear, then the corn in the ear, not first the individual grain, then the ear, then the stock. The ear and the grains are first seen as one. It is only after, that the "marbles" are distinguished from "the stick."

The importance of this view of the "Growth of Knowledge" is great. It requires the teacher to avoid detail at the beginning, to present the broad outlines first, and then, as the interest grows, to fill in the rich detail. For example, the teacher will not delay over the garments of the Israelites, nor the chariots of the Egyptians, nor the smooth stones in the path of the people as they move between the walls of water through the Red Sea. When the story is told, curiosity will turn back to the minor incidents, the chariot wheels, the east wind and the rod.