

Concert Work in Spelling.*The Educational Review.*

DEAR SIR:—The REVIEW of last March contains an article on "Concert Work," in which simultaneous repetition on the part of a class is set at a very low value.

I had been giving this subject much thought and was pleased to get an opinion from so reliable a source. It is a practice, which, to put it mildly, does not excite admiration. Nevertheless, primary teachers who use it will not readily admit that it is "utterly valueless."

The spelling of the first year has, to my own knowledge, been taught in this way with the result that the pupils could spell quite satisfactorily; the spelling was satisfactory if the method was not.

I certainly think that the work could and should be done in a quicker and more intelligent manner; and, desiring to get at the root of the matter, I ask,—What is the reason that so many primary teachers resort to this "utterly valueless" method of teaching spelling? Is it not because the spelling is taught orally before the pupils can distinguish the letters at sight? This process renders concert work indispensable.

In connection with this subject, kindly answer in the columns of the REVIEW, the question—Should spelling be taught orally, before the pupils have learned to distinguish the letters at sight?

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The REVIEW is pleased to get this expression of opinion from its correspondent, because it shows that where some teachers may fail with certain methods others may be tolerably successful. Concert work in large classes of primary pupils is perhaps indispensable; and a little of such work was favored in the article that appeared in the March REVIEW—a selection from *Primary Education*—although the general practice was condemned.

We should like to hear from other primary teachers,—what their practice is especially in spelling, and what they have adopted in place of concert work in spelling and reading for large classes; also their views on the question asked by our correspondent. The columns of the REVIEW are always open for the discussion of such questions, and brief, clear, expressions of opinion on work are welcome, especially from primary teachers.

"We pray to Egypt for our flag," is what a little New Jersey school-boy learned to say in his flag drill. His puzzled parents found, upon inquiry, that what he was expected to say is, "We pledge allegiance to our flag."

(The hero of the above yarn is the little son of Edgar M. Robinson, who lives at Edgewater, N. J., just across the river from New York.)

CURRENT EVENTS.

The British Antarctic expedition under Capt. Scott, which sailed from London last June on the *Terra Nova*, is expected to remain for a year in the South Polar regions, pushing forward in its effort to reach the Pole in December of next year. The Japanese expedition will sail from Tokio this month, and will be equipped for rapid work. A German expedition will also sail this month; an Argentine expedition is planned, or possibly has already started; and Capt. Amundsen, who intended to revisit the Arctic regions, has changed his plans and will sail for the South Polar sea in the *Fram*. The object of the German and Norwegian expeditions is to find out whether the supposed Antarctic continent is continuous, or is a group of islands more or less connected by ice.

Wireless messages have been sent from Glace Bay to South America. The great towers erected at Glace Bay are no longer needed, for a tall mast answers every purpose since the latest improvements in the system have been made.

An international congress has been held in London to discuss plans for providing for the future growth of cities. The city architect of Paris prophesies that city streets will have to be supported fifteen feet above the surface of the ground, while railroads and moving sidewalks will occupy the ground beneath. From the arches which support the streets will be suspended, he thinks, not only pipes for water, gas and electric wires, but also pipes for petroleum, steam and liquid air for cooling. Each house will be connected with vacuum pipes for cleaning, so that all the household dirt of the city can be drawn to one place and burned. Sea water will be supplied for cleaning, and for putting out fires.

The Governor-General of Canada is credited with having suggested a scheme for the federation of the Empire that will possibly be adopted. It is supposed to provide for local home rule for England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and for an Imperial Parliament in which the colonies will be represented. The upper house of this parliament is to be called the senate, and is to include one hundred members of the present house of lords. It is believed that both the great parties in the United Kingdom will favor the scheme, or one similar, as it offers a way out of their present legislative difficulties. At present, a general election is in progress there, the principal question at issue being the veto power of the House of Lords.

Count Tolstoy, the famous Russian writer whose teachings are followed by the Doukhobors, died on the twentieth of last month, in a peasant's hut in which he had taken shelter. He was recognized as one of the prophets of the age, and his message was the brotherhood of man.