

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SPELLING.

It is one of the discoveries of modern experimental psychology that some learn more quickly through the eye, others through the ear. In other words, some are eye-minded or visualizers, others ear-minded or audiles. While the number of visualizers is much greater than the number of audiles, the fact that a certain percentage of the pupils of any school are almost certainly ear-minded would suggest the employment of methods comprehensive enough to make appeal to both classes. There is, then, a psychological deduction to be made in favour of some form of oral spelling. There is also the obvious fact that the more sense avenues can be employed in building up a mental image, the stronger that image will be, and the more clues there will be to its revival. Though the ear-gate may in most people be narrower than the eye-gate, the impression made through both will, in all, be surely stronger than the impression made through one only. Here, then, is another *a priori* principle in favour of oral spelling. And the truth of these deductions will, I believe, be borne out by systematic observation of children, by systematic oral and written spelling tests, and by the examination of pupils' mistakes.

Dr. Shaw tested "over 2,000 children with nonsense combinations of from three to ten letters in length. In the first part of the investigation 140 visual presentations of these were made. From thirty to forty pupils were tested at a time, and the tests were so divided as to make no fatiguing demands upon the pupils. Each child wrote down what he could recall of the 140 printed cards which were held up before him for a given length of time. The pupils were requested not to move their lips when looking at the combinations; and although we impressed upon them as strongly as we could that they must not use their lips, we found that, though they started out with very commendable effort not to do so, they soon lapsed into the use of their lips. When another strong appeal not to use the lips was made, many cases came under observation of children who, while inhibiting the use of their lips, were moving their hands or a finger, as if telling off the letters silently. After repeated observations by those who assisted in making the tests, it was agreed that at least ninety per cent. of all the children tested lapsed into aiding themselves by using their lips—