

case of a Spelling Book it will be reasonable, in order to determine whether it shall be reviewed or not, to inquire whether its compiler can spell. A cursory examination of "Gage's Practical Speller" will quickly satisfy anyone that, on the principle set forth in our opening sentence, the work fully merits notice. It shall have it.

It will be observed that this eminently "Practical Speller" is in its *second* edition; and as there is internal evidence that the work has been submitted to revision, there is the less justification for the retention of errors which disgraced the book in the first place, and which still disgrace and discredit it as a text-book designed for school use. When we state, moreover, that the work has been largely pillaged from American text-books, astonishment at the blunders in the little the compiler had to do will be correspondingly increased. But the moral aspects of the educational book-making of this "Practical Spelling" firm are too uninviting to be here dealt with. We shall therefore not touch the unsavoury subject. The compiler, however, has too much respect for his art to be a mere copyist: in his blunder-building he is intrepidly original. It is true that, in the long and rambling "Preface" to the work, one meets with much that is assuring; and we feel that the man who writes "if possible *never let a pupil see a word wrongly spelled*" must be a safe guide for correctly-spelling youth. But the information, "the old-fashioned spelling book has been discarded," is ominous; though again our prejudice vanishes when we read of pupils "turned loose on society to shock it by their bad spelling." "Guage," "guager," and "rain-guage" (*vide* pp. 86 and 92, 1st edition), it is true, at first discomfited us, but in attributing this originality in spelling to some personal eccentricity in the publisher, we speedily recovered ourselves—only to be bowled over again, however, on stumbling upon "pronunciation" (*sic*) on the title-page. Still nothing daunted, we ventured to explore within—to find *marone* for *maroon*, *salable* for *saleable*, *dynasty* for *dynasty*, *wave* for *waive*, *caption*

for *capture*, with such outrages on the Queen's English as *filoneous*, *Lilly*, *lilliputian*, *raccoon*, *pappoose*, *worshippers*, *smilling*, and other thorough-going attempts to revolutionize or disguise the language. Clearly, we thought, some original and highly unusual merit has here been impressed into service. Of course, talent of this sort, if to be had at all, we felt sure would be engaged on such an enterprise as "Gage's Educational Series." But literary enthusiasm of this type was not going to stop at orthographic disguises. The classification and syllabication of words opened a new field for original authorship. Here would it throw itself! Let us cull a few specimens. Under "Animal Food" (page 15), without a word in explanation of the minuter classifications of the animal kingdom or of the chemistry of dietetics, we find honey, oysters, curd, custard, and sardines, and on the following page, under "Vegetable Food (prepared)," stew, gravy, catch up, and vinegar! This we may call literary *hash*, which, by way of dessert, has the following expository sentences as a syntactical condiment—"Pastry is pies, tarts, cake, and the like," and "game is wild *meats for food*." Verily, "base is the slave who expounds!" But all this is nothing to the complete intellectual freedom with which the editor of this precious manual approaches and deals with the subject of syllabication. Here we have him at his best, and who shall say that the flickering lamp of learning shall ever go out while our author holds the torch?

We have hitherto had a vague consciousness that, however far removed from an exact science, there were certain well-defined principles which governed the syllabication of words. How little we knew, or rather, how much we trusted, in this matter, this master-juggler of spelling has enlightened us. Still, we retain a traditional respect for old methods, loyalty to which compels us to demur to the syllabication of the following dissyllables selected at random from the "Practical Speller." We cite the words as they appear in the work:—"ho-ney," "clo-set," "rul-ers," "La-tin," "fact-or," "de-