

generally did this on the side on which Alice was walking, she soon found it was the best plan not to walk *quite* close to the horse.

"I'm afraid you've not had much practice in riding," she ventured to say as she was helping him up from his fifth tumble. The knight looked very much surprised and a little offended at the remark. "What makes you say that?" he asked, as he scrambled back into the saddle, keeping hold of Alice's hair with one hand, to save himself from falling over on the other side.

"Because people don't fall off quite so often when they've had much practice."

"I've had plenty of practice," the knight said gravely; "plenty of practice!" Alice could think of nothing better to say than "Indeed!" but she said it as heartily as she could. They went on a little way in silence after this, the knight, with his eyes shut, muttering to himself, and Alice watching anxiously for the next tumble.

"The great art of riding," the knight suddenly began in a loud voice, waving his right arm as he spoke, "is to keep"—Here the sentence ended as suddenly as it had begun, as the knight fell heavily on the top of his head exactly in the path where Alice was walking. She was quite frightened this time, and said in an anxious tone, as she picked him up. "I hope no bones are broken?"

"None to speak of," the knight said, as if he didn't mind breaking two or three of them. "The great art of riding, as I was saying, is to keep your balance properly. Like this, you know"—He let go the bridle and stretched out both his arms to shew Alice what he meant, and this time he fell flat on his back right under the horse's feet.

"Plenty of practice!" he went on repeating, all the time Alice was getting him on his feet again. "Plenty of practice!"

"It's too ridiculous!" cried Alice, losing all her patience this time. "You ought to have a wood in horse on wheels, that you ought!" "Does that go smoothly?" the knight asked in a tone of great interest, clasping his arms around the horse's neck as he spoke, just in time to save himself from tumbling off again. "Much more smoothly than a live horse," Alice said, with a little scream of laughter, in spite of all she could do to prevent it. "I'll get one," the knight said, thoughtfully to himself. "One or two—several."

"The great art of riding is to keep your balance properly;" and the great art of reading is to know when to give the sound, and when to give this sound, and when to give another sound to the same letter, and to keep your mental balance among all this confusion. Alice "found it was the best plan not to walk *quite* close to the horse," and children very soon instinctively learn that it is the best plan not to keep *quite* close to the letters, but to be ready to give a new sound to the old friends at discretion or indiscretion. And thus a want of firmness, confidence, and mental clearness is generated, which probably delays the acquisition of other subjects, and which may in fact stick to the pupil all his life. For the attitude of the mind in learning to read English is not a simple one—like the mental attitude of the German child. It is a threefold state of mind. The child has to do not one thing, but three things:

1. He has to notice when he must *not* notice (in the case of *silent* letters);
2. He has to notice when he must alter his translation of a symbol—or be *false* to his past experience;
3. He must notice when to give the old translation, or keep *true* to his past experience.

It is very difficult to make one set of movements with the right hand, and a different set with the left; but if we had to keep up a third and still different set of movements with one of the feet, it would be a very slow and difficult thing to learn.

The language contains more than 1300 words the notation of which is not in harmony with the pronunciation, and these 1300 words are the commonest—the most in daily use. Of these, 800 are monosyllables—and these too in the most common use—words like *too*, *said*, *they*, *brought*, *one*, and *once*. The problem of teaching to read a true notation is to train children to co-ordinate with and fit to the *eye-language* (the printed symbol), which they do not yet know, the *ear-language*, which they have known from their earliest days. But what if the eye-language refuses to be fitted to the ear-language? What if they have long bid each other good-bye and taken separate paths? What if the task becomes for the

child a merely arbitrary and entirely forceful linking of the one to the other?

The important question now arises. *Is there an antidote to this state of things?* The two diseases or malformations in the language are plain to every one; and they are perpetually present to the elementary teacher. What are we to do?

The analogy in human affairs points to the fact that the presence of a great defect in one direction points to the presence of a great power in another direction; and the question arises: Is there, for the enormous deficiencies and absurdities in our notation, some countervailing advantage in the language?

I believe there is an antidote—a very simple but a very effective one. The antidote is to be found in the language itself. It is easy by the invention of diacritical\* marks, to guide the child to the ordinary pronunciation, but then these diacritical marks are themselves a new notation. The cure is not to be found in that direction. The language is poor in letters; but it is rich in words. The wealth of the vocabulary may make up for the poverty of the alphabet. There is no more common experience in the writing of English than the quickness which the mind soon acquires in rejecting this phrase and preferring that—in substituting one word for another—in selecting, among a number of candidates, the aptest word for the purpose. There is probably no European language with so many different words for the same notion; and it is quite possible to write one's ideas in two perfectly different kinds of English—Latinised English or pure English. This then raises the hope—is it possible that, by conscious selection, we should come to write English which should present no difficulties to the learner, and which should be printed in a self-consistent notation?

I have made the small but important discovery that there is such a notation in the language, and that it is possible to write decent English in it. Among the detritus of notations which represent the English language upon paper, there exists a PERFECT NOTATION, which is always self-consistent, and in which sound and symbol are always in agreement. This perfect notation represents the twenty-six letters of our alphabet in only one of their functions, and, if intelligently taught, it can be learned with pleasure in a very short time. Narrative of all kinds—Bible Stories, Travels, Natural History, and even Verse—can be written in this perfect notation without much injury to the style and rhythm of the language.

If this is so, then it follows that the existence of this perfect notation at once puts into our hands the true method of teaching to read. Acquaintance with one self-consistent notation forms the primary condition of all methods and all attempts at teaching the paper-form of our language to young children.

A child who has mastered this has mastered it with all his faculties preserved to him, his rational and "natural" expectations gratified, and his love for self-consistency and intellectual honesty contented.—*How to Teach English Reading.*

#### WHO BELIEVE IN EDUCATION?

The idea is very widely diffused that the "educational party" is very large, and by this term is meant commissioners, trustees, superintendents, principals, teachers, and that indefinable class "friends of education"—meaning those who send to school or "holler" about the schools—when they are running for an office. Do not for a moment suppose that all these people believe in education.

(1.) What a man knows nothing about, he does not, cannot, believe in. Now, how many of all the above classes know about education, its history, its principles, its ideas, its methods, its exponents, its prevailing tendency to-day, the stages of its progress, the history of its founders, the influence of each, &c. &c.?

\* Such marks, I mean, as are used to indicate silent letters, etc., etc.