

FIRST STAGE.

SHORT, simple, pleasing, and attractive should be the characteristic qualities of the first object lessons; so short a never to weary, so simple as to call for scarcely an appreciable effort, and as pleasant and attractive as play itself.

To train the senses, to cultivate habits of observation, to note, to compare, to contrast should be their aim.

Their method should be conversational. The conversations, however, should not take a desultory form; but should have a definite object and serve a definite purpose.

The lessons should form the first step in a complete system, the foundation on which future lessons are to be constructed, the key-note for other subjects of a similar character.

The subjects should be selected from simple "every-day things," with which the children are most familiar, and which are likely to prove the most interesting.

The little scholars should be encouraged not only to look at, to feel, to taste, to compare; but they should be led to talk about the things, and ask questions concerning them.

At this early stage, where the powers of concentration are so feeble, the object should be placed *as far as possible* in the hands of all the children. If this is impracticable, then the specimens should be of sufficient bulk to be seen distinctly by every member of the class; but whatever may require to be done by way of experiment, such as feeling, tasting, &c., should be done by the pupils themselves. "It is what the child *does*, that it learns *to know*."

The lessons of this *first* stage are offered as illustrations of

the sort of object lessons suitable to children of from *four* to *five* years of age. They have for their definite aim and purpose to train the children,—

(1.) To discriminate between the following colours: white, black, red, yellow, and blue.

(2.) To distinguish and name the following lines and forms: straight line (perpendicular, horizontal, and oblique), bent line, crooked line, square, oblong, and ball-shape.

(3.) To discriminate between sweet, salt, and sour tastes.

(4.) To appreciate the general differences between rough and smooth, hard and soft, long and short, broad and narrow, thick and thin, heavy and light.

It is important that the children should not pass to the next stage till the subjects of this course are thoroughly mastered, not only by a few of the more clever scholars, but by the bulk of the class. The lessons need not be repeated in the same form, nay, should not; for the thoughtful teacher can exercise her class on the various ideas herein involved in an almost infinite variety of ways. Neither should the teacher slavishly follow the order of the different points in the lessons here given, much less confine herself to the identical questions in the text. Notes of object lessons can never be anything more than general guides to the careful teacher. They may assist her to confine herself to the definite purpose of the lesson, and point out the way in which she should strive to guide the thoughts of the children; but the actual questions to be asked and explanations to be given must always depend to a very great extent on the answers given by the children. The highest kind of teaching is that wherein the teacher by skilful questioning leads her scholars to imagine that they have discovered something new for themselves.

NOTE.—It is assumed that for *every* lesson the teacher will have a table and black-board before her class; and both so placed that *all* the scholars can see distinctly. Slates and pencils also should always be ready to hand.