

separate classes, all recitations should be, to a certain extent, recitations in spelling. When a new word occurs, have it spelled and defined. If this cannot be done, there is no use of the pupil who fails going further in that recitation until he consult the dictionary.

3. Pronunciation—that is, correct pronunciation on the part of the teacher—is a powerful aid to the study of spelling. In dictating words, many teachers are liable to pronounce so plainly as to be incorrect; each syllable being enunciated with labored distinctness, and an utter disregard of the laws of pronunciation. If the pupil is unable to spell a word, he has only to say that he does not understand it, in order to have it so pronounced as to leave no doubt as to its orthography. Of course, he will miss this same word the next time he has occasion to use it. Carelessness of pronunciation on the part of the pupils cannot be too carefully guarded against. We spell as we pronounce—to a great extent. If *part-i-ciple* be pronounced with three syllables, it will be spelled with three syllables; and if *perspiration* be pronounced as if the first syllable were *pes*, it will be spelled in like manner.

4. A fourth means to correct spelling is composition. A list of words is assigned for a lesson; the recitation to consist of the correct placing of these words in sentences. This is a very useful means of teaching the orthography and use of words pronounced alike, but spelled differently, and of different meaning. How often is the word *principle* used when *principal* is meant, and *vice versa*? So *cur-rent* is used for *cur-rant*, and the reverse. The argument for teaching the spelling of words only in connection with their meaning applies especially to this class of words. The spelling of each examination paper should be carefully scrutinized, and misspelled words noted. If it be understood that these efforts will affect the standing, carelessness in spelling will be effectually done away.

5. Good penmanship is a most efficient teacher of spelling. Many a person writes a word poorly because he is not certain of its orthography, and his penmanship prevents detection. A misspelled word looks worse when well written than if only scrawled. I have seen the word *to-gether* misspelled many times, but never did it look so utterly out of place as when it appeared in the rounded characters of a well-known writing teacher. A gentleman who stands high among the teachers of Wisconsin, in writing the diphthongs *ei* and *ie*, makes both letters exactly alike, and places the dot above and just halfway between them. There is nothing to be insisted on more strenuously than plainness of writing. It will prevent attempted deception as well as a great waste of time.

6. Rules for spelling have a place among the means of teaching this art. Just what their relative importance may be is a matter of opinion. Time spent in a mere memorizing of rules is time wasted. Yet this is just what many think to be their use. Their application to the spelling of certain classes of words may be very valuable, both as a means to correct spelling and a matter of discipline. The application of rules to the spelling of derivatives must be practised until it becomes habitual to the pupil, or the rules are of no account. But there is a large class of words that is above all rules, and that defies all law. Such words as *delible* and *indelible*; as *siege* and *seize*. The only way that I know to dispose of such words is to learn their spelling just as the multiplication table is learned. They must be taken by force and compelled to submit.

7. Pupils should keep a list of all misspelled words, and from time to time review them. Of course, the teachers will note all such words, and frequently bring them to the attention of pupils.

8. And last, but by no means least, let the habit of consulting the dictionary whenever any doubt arises, be formed as soon as possible—not an unwilling consultation, as is now usually the case, but a willing and cheerful search after truth. This habit cannot be over-estimated. If it be once acquired, there is little fear that misspelled words will find a place in any composition.—*New York School Journal*.

TEACHING LANGUAGE.

Many thousand years ago mothers and nurses discovered how to teach babies to talk. About other educational problems there may be doubt, but this one is settled; the one thing every human being, rich or poor, learned or ignorant, can do really well is to speak the tongue his mother taught him. Now, if pedagogues, instead of making children go their way, would only consent to follow the ex-

ample set by the mothers, and teach as they do, or, in other words, would let children learn in the way in which nature meant them to learn, they might be successful, too, but they consider themselves wiser than nature, and therefore they fail. A mother does not begin by teaching her baby to spell before it can talk. She says, "I am mother;" and the baby understands perfectly, and tries, and after a while says "mother," and is delighted; and so learning to talk goes on with perfect satisfaction to every one. In view of these well-known facts, common sense would suggest making an effort to see if it is impossible to teach reading and writing in the same way; in perfect faith that if it can be done it must be natural. That it can be done with entire success the result of many different experiments has proved. The method is very simple. For example, the teacher, on the first day of school, draws a man on the blackboard, and then taking a little class of about a dozen children about her she asks them what she has drawn. They say "a man," and are interested at once. She then writes the word "man," and tells them that means "man," too. They understand immediately, and after she has rubbed it and re-written it a few times they learn to recognize it wherever they see it. Then while the impression is still fresh they are sent to their seats to see how good a man they can make on their slates for themselves. This is their first writing lesson, and though naturally the first attempts are not very successful, it is surprising how quickly children learn to imitate any word they see written, and with what never-failing interest and enjoyment they will copy words and sentences upon their slates. Every word they read they also write, and of course spell; for children would no more spell the word "man" wrong than they write it, after having learned to draw it in this way, than they would draw the man without his head. Indeed, the method of teaching spelling is a great feature of the system. If anything has been demonstrated by repeated failure, it is that teaching to spell English by ear is impossible. Nine out of ten of the people who speak the English language to-day, if they are in doubt how to spell a word, write it down to see how it looks; that is, they spell by eye, although the eye has never been trained to retain the shape of words. The object system spends its whole power on this training of the eye. From his first lesson, before he knows a letter, the child is taught to imitate the written shapes; he is taught to rely entirely upon the eye, and after he has learned his letters, and can spell orally, instead of drawing what were to him at first arbitrary signs, the same system is continued. Spelling is taught by dictation, and by exercises in writing original composition, until at length the eye retains naturally and without effort the form of every word that has been seen.

Meanwhile, orthography is learned. Having always seen sentences written beginning with a capital, it seems to the children a law of nature that all sentences should so begin, and accordingly they never think of writing otherwise. They learn in the same way what a question mark is, and what it means, and where it should be put, and so on throughout. Strangely enough, also, although the child has never been taught his letters, and only knows written words as signs representing objects, he finds no difficulty in recognizing the printed words when he sees them printed in a book.

The children who have learned to read from script upon the blackboard, when they are put into primers, go on with so little difficulty that the delay in the school work may be neglected. Every one knows, however, that the converse does not hold true, and that children who have first learned to read print do not read handwriting naturally. As time goes on another strange phenomenon takes place. Children begin to read new words at sight, without knowing their letters. They appear to have come to associate certain written signs with certain sounds, and to generalize just as they do when they learn to talk. No child, for instance, ever heard the word "gooder," yet the chances are he will say "gooder," and not "better," because he has learned by observation the rule for forming the comparative, but not the exception to the rule. So in learning to read he seems to recognize the force of the letters long before he knows their names. When this stage is reached the battle is won. After that children soon learn the names of letters for themselves; at most the teacher has only to spell the words aloud for a few days as she writes them on the board. The difficulty then is to supply the books. There is no danger that children thus taught will not love to read. Learning has been one long pleasure to them, because it gave a vent for their energy in work they thoroughly understand, which occupied at once their brains and their hands. They read childish books with