

to act, is analagous to and commensurate with the physical faculties of the body. A man can only see to a certain distance, and the capacity to see clearly or indistinctly is in proportion to the proximity or remoteness of objects. So it is with the mind, and whenever the latter is exercised for any length of time upon objects remote in their situation, and not producing active and positive exercise, feebleness and diffuseness are produced instead of strength. In this manner the prime of life is consumed in thrusting the mind vaguely and indefinitely into the remote facts of antiquity, while things at home are neglected and unknown. In maintenance of this view of the subject, we will quote a passage from the report of one of the school committees of Massachusetts. The remarks contain a solemn and important truth, and being the fruits of the observation of the operations of the *youthful* mind are far more valuable than volumes of philosophical writings of many authors.

It has been the case that all those who have written upon the human mind have directed their investigations to the action and character of minds of full age. In this case the description is different and is applied directly to the action of the *youthful* mind as evinced by actual experiment; and speaks in direct reference to the subject of education. "Among the suggestions and recommendations which we would venture to make is the importance of a more thorough and *exact* instruction even if a less amount of ground be gone over. There is too prevalent wish to measure the progress of the scholar by an *apparent* and not a *real* standard; by the *number* of *pages* passed over and not by the amount of knowledge conveyed. It is a very obvious truism that it is much better to know a little thoroughly than much superficially; but though it is so obvious a truism it is constantly overlooked or violated in the business of education and the habit of mind produced by this violation is very injurious. In this respect almost all our schools are susceptible of improvement. In history and geography we would recommend a more careful attention to our *own country*. These are of *primary* importance. A boy or girl should be taught *thoroughly* the history and geography of his or her own country, before going beyond any thing more than the outlines of those of other countries. In most of the schools this rule is not observed with sufficient care. We especially found it difficult to obtain correct answers to questions about the *constitution* and *government* of our *country*. One can listen with no satisfaction to hear a boy mention the rivers in China or the mountains in Sweden after he has been found ignorant of the mode of *electing* the *President* and *Senators* of the *United States*. The danger of taxing the *memory* rather than the *understanding* should be strongly urged upon our teachers."

These few remarks, plain and unadorned as they are, express a solemn *truth* in reference to the subject of education. It is strictly the truth, that many men have had their abilities impaired and their usefulness destroyed by being directed to wander listlessly