

## Primary Department.

### OBJECT LESSONS FOR SPRING.

RHODA LEE.

It seems to me that at this time of the year, the interest in object lessons should be greatly increased and specially good work done.

The fact that there are so many suitable subjects for this season should inspire every teacher with new zeal and energy in this department.

One word of warning. In our efforts to make the lesson pleasant and interesting, we must not lose sight of our special aim, namely, the all-round development of the faculties of the child-mind. As secondary aims, we have the enlarging of the vocabulary and gaining of general information.

In studying any object we put the child in a position to gain knowledge for himself; to find out all he can about it in a definite, orderly and independent way. Thus the method is entirely active, not passive, on the part of the child. The teacher merely shows the way, the pupil does the walking.

Only a few days ago I was delighted by being presented with a large bunch of little purple Hepaticas. They were the first wild flowers of the season at school, and we all enjoyed looking at the dainty little flowers peeping out of their dusky brown coats. In a few weeks these and other May flowers will be quite plentiful, and what delightful Object lessons they will make.

In the higher classes they might be taken as Botany lessons. Just here let me say that I think this subject should be introduced to our classes long before it is. It is looked upon too generally as an advanced subject, beyond the range of most of our classes.

I heard recently of a number of earnest teachers, employed in country schools, who give great encouragement to their scholars in the study of flowers, organizing little botanizing parties and drying and classifying the specimens collected. In this they are doing a good work.

The study of flower and plant life cannot fail to make children love and observe nature closely, and it certainly aids in developing the sense and appreciation of beauty. We cannot begin to study nature too soon, as at the end of the longest life there are few who have really learnt to see consciously, half of the beauty and grandeur she spreads around us.

One other thought before we leave the flowers; encourage your pupils to bring roots of wild flowers to school, and if you have no flower-beds outside, plant them in a window-box and care for them inside. Ferns and some trailing plant will improve your box, and a few geraniums, fuschias and panzies will beautify your room, making it surprisingly attractive and cheery-looking.

The children, if encouraged, will be delighted to bring plants, and I find it a good plan to label them in some way, have them taken home at the end of the session and cared for and then brought back at the close of the holidays.

I was once in a class where, in the Spring, the scholars planted seeds such as sweet peas, balsams and morning-glories, and watched the whole growth.

The object lessons that are specially suitable just now are those on grain and seeds of different kinds, such as barley, wheat and Indian corn; beans and pumpkin seeds are also in favor, wheat makes an interesting lesson and *Indian corn* is excellent.

In fact the last mentioned lesson was the most developing and interesting one I have had for some time.

After the corn was distributed—a few grains to each child—we proceeded to examine it, following the general order of the senses.

After a thorough examination, noting similarities to other grains, etc., we talked about its growth, and all had vivid recollections of its appearance when in the green state, as squirrel-like they had nibbled it off the stalk, the tall waving stalks, the closely-wrapped "cot" and the many-hued silky hair were all subjects of interest; then its uses when dried; the pigeons, chickens and horses that were fed with it. Some were acquainted with the process of turning it into meal, and also understood something of the different ways in which it could then be used.

There are good moral lessons suggested by this talk of seed-time that will, perhaps, crop up in

your lesson or be reserved for the morning talk that should always precede or follow the Bible reading. It is then you can give your children stimulus and little words of help that will aid and encourage them throughout the day, and we know not how much longer. Seed-time makes us think of the heart gardens and the seeds of kindness, love and gentleness that may be scattered or carefully dropped into the hearts of those around us.

The children will understand how a kind word grows and what a harvest it yields, sometimes when least expected. The old familiar hymn found in almost every Sunday school collection, "Scatter Seeds of Kindness," will be a favorite if this thought is implanted aright. In the Kindergarten collection there are several good Spring songs, such as "Planting the Corn and Potatoes," "Hasten to the Meadow, Peter," and "Lovely May." These are all simple and pretty and genuinely Spring songs.

I am sure some one will say, when glancing over this page, "When do you find time to teach all these songs; do you omit a few lessons for this purpose or how do you manage?" It is only in the spare minutes that I teach the meaning and words of the song. Then when a wet day comes and we have "in-door recess," the children are quite pleased to learn a tune to which to set the words.

Of course in the time allotted to music we may teach some rote songs.

The songs are not learnt in a day, but generally Spring lasts long enough to allow of our learning and enjoying a considerable number.

### WAYS AND MEANS.

ARNOLD ALCOTT.

DURING the five minutes which we devote every day to general business, that is, the time in which the pupils may ask any questions on any subject, or may relate to the class anything which they feel they would like to tell, one of our bright-eyed, clear-brained little friends said: "To-day is my birthday." And, when asked how old he was, he involuntarily straightened himself, and, with a dignified manly air, answered: "I am eight years old, (the 'eight' was distinctly emphasized) and I got a splendid box of German blocks from my papa."

"What kind of blocks did you say, James?"

"German blocks."

"Yes, the blocks were made in Germany. They make beautiful toys there for boys and girls. The Germans are very musical, and they make pianos. If we work very well, we shall have a fairy story about the 'Three Musicians of Bremen.'"

The incident which James told furnished an idea which we expanded into a lesson, which we shall endeavor briefly to outline for the benefit of our readers who heretofore may not have adopted as simple a method for presenting clearly to the "little folks" the "plan" of our school-room.

For our present purpose, let us call the teacher Miss Sympathy.

"James, you may bring your box of blocks to school this afternoon." So said Miss Sympathy on Friday morning.

In the afternoon, James, with beaming face, brought his box of blocks to the teacher's desk.

When the time for Geography came, Miss Sympathy called on several of her pupils to bring their rulers and to measure the length of the room. Of course the pupils had previously been taught the use of the yard-stick, and also the meaning of the terms foot and inch.

"John, how long is our room?"

"Our room is twenty feet long," said John. And Charlie agreed with him. Then two others were required to determine the width of the room, which was found to be sixteen feet. Then Miss Sympathy put these numbers on the board, and next proceeded as follows:

She has James uncover his box, and she permits him to show his blocks to the pupils, so as to gratify their curiosity, which, indeed, she is delighted to see, because it is so natural for children to wish to know the "what for" and the "why" of their environments. Alas! that older children lose this faculty to a greater or less extent; and a great pity is it that we, as teachers, are somewhat to blame, and, indeed, *largely* are we accountable, for we do not encourage sufficiently in our scholars the power to ask questions.

Of course not more than two minutes elapse in this, for we must not leave the main road almost before we have begun.

Then Miss Sympathy says:

"Let us suppose, boys and girls, that one block represents one foot. Those who can tell how many blocks are necessary to represent the length of this room?"

James is our steady reasoner, and when asked he definitely replies: "We would need twenty blocks."

"Then, John, you come and place twenty blocks side by side on this sheet of white paper which I have on my table."

John does so. He also completes the other *long* side.

"Now, how many are needed for the width?"

Charlie answers that sixteen are necessary. And the blocks are placed as before.

Miss Sympathy says: "We have a *block* plan of the sides of the floor of our school-room, but you cannot carry this home to show papa or mamma, so let us try to *draw* a plan. James, you draw, with your red pencil, lines around the outside edges of your blocks." Having removed the blocks, the class see the oblong.

Next, Miss Sympathy called on a pupil to measure the side of a block which was found to be one inch.

Then the question was asked: "What did we take to represent one foot?"

Mary answered: "We took one block to represent one foot."

"Very good. Those who know now how many inches we took to represent one foot?"

James replies by saying: "One inch represented one foot."

"Then how many inches represent the length?"

"Twenty inches"

"And how many the width?"

"Sixteen inches."

Next the sheet of paper was pinned against the wall, and the pupils at the far end of the room could not see it, so this helped Miss Sympathy to develop that she must make a larger plan on the blackboard.

"Supposing that we take *two* inches to be one foot on the blackboard plan, how many inches will represent the length?"

Fred answers that forty inches will be the length. Also that thirty-two will be the width.

Then the doors, windows and different articles of furniture are placed in the plan, the teacher's table, the chair, the pupils' desks. Also, a pupil may be required to move about, and others, especially the slower pupils, be required to point out his location, or his new house and number.

Miss Sympathy knows physically, practically and intuitively that children love to be "doing," and that they learn by industrial activity, so she proceeds to have every pupil draw a plan on his slate for himself. She says: "Let *one-half* inch be one foot on your slates. How many inches will represent the length?"

The answer is ten inches.

"And the width?"

"Eight inches."

Then, the plan being made, every pupil being encouraged to place a little red mark, or picture of our flag, where "he" is on the plan, the teacher must go to see the work of the "little architects," and many a choice morsel of kindness in commendation is given. Perhaps not spoken verbally, but spoken nevertheless. It may have been a smile, or a nod, in recognition of well-directed effort. But who that has the magnetism of a clear expressive eye but should *use* it? Or, if not, then fully half the power and fascinating influence which it was designed should be exerted for good is lost, for who comprehends all that is in a look?

We do not need to understand the function of the retina gangliformis as does the optician, in order to see the good around us.

Having praised the *attempt* rather than the result, the teacher ended the lesson with the following remarks:

"Girls, you talk among yourselves, when outside, about a plan for a 'doll's house.' Decide on the length, the width, the number of doors and of windows; also on the number of rooms and their names; and also whether or not you want the hall to be down the centre. Let me know what kind of house you would like, and we shall ask the boys to draw a plan for us, and the prettiest plans we shall have drawn on paper with colored inks." Thus ended an interesting and developing half-hour lesson.