

subjects are out of touch with life. The quarrel is not with arithmetic, as a school subject, but with what is likely to be taught as arithmetic — operations and methods the utility of which ceases when school is out.

Dr. Leonard P. Ayres tells of having been called upon to examine the eighth-grade arithmetic text-books in a New England city. From the book in use he made up an examination, which he persuaded a number of successful business and professional men to try. These were men earning from three to fifteen thousand dollars a year. None of them passed the examination. The highest mark recorded was twenty-five per cent. There was one problem in paper-buying that seemed particularly troublesome. Two of the men who took the examination were directly engaged in publishing work, and purchased many tons of paper every year. Both failed on the paper question, and both gave the same excuse: "They had known how to do that when they left school, but having had no use for it since, they had forgotten it." They further explained that the terms used in the paper problem had not been in use in the trade for the last fifty years. There is an interesting epilogue to this story. Dr. Ayres gave the same arithmetic examination to his fifteen-year-old office girl, just from the eighth-grade. She received seventy-five per cent. marks on the examination.—*The Schoolmaster*.

### SPELLING IN THE PRIMARY GRADES.

A paper read by Miss Florence Seeley before the Teachers' Institute in Moncton, October 20th, 1916.

Incorrect spelling is one of the most common, and, to the teacher, one of the most annoying faults found among the classes of the public schools to-day. We are going to discuss *how* this fault may be corrected. First of all, I think you will agree with me that this correction must begin in the primary grades, by teaching the children there, first, how to spell the words which are most commonly used by them, and, second, how to study spelling.

In preparation for teaching a spelling lesson I write all the new words in the lesson on the blackboard; then we divide the words into syllables and discuss their peculiarities, such as the silent letters,

the capitals and why they are used, or the apostrophe and what it signified. Then we spell each word simultaneously nine or ten times, always pronouncing the word before spelling. Next, I write a second list containing the difficult words which, although we have studied them in previous lessons, are still likely to be misspelled by some of the class, and we spell these words simultaneously five or six times, pronouncing each word before spelling it as before.

This completes the oral part of the lesson. But it is nearly, if not quite, as difficult for a child to learn to write a word correctly, having previously learned to spell it orally, as it is for him to learn to spell the word in the first place; so the pupils write in their best writing, each new word ten times. When I first began to put this plan into practice, I found that the pupils hurried so much to get the work done that it was spoiling their writing; but since I have required the work to be done over again if the writing is not satisfactory I have had no difficulty in that respect.

This may seem a very lengthy and tedious process, but in reality, it is not; for in the primary grades (and it is of those only that we are speaking) we have only five or six new words each day and often not so many. And for that matter we should *take* time, for if spelling is not taught in the primary grades, where are the teachers of the intermediate grades to get time to teach spelling that should have been learned in grades two or three, in addition to all the work planned by the school curriculum to be done in those grades?

Just one more point in connection with the new spelling lesson, and this is that when the words are written next day the pupils pronounce each word together after hearing it and before writing it. The work is then examined and the misspelled words are learned and written out ten times each.

For spelling review I have a list of the words that are frequently misspelled on the board, and at odd moments we drill on these. Also on every Friday I have a review of the four previous days' lessons; and of course I use the ever popular (with the children at least) spelling class for this purpose, and occasionally we have a spelling match.