

hended fact? Take history, for example—I mean that of our own country. What can be worse, more staggering, more stupefying than to take a child destitute of the idea that his country has had a past, and suddenly flop it down on a particular period, say the times of the ancient Britons? The idea of history is not inborn in the child. He finds it hard enough to grasp the fact that he himself has had a past unlike the present, and is far from thinking this of what he sees about him. The idea of history must be led up to by a series of stories; partly biographies of men who had much to do with the making of this history, and partly story like accounts of particular features of country and national life, *e.g.*, a short picturesque narrative, intentionally incomplete because detached from its historical belongings, of the changes in the outward aspects of the country; in the dress, manners and the daily life of the people; of how we have come by some of our most valued possessions, such as the security and comfort of our homes, our liberties, and so forth. Such cuttings from history, if judiciously selected and brightly narrated in story form, could not fail to interest and arouse the childish mind. For they would all take their start in known facts, in the observation of things now surrounding the child; and they would exactly answer to one of the strongest outgoings of childish curiosity—the desire to know about the origins of things, the way in which they come to be. A few of these historical stories would suffice to familiarize the childish mind with the general truth that our customs, our institutions, our literature, and the rest of our modern possessions, did not always exist, but have been won for us by ages of human effort. And when the proper time arrives, the clear consciousness of this idea of a past unlike the pre-

sent, and of a gradual striving forward of the people to its present condition, will supply the needed interest in the connected and systematic narrative.

The contention here urged that an unsystematic study must precede a systematic study seems to me to be a deduction from the fundamental principle we all profess to adopt, *viz.*, that intellectual progress is from the known to the unknown. If you want to carry on the child's thoughts with you, you must go back to where that thought is loitering; you must, therefore, be content at first to present knowledge in an incomplete and fragmentary form. To this extent I would concede to the maxim of Pestalozzi and Herbert Spencer that the individual mind acquires its knowledge as the race acquires it; gradually rising to the clear connected systematic view of the whole which the mountain-top gives, out of the detached partial views which were all that the successive climbing positions yielded.

I would add, however, by way of qualification, that, even in this rudimentary stage, instruction, just because it is instruction and has to exercise the learner in methodical work, must be definite and connected so far as it goes. You can tell, for example, the story of the English Parliament in a very incomplete fashion, in a manner that would make your historical pedant wince his hands perhaps, and yet enable the child-mind to reach a perfectly clear and connected view of the more important features of the history.

For the same reason that it is necessary to bridge over the chasm that divides childish ignorance and confusion of ideas from the perfectly organized knowledge of the educated man by a comparatively unsystematic mode of instruction, it is desirable to preface each formal lesson by what