

whose training in youth neglects this for other things. One beginning his book-education late in life may, if he takes the right course, learn this as well as he learns other subjects, though such a one always labors under the disadvantage of not having learned some things at the time of life in which they are most easily learned. But one who grows up through the grammar or high school with habits of inaccuracy will almost certainly carry them into business, and will reveal them in legal documents or in written sermons. The worst spellers I have known have been grown-up students in higher English and Latin, students who ever really learned any "common subject." And they seemed as insensible to the disrepute of such ignorance as they were incorrigible in the practice of it. They had failed in the early drill which teaches and fixes good habits, and they were unwilling to submit themselves to any process which might promise to remedy, in part, their fault, but promised only at a price of labor and perseverance which require a sort of heroism to undertake.

They are good spellers and they only—excepting the very few whom we call *natural* spellers, and they need the same drill though not to the same extent with others—whose attention is called constantly and sharply to the form of words while they are getting their vocabulary and are first coming into contact with written words as signs of ideas. Children now learn words as wholes and then separate them into letters. In this way they very soon learn to recognize in other words, not yet taught to them, the combinations which their eyes and ears first, and then their tongues, have already been made familiar with, and so are constantly reading and spelling ahead of the teacher's lessons. They learn to jump at pronunciation and meaning, and very early in the process of reading and spelling astonish and perplex the teacher by had knowing much more than has been taught. It is not possible, if it were desirable, for the teacher to keep the spelling and analysis and definition lessons, and whatever other lesson it may be the practice to connect with the acquisition of new printed words in the first stages of book learning, abreast with the child's own acquisition of a vocabulary. He will learn words in their use and in their meaning faster than the teacher can possibly furnish them in the usual manner of giving lessons, and he will learn them accurately, so as to know them and so as to reproduce them to the ear or to the eye in reasonably certain opposition to the exactness and accuracy of the attention which he is compelled to exercise on such as form the material of his daily drill. That is, he will speedily and accurately extend his spelling lesson and his pronouncing lesson to words which are similar or analogous to those which his lessons have fixed in his eye and ear. If these organs and his memory are drilled to see, to hear and to remember some words just as they are, he will for himself see and hear and remember many more, and if the drill is kept up long enough he will be a reasonably safe speller: but if this process is not begun early and persevered in rigidly during the first years of school life it is hardly possible that the child will ever learn to spell. The sharp sense and the ready verbal memory of childhood seem to be almost essential to the learning of this art.

On the other hand, those who have been drilled to see correctly the form, and have been accustomed to hear correctly the sounds of words and have at the same time been exercised in making the written form represent the sounds heard, that is, in writing words, will presently form the habit of learning the spelling of every new word, as a matter of course, the forms being accurately noticed as the meaning is for the first time ascertained, and the two being fixed in the mind so that the one shall always suggest the other. This cannot be said of those who have not been carefully drilled in spelling. They are as uncertain and as careless about new words, and words which come to their notice later in life, as of those they first neglected to learn. They can never learn to spell more than they can learn any thing else by *beginning in the middle and going backward*. The form of words can be remembered only by being seen just as they are and seen on purpose to be remembered, as the railroad conductor sees his passengers, or as the detective searches the face of a suspected person that he may know whether it answers to the description of the man he wants.

Now a days the almost universal method of spelling lessons is the written. The argument is good and the practice should be in writing. The argument is good and the practice is good. It is possible, however, to overdo this, or rather to neglect another aid. It is true that we need to see a word just as it

in order to write it in the same way ourselves; do we not also need to *hear* it just as it is for the same purpose? If both ear and tongue are accustomed to scrutinize words, and both pencil and eye are habituated to reproduce them, the habit of accuracy may have two points of attachments instead of one. We do not want to make the written spelling less abundant, but the oral a little more so.

What shall the spelling lesson be after children get out of the second or third readers? What shall be the daily drill? We can make secondary lessons out of the names of articles sold in a shop, or of the vegetables raised in a garden, or of the parts of a house, or of a taste of etymology, or of a list of all the words which begin with a certain prefix or end with a certain suffix. There are ten chances to one that the teacher does not know any basis on which to build any but the most precarious (etymology or word-analysis, he knowing no Latin and less Greek or French or Anglo-Saxon; and there are ten chances to none that the people have no knowledge of such things and will not get it under such teaching.

Spelling books, or set lessons arranged for the daily drill, made up of the "substance of doctrine" in this subject seem to be both a necessity and a convenience. The ordinary teacher will do far better with them than he can do without. Indeed, he will only make a caricature and a blunder of his spelling-lesson if he did not use them. He can make orthographical excursions and spelling picnics with safety, if he has some good guide to call him back when he gets too far away from work and too much engrossed with exercises whose main interest is not founded in spelling, but he needs and would better stick pretty closely to his guide-book and go out on such expeditions or raids as it may suggest and show the way to.

Shall he learn by rule? If the language would conform to rules, this would solve the question, but it will not till the reform comes. Scarcely any rules, which are not more confusing and misleading than helpful, can be given. Three or four perhaps half a dozen, may be of help, but beyond this they are almost worthless. For example; to determine which of the two letters of the diphthong *ei* precedes the other, we are told by some that if the preceding consonant have an *s*-sound, *e* comes first; this will spell many words and would be a great help but for such bothersome exceptions as *siege*, *siege*, *clairassier*, *financier*, &c., and if there were not so many words in which *e* comes first, though the combination is not preceded by an *s* sound: as *foreign*, *reign*, *rein*, *mullin*, *neigh*, &c. Kerl says: *always c-ei*; how then about *deficient*, *proficient*, *sufficient*, *conscience*, not to say *glacier* and *species*? Another says (Westlake) *c-lous* is the spelling for words which pertain to matter, for all other *c-lous*. I find no exception to the first half of this rule; but how about *spacious*, *meritricious*, *luscious* and *capacious* in its first meaning? It can hardly be more than a chance that the rule is as nearly true as it is, and it is only half a rule at best, for its legitimate extension to include another preceding consonant, *t*, with precisely the same vocal power as *c* in such cases, puts us at sixes and sevens, as there are many *teous-es* as *tious-es*. No principle of orthography is involved and hence no safe and comprehensive rule can be made. A very few rules, however, are of service.

A principle of arrangement of a spelling book may be found in the classes of errors almost universally made. These are the interchange of alphabetical equivalents, double or single consonants, the vowels of obscure or unaccented syllables, and words of similar or nearly similar pronunciation. For example; the child does not know, unless he *knows*—that is, he cannot guess, or determine by any rule—whether to write *s* or *c* in the last syllable of *supersede* and *intercede*, one *g* or two *g*'s in *maggot* and *fagot*, what vowel to write for the second syllable of *separate* and *origin*, and whether to write *beach* or *beech*, *principal* or *principle*, as detached words, undefined. If he were drilled in miscellaneous collections of words, a rule being thrown in now and then where a really helpful one can be made and a foretaste being offered of the way in which words are made from other words, just enough to suggest that a very inviting field lies not far outside of his spelling lesson, and not neglecting a full collection of phrases containing homophonous words, would he not be taking, about as direct a road to correct orthography as can be found? Thus: if all the words, or a good share of them, containing *ei* and those containing *ie*, and those which have two *n*'s or *g*'s and those having only one, and those which double the consonant or drop the final vowel on undergoing some modification, &c., were put together, and were followed by a collection of those which cannot be made to go