

ledge. And so it is, if by new knowledge is meant simply a consciousness of *new* but meaningless symbols. But surely this is not the new knowledge that the pupils should gain when acquiring the definition of words. No, it is not. Yet it is not too much to say that such is the new knowledge actually gained in very many cases.

This result grows out of the fact that the words called the definition may be, and indeed are, frequently associated in the minds of the pupils, with the word they are said to define as mere sounds or written characters. When words, therefore, are thus associated and given as a definition, there is nothing present in the consciousness but the words themselves, and there is no new knowledge gained except the knowledge of new sounds, and new combinations of known characters. This is not an unusual product of the school-room. Meaningless words are frequently associated in the minds of the pupils, so that they readily recall each other. A display of superior knowledge is thus made possible where there is practically none. To the uninitiated it would seem that the pupil is verily master of his subject, while he is almost entirely ignorant of the realities which his words should call into his consciousness. A little questioning, a little probing, a little searching upon the part of the teacher for these realities, soon discovers the fact that the words are used without much meaning. They may, indeed, be used just as the teacher has used them, or as they are used in the text-book in the pupil's hands, yet it does not follow that they convey any reality into the pupil's consciousness. No, to do this,

the meaning of the words must be acquired through a process consisting of several steps. First, there must be wrought into the pupil's mind a vivid perception or consciousness of the existence of a definite entity or entities; second, this perception must be idealized by the pupil, or made and retained as an object of thought; and third, when these two steps have been taken, this object of thought must be associated in the pupil's mind with the word in its oral and written form, so that whenever the word is present to the sense, the object of thought with which it has been associated is at once placed clearly in consciousness. Accepting this view of acquiring the meaning of words as substantially correct, it is evident that however skilful the teacher may be in the use of words, he cannot by this means alone put his pupils in possession of any knowledge which is not in some sense a combination of knowledge already acquired.

It may be objected to the foregoing that what has been said applies exclusively to the first stages of the pupil's work. This objection is not founded on fact, as we will endeavour to show in a future article. But for the present, accepting the correctness of the position, with reference to the first stages of the pupil's progress, it is plain that the teacher's work includes much more than can be done by talking or lecturing to his pupils, or by insisting upon the most diligent use, upon the part of the pupil, of the most approved text-books. It is also equally plain that the teacher's preparation for his work means much more than passing examinations upon books and lectures by living teachers.