

## V. Papers on Practical Education.

### 1. HOW TO TEACH SPELLING.

I. Special attention should be given to the shorter words, because (1) They are in more frequent use than the longer words. (2) They form the basis of the longer words. (3) They are often more difficult and irregular than the longer words.

II. By a systematic classification of the words in common use according to their peculiar difficulties, the principle of association should be brought to bear upon the teaching of spelling to a greater extent than is usual in schools. Perplexing as are the anomalies of English orthography, there is yet "some method in this madness;" the irregularities are reducible to classes, while the words that are quite irregular are comparatively few; thus, as regards the monosyllable in the language, which numbers about 3,000, the number of words which defy all classification—those that form a "sui generis"—are less than 100, of which *do, been, said, shoe,* are examples. Now the committing to memory by frequently *writing* them, would be no formidable task to a child; then the regular words might be learnt in classes.

*Dictation* is generally considered the only remedy for bad spelling. Now *dictation alone* has the following inconveniences:—In large classes it is difficult to correct all the exercises. Then there is the risk of confirming the pupil in error. It is a needless waste of time to dictate *every word*, especially in the more advanced stages.

*Dictation* is an admirable *test* of spelling, but it should be accompanied by *direct teaching*.—*E. J. in London Educational Record.*

### 2. MAP DRAWING IN TEACHING GEOGRAPHY.

Most teachers have become convinced that the method of teaching Geography generally practised in our Common schools, is by no means satisfactory. The pupils appear to recite their lessons well enough, but the teacher soon observes that they seldom retain that which they so readily recite. To remedy this defect, and to more durably imprint upon their minds the relative positions of countries, and the location of cities, etc., I have adopted the following course:

Each day a short lesson is assigned to the class to be learned from the Geography; but in addition to this they are required to draw upon the blackboard a map of the country, or part of country, under consideration, delineating the larger rivers, and locating the principal towns. After they have drawn their maps, one is sent to the board and points out the cities, giving their names, and also describes the rivers. The next gives the area in square miles of each state or division of country which they have drawn. The next bounds the several divisions, and so on through the lesson, assigning some part to each member of the class.

I generally feel satisfied that if a scholar can draw a good map of a country in the manner indicated without the aid of a copy, he has a tolerably fair knowledge of the geography of that country; and it is my candid opinion that if teachers would generally adopt the plan of having their pupils draw maps upon the blackboard, their endeavours to teach Geography would much more generally prove successful.—*TEACHER, in Wisconsin Journal of Education.*

### 3. LORD PALMERSTON ON WRITING.

Lord Palmerston took a little recreation the other day by presiding at the Romsey Labourer's Association. In the course of his address to them he spoke of hand writing as follows: Writing is almost as important as speaking, because every man whatever his station in life may be, must have constant occasion to convey his thoughts, his wishes, his complaints, his desires, in writing, and unless that writing be legible and easily read, with the letters well formed, so that a person can read that writing without trouble or delay, it fails by disgusting the person to whom it is addressed (Cheers). I must say that in the present day I do not think that instruction in writing is given in that way which would render it most useful. Children who are taught to write are taught to make up strokes fine and down strokes bold—the consequence of which is that writing often looks like a railing, a little laying on one side, so that it is difficult for the eye to make out the letters of which that writing professes to be composed. Children should be taught to write a large hand, to form each letter well, and never to mind whether it looks beautiful or not. If it answers the purpose of being easily read, that is the thing which ought to be aimed at.

### 4. WRITING FROM COPY BOOKS.

All masters know the trouble and expense of using and providing copy-slips or writing-models for the children of their school—the

results arising therefrom being, generally speaking, unsatisfactory, unless the child's writing a stiff formal hand, commonly called copper-plate, be considered the acme of this branch of its education. Copy-books with headlines, though they save trouble, are equally as expensive, the child having to pay extra for such books, and in my opinion inferior as models, the imitation of which is to lead to the formation of a business hand. If models are to be used, I certainly prefer Mulhauser's, the small-hand of which contain useful and instructive sentences, which fix the attention of the child much more readily than a few dry words, meaningless unless explained, such being rarely done. A good plain, readable hand, appears to me to be the great desideratum to be attained in the caligraphy of our schools; and to that end I adopt the following plan:—None but plain ruled copy-books are used, viz., text, round, and mixed hands; the former for the 1st and 2nd, the round hand for the 3rd, and the latter for the three higher grades. Every morning, before my arrival in the school-room, each teacher has a copy written on the black-boards of their respective classes suitable to each grade. On the boards before the classes writing mixed hands, two sentences are written, one in round hand, the other in small—the former likewise sufficing for the text-hand—sufficient to occupy two or three lines of its copy. By this method the ceaseless trouble and expense of copy-slips disappear; and from the evidence of numerous visitors such a similarity in writing is the result, in all parts of a large school, as is rarely seen. For a young beginner, the copy is pencilled in its book for a few times, which is discontinued as soon as possible. Should the copy be unfinished at the close of the lesson, the child commences the next writing lesson where it finished the preceding. Often has it been said that "Necessity is the mother of invention." This has been perfectly true in my case, for taking charge of a large school, in a very poor district, I was obliged to hit upon the most inexpensive means which would conduce to rapid improvement in knowledge and discipline; and in this instance I consider myself successful. A plain, round, readable hand from dictation is the happy result, with no trouble in finding models or monitors to serve out and gather in the same; no time wasted in attempting to discover some poor delinquent who has purposely or accidentally torn, blotted, or otherwise disfigured the model; yet with the same, at least, if not with far better, results.—*EDWIN LUCAS in Monthly Paper.*

### 5. THE VALUE OF A COMMA.

Mr. Edward About, wrote, in report of the Fine Arts Exhibition, "M. Lapere is skilful, educated, more than intelligent." M. Lapere inquired, by note, of the writer, what he meant, "What do you mean to say, sir? I am very much afraid you mean to say that I am better educated than intelligent, and that the comma signifies nothing. And even if it is there, it might not have been there." M. About replied, "the comma proves, sir, that I look upon you as a man who is educated, and more than intelligent." M. Lapere was not satisfied and appealed to the law to redress his grievance. M. About answered, "I am challenged to explain and say that if that comma is a serious, solid, established, intentional comma, and if I meant to say that M. Lapere was both an educated man and a man of remarkable intelligence. I hasten to declare that I was still under that impression when I wrote my article, that is to say a fortnight ago.—*Publisher's Circular.*

### 6. DRILL AT SCHOOL.\*

The opinion is very generally expressed that a law should be introduced making it imperative that the scholars of every school and institution receiving a Government grant should be trained and drilled. In ten years, if this scheme be carried out, the country would be as powerful as any on this continent, independent of foreign influence, and indisposed to play the ignominious part it has been dragged through during the past few years.—*Montreal Gazette.*

## VI. Biographical Sketches.

### No. 22.—THE HON. JAMES GORDON, M.L.C.

In our obituary column yesterday was announced the death of Lieutenant Colonel the Hon. James Gordon, member of the Legislative Council of Canada. Lieutenant Colonel Gordon was the son of the late Rev. Alexander Gordon, minister of Daviot, Inverness-

\* We are happy to state that His Excellency the Governor General has been pleased to appoint Major Goodwin (so long and so favourably known in Toronto for his activity and zeal in militia affairs), to be Drill Instructor to the pupils and students at the Upper Canada College and the Normal and Model Schools.—*Ed. J. of Ed.*