

over any other, for spelling would then consist in the analysis of words into their simple sounds and the representation of these sounds by their appropriate letters. But the English language does not conform to phonetic principles. With words of the simplest orthography an analysis of their sound never gives the names of the letters. The number of words containing silent letters is very great, while in the terminations *able* and *ible*, *ant* and *ent*, *or* and *er*, the sound gives us no assistance, and besides the character of the vowel sounds is utterly uncertain and arbitrary. Hence to acquire a correct knowledge of English spelling it is almost necessary to form a personal acquaintance with each individual word. From the nature of our language it is certain, therefore, that the ear is no guide to the correct spelling of English words. There are other reasons, not based upon the nature of our language, which should lead us to discontinue teaching exclusively by oral spelling. First, we cannot be certain that we have the undivided attention of the whole class. We can give active employment to only one pupil at the same time, and the rest may be attentive or their thoughts may be wandering off in other directions. This method fosters inattention and listlessness, and should therefore not be adopted. Secondly, as each pupil can receive only a small portion of the words of the lesson, we cannot determine exactly whether the lesson has been prepared as a whole, nor can we determine with certainty all the mistakes of each pupil—a very important point in spelling—so that the value of the lesson to the class is very much diminished. Thirdly, by teaching spelling orally we adopt a method of little practical importance to the pupils after their school days are over. Few require to spell orally more than an occasional word in actual business, so that pupils trained to spell exclusively by the method of oral spelling have no preparation for the only use to which their knowledge of orthography will be put when they leave school. For these reasons then oral spelling should hold only a subordinate place in school work.

When spelling is made to depend upon the sense of sight we resolve the word into its several parts and express these parts. This method is founded upon an analysis of *form*, and the important point aimed at is to impress the form of the word upon the memory of the pupils. No attention is paid at all to the sounds of the letters composing it. The word is viewed as the picture of an idea, and its parts are studied by the pupils so that they may be able to reproduce it in writing. The pupils are taught to look upon letters as parts of whole words and not as characters representing certain sounds. The eye is trained in analysing the forms and letter-contents of words, and the hand is trained to produce them promptly and correctly. This method appears to be the more rational one. From the commencement the pupils have abundant practice in writing words; each pupil spells from forty to fifty times as many words as he would by the oral system, and at the same time by having something allotted to him to do he is prevented from being inattentive, listless, or mischievous. That better results will follow if spelling be taught from the beginning, principally by written exercises, experience has fully convinced me. It is true that this system requires better teaching and far more labor than the oral system, but the best results and not the minimum of labor to the teacher should be the aim. The course of instruction to be pursued in each class will first be pointed out in the following paragraphs, after which the method of examining and correcting errors will be discussed.

While the pupil is in the first part of the First Reader he should not be bothered with spelling at all. He is now so fully occupied in learning to read, that the introduction of spelling lessons at this stage only interferes with his progress. He requires time to gain such familiarity with the forms of words as will enable him to pro-

nounce them with facility, and as the analysis of words, with a view to secure their correct spelling, can be of no use to him in acquiring their pronunciation, it should not be attempted. Words must be recognized as wholes before an attempt is made to resolve them into their letter-contents, and hence spelling should follow reading. But if, after a few lessons have been read, the pupil be provided with slate and pencil, and be taught to print by copying from the black-board the simplest words of the lessons he can already read thoroughly, better results will follow. The exercise furnishes him with agreeable employment at a time when he would take very little interest in his book, and he performs the task willingly. He is led to observe more closely the forms of words by printing them again and again, and at the same time to institute for himself a comparison of words, so that when he finishes the reader he can not only spell all the words in it but has gained a power of spelling. At this stage spelling is best taught when not taught formally.

When the pupil is promoted to Part Second he should take a step in advance. Hitherto we have helped him to the spelling of each word; we have shown him on the board how to print every word before asking him to print it; we have resolved every word for him into its letter-contents before requiring him to do the same. He has hitherto been dealing with *single* words selected for him on account of their simplicity. We now withdraw this help and require him to analyse for himself every word he meets with in his future lessons. This step is for him a difficult one. He meets with many combinations of letters new and strange to him, as well as longer and more difficult words than before, while he has now to copy from the printed pages, of itself a difficult task for him. But we have placed him in the most favorable circumstances to accomplish the task. The work of copying from the board the words of his previous lessons has enabled him to master the mechanical difficulties of forming the letters, so that he can now print with ease. We only require him to print those lessons he has *thoroughly* learned to read. Further, a line or two at a time is for a while a sufficient exercise, but the work of copying this line or two must be neatly and correctly done. From the commencement the pupil must be made to understand that we do not so much wish to know how *much* work he can do as how *well* he can do it. By again and again copying out the words of his lesson, and observing their forms, he gains a mastery over the new and strange letter combinations, and gets the images of the words firmly impressed upon his memory. He gains, too, as he proceeds, the power of analysing the letter-contents of words with more and more rapidity, and when he finishes this reader experiences little difficulty in doing it.

On his attaining to the Second Reader we continue to require the pupil to copy every lesson; but now the work is to be done in writing, and after he has so copied it selected words and phrases are to be dictated to him, to test whether his analysis of the words has been sufficiently exact. Every word he is unable to spell should be copied five or six times. As soon as the corrections have been made the slates should be called in and an oral drill given on the mis-spelled words. If the class be large it should be divided into two sections, one of which can be engaged in copying the assigned lesson while the other is reading. Thus when both sections have read round they will also have finished copying the lesson assigned, and then both may be tested together by written spelling in the way previously mentioned. In the oral drill which should follow every test exercise of this kind the pupil should be taught to give proper attention to the syllables, by making a pause after each. This not only costs no additional labor, but is found to diminish materially the difficulties of oral spelling, which arise from the pupil's being confused with the lengths of words. Of