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hundreds of lessons in arithmetic, depending on such measures of length as inches, feet, yards, and rods, without being able to estimate by the eye the length of anything in one or other of these measures! What an infinity of hues and colors is spread before the eye in nature, the notice of which, with their appropriate names would supply a deficiency which most persons feel through life! And is it not better to study the forms of things in their actual state, than from definitions, pictures and diagrams? So, too, symmetrical proportions and groupings of things, according to the laws of propriety and taste, are nowhere better taught and exemplified than in the material world. The course which is here recommended would differ from the casual and disconnected observations spontaneously made by the young child in following his amusements, and from the instruction in the same subjects subsequently to be derived from books, and would seem to be the most natural way of passing from one to the other. There should be regular gradations in the first as well as in subsequent exercises of the school, and a period of many weeks should pass before a child should be chiefly occupied with books. That is not so much the time for teaching anything absolutely new, as for making one more perfect in the knowledge of things already more or less known, —to make firm the foundations on which he stands, and to enable him to reach securely to that which is next above.

A GENERAL VIEW OF THE COURSE OF STUDY AND OF THE METHOD OF INSTRUCTION ADAPTED TO COMMON SCHOOLS.

BY THE REV. DR. SEARS, BOSTON.

As there will be several classes in a common school, it will be most appropriate to begin with a consideration of the youngest, with those who have but just entered it. If suitable arrangements could be made, it would be desirable to have each session of the day for study not more than an hour and a half or two hours long. The object of such short sessions would be two-fold; first, to consult the physical comfort and well-being of the children, and secondly, to prevent too sudden a transition in their mental habits. Where such an arrangement would be impracticable, it would be well, if, during a part of the school hours, an assistant teacher, or advanced pupil, could accompany the class on the play-ground or somewhere in the vicinity of the school, and teach them to make such accurate observations upon the various objects presented to view, as would give precision to their knowledge of forms, colors, proportions, measures and distances. These things, which are the corner-stones in the edifice of knowledge, a deficiency in which gives such a weakness and tottering appearance to the superstructure afterwards reared, can be learned much more readily and perfectly outside of the school-room than within it. This knowledge is needed in every elementary study. How many persons study

Following these exercises of the eye and the judgment on visible objects, will be others in a second part of the preliminary course, in which kindred things shall be presented to the mind or imagination to be considered and orally discussed in the school-room. Neither the objects themselves, nor the books that give an account of them, are now to be used. But in respect to familiar things, the memory and imagination of the pupil are to furnish the materials for mental inspection, and in respect to others, either specimens, models, pictures, or other representations are to be presented by the teacher, and the circle of the pupil's ideas to be enlarged by means of comparison of resemblance and contrast, slowly and cautiously proceeding from the clear to the obscure, from the known to the unknown. Here language (oral of course) in connection with things will begin to receive particular attention. Not only the names of things, and of their properties, relations and uses, but the proper conversational forms of expression, the easy and natural use of language as an instrument of thought in describing what has been observed, or conceived of, become more and more an object of attention. The teacher will find it necessary to spend no little time in selecting and arranging groups of objects, adapted to the age, intelligence and local circumstances of the children. These will vary with the localities of the school, the physical features of the neighbourhood, and the occupations and habits of the people.

Foreign objects should not receive attention, except incidentally, till those connected with the place are generally understood.