

English.

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SPELLING—A PLAN.

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JUST now there is an epoch of revolt against spelling. Theoretically we are doing away with the old-fashioned spelling; practically we are still grinding away at the oddities and anomalies of the English orthography, and still reaching as poor a result as of yore. The task of raising a class to a high level in this subject is still a question of sad thought to both pupil and teacher, and imperfect lessons, shirked corrections, copying, and punishments, are some of the features of the spelling class, leading many children to actively hate this subject as taught, or presumably taught, in school. Now the question is, are we making the children good spellers, or are we merely detectives to find out how badly they spell and to mete out suitable punishments for their failures? Of course "to make good spellers," any one will say. But when we hear two teachers talking over methods for this subject any one would think the chief end of the lesson was to make sure of how many mistakes each child had, and to keep them from copying. Now good spelling is not attained without a training in observation, order, logic and memory, and any method that succeeds in training a child to spell well, must be based on a knowledge of this fact. To set a child a lesson on a paragraph, say, of a reading lesson and expect him to have it perfectly prepared for the next day, is to expect something unreasonable, unless he has special abilities or training in these respects. Yet many teachers punish every day for imperfect results!

Miss Kramwell had for years ground her pupils into a morbid dread of the spelling lesson, and had succeeded in getting perhaps ten pupils out of fifty to be excellent spellers, ten more to be pretty good, ten more medium, and out of the untrustworthy remainder there were always to be found two or three very bad indeed, in spite of the fact that they had been pursued until every error was corrected twenty times for each word, for a period of two school terms, and no loop-hole of escape allowed them.

There was in her present class, James Black, an earnest, dear boy, who tried and tried, and there was timid Helen Smyth, who longed to leave school with the other girls but was always "kept in" for her corrections; and there were those two careless, easy-going souls, Charles McSweeney and Alfred Lowndes, to whom the matter was one of indifference and hopelessness, and the punishment an expected and not-to-be-avoided fate. What was to be done with these four was the responsibility which lay upon Miss Kramwell's thoughts one day in the middle of the term. After visiting a friend at a shorthand academy a method came to her like an inspiration and the next day she tried it.

"Pupils, take slates." The class looked up, surprised, for she had always used a dictation book, but the slates were placed on the desk, ready for further orders.

"Write these words on your slates, each twice; write well."

Then she wrote on the board three words, such as these, from the Reader, dividing them into syllables: "dif-fer-ent, ex-ten-sive, prop-er-tions."

"Write them again."

This done, the class sat in position.

"Now we are going to have a drill." When I say different, you will write the word as many times as you can before I say the next word. Write plainly, and if you need to, look at the board." The children were surprised again. "Look at the board!" They had been punished ere now for that very thing! But Miss Kramwell looked so cheerful, that they went to work with energy, and Miss Kramwell

went on: "Different, extensive, proportions, extensive"—a hand went up. "You gave us 'extensive' before, Miss Kramwell."

"Never mind, write it again as often as I say it, Johnnie—different, extensive, proportions, different, proportions, etc., etc.," until the class had seen and written and heard each word a great number of times and had grown independent of the blackboard. All in less time than it takes to write it down here.

Then Miss Kramwell covered the words and wrote other three words, "visible, starvation, mystery," with the same division into syllables (with passing comments on meaning by synonym and context). The class wrote them slowly twice, then rapidly many times. Then the first three were written, mixing in the second three and repeating the more difficult oftener. Four more words were then put upon the board and drilled upon as the others. Slates were cleaned and the words upon the board covered. Miss Kramwell then read out the ten words to the class. The blackboard words were then uncovered and the pupils compared their spelling with the board. No one was punished for errors; she simply commended the good work everybody had done and said she believed she would have a fine lot of "reporters" soon, if they kept on doing so well. No lesson was assigned, but she said she would take the same words next day and then she would give them ten new ones. She noticed as a hopeful sign that Charles McSweeney and Alfred Lowndes were quite gay and elated over the fact they had accomplished as much as the others and that James Black had spelled every word correctly.

The next day she took a review without the board (for memory-training) of the ten words, but put the words on for comparison after they had been written. The new words were given out as on the day previous and then the twenty were rapidly written. No scribbled or obscure words were to be counted as correct, and each scholar corrected his own, apparently with no watching from the teacher. No mark was given for correct work, but for earnest work, and the children did not feel so great a temptation to deceive by giving in less errors, as is too often the case.

Next day, the dictation books were used, and, without blackboard, the twenty words were neatly written in ink in the book. They were then marked by a committee of good spellers and the teacher, any dissatisfied pupil asking the teacher's opinion. All mis-spelled words were re-written at the back of the dictation book. Marks were given proportioned to the result as in an examination. A great interest was seen to be prevailing, and the almost discouraged plucked up courage and asked to know where Miss Kramwell intended to find the next twenty words, and she was kind enough to say she was thinking of a certain page. A steady trial of this method helped her class very much, and by varying it by giving sentences and words used practically, and by plenty of written composition, she found the children's language, fluency of handwriting, quickness of hearing, and concentration, were all being improved as well as their spelling. It was no mere grind, which is detestable, but was a delight to all. Even Charles McSweeney and Alfred Lowndes brightened up, because it was something they could do well, and that is always encouraging, and Miss Kramwell says that James Black and Nelson Smyth have quite got over dreading the spelling hour. And nobody ever now says, "I didn't get it down, you went too fast." The class would dissolve in laughter at such a speech, for it is the ambition of every one to get each word written at least three times, and they would scorn to be behind. The method may not be new, but if kept up with discretion, and varied to avoid monotony, it is a good one, and gives good results.

If in a day or so Miss Kramwell wished to test their power of using the words taught, she gave out some words and asked for written sentences, obtaining such results as:

Preservation—"My mother's fruit kept in good preservation;" or,

Preservation—"The moths got at my fur cap and it is in a bad state of preservation;" or

Proportions—"This building is of large proportions;" or

Proportions—"Proportions are the length, breadth, and thickness and height of anything, taken together."

Miss Kramwell gave the class some home work on these lines and got very intelligent results. But these are matters of detail merely; the point is to give eye-training especially, and to use the hand and ear and memory to quick automatic power of expression, and the variation of the plan will vary as the pupils and the teacher vary.

Science.

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HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE.—1894.

PHYSIOLOGY AND TEMPERANCE.

NOTE.—Five questions will make a full paper.

1. Describe the processes which food undergoes in order to prepare it to enter the blood.
2. Explain clearly why the body requires food.
3. What are the functions of
 - (a) the heart,
 - (b) the arteries,
 - (c) the capillaries.
4. State clearly the effects of alcohol on
 - (a) the blood-vessels,
 - (b) the blood.
5. Explain the changes that take place in the blood as it circulates through the lungs.
6. Show how alcohol injuriously affects the functions of the lungs.
7. Give four reasons why you consider the use of tobacco injurious to the system.

ANSWERS.

1. The food is chewed by the teeth to render it fine, so as to be easily acted on by the various secretions poured into the alimentary canal. While in the mouth the saliva with which it mixes changes a portion of the starch of the food into sugar which is soluble and so can be absorbed. When the food passes into the stomach it is rolled about and mixed with the gastric juice, which changes the insoluble proteids into soluble peptones. Certain other salts are here dissolved; and a portion of these with other soluble materials are absorbed into the blood and lymph vessels of the mucous membrane of the stomach. The liquid food now called chyme, is passed into the intestines, where it comes into contact with the bile and pancreatic juice. The latter changes insoluble starch to soluble sugar, and also changes proteids as in the stomach and attacks the fats. The functions of the bile are not well understood. During the whole of its course, the food as it is rendered soluble is absorbed into the blood and lymph vessels in the lining of the intestines and stomach. From these it is conveyed to larger vessels and finally into the heart.

2. Every movement of the body is made by expending energy of some kind. Heat is a form of energy which can be transformed into mechanical energy. To supply heat the body is gradually buried up and to make good this waste, food is required.

3. (a) To force blood to the lungs for purification.

To force blood to all parts of the body, conveying food and oxygen.

To receive the impure blood to send to the lungs.

(b) To carry the blood from the heart to the lungs and to all parts of the body.

(c) By the thinness of their walls they allow the food parts of the blood to pass to the