

either phonic or graphic, withdraws so much from the thought they express. But the necessary effect of teaching these forms *directly*, by whatever method, so that they shall be recognized at sight, is to *thrust them forward* into consciousness, and thus destroy their function as language. If we commence with the ultimate elements, either phonic or graphic, we interpose a great number of objects of attention before reaching the *ultimate object*, the thought.

It is a well-established law of the mind that a series of remembered facts will be recalled in the order in which they were first acquired. To illustrate, we will select the word "cat," and proceed according to an approved letter-method. We first give the letter *c*, then *a*, and then *t*. The child must then be told that these letters put together spell "cat." He may, or he may not, think of the object, cat. Whether he does or not according to the foregoing principle, whenever the word is presented for recognition, his attention is arrested by each letter in the order in which it was first learned; and each letter being an independent recognition, is complete in itself, and satisfies the mind for the time being, and leaves no impulse for going beyond. This process is repeated with each word, multiplying intermediate objects of attention, and making more and more difficult the attainment of the thought. An immediate and necessary result of all this is a laboured and monotonous naming of words without thought or naturalness of expression; and a still sadder result is the formation of the habit of being satisfied with this recognition and naming of words, that years, and often a life-time, fail to correct. If we begin with the elementary sounds, by either the phonetic or phonic method, substantially the same results follow. By commencing with the whole word we

somewhat lessen the number of intermediate objects of attention, and thus increase the chances of not exhausting this power before the thought is reached.

Good readers are never made by any of these processes. But there are good readers in spite of our methods. They are those who have learned without the intervention of teachers, or have been brought to a good degree of excellence by drill, and by processes that have no necessary connection with the methods by which they were first taught. The written or the printed page, instead of being a *medium* through which the thought is unconsciously attained, becomes an obstacle by being made the direct object of attention, which is only removed by the laborious process of translation into oral speech. You look through your window to what is passing in the street; you do not notice the glass that intervenes. But turn your attention to the glass and it becomes a barrier almost as complete as if it were opaque.

Language, to be a medium of thought, must be used unconsciously. The words of the speaker only make us think his thoughts. We speak and are only conscious of what we say, and not of the means or manner of saying it. We look upon the printed or written page, and we should have no more consciousness of the letters or words upon it than of the glass through which we look at objects without. So language is a medium of thought. But if it be taught as *an end*, by any direct process, the order is reversed, and *long years of effort* will be required to make it take its proper place as a medium.

*Language Taught Indirectly.*—To meet these conditions, means must be devised for teaching graphic language as we have learned the oral, by making it a secondary, rather than the primary object of attention. It must