

## PRIMARY SPELLING LESSON.

BY ELIZABETH SHARE.

A PLEASANT, bright room; fifty children from seven to nine; a teacher who is earnest, and interested in her work. On a side blackboard is this list of words: Calf, thief, wolf, pony, story, knife, wife, motto.

"First class face side-board." Quietly and promptly the division seated on that side of the room turns toward the board where the spelling lesson is seen. "Children, I want you to tell me the word that means *more than one* of each of the objects these words name. As you give them I will write them opposite these words on the board." "Charlie," the teacher simply says, in answer to the score or more of hands that fly up to signify readiness to respond. With Charlie to start, rapidly others are called upon. In a marvellously few seconds, one might almost say, the second list is complete. Occasionally as she writes, the teacher puts in a note of warning. See where the *i* is in this word." "Watch what I do with the *y* in this." "This word is one of the hard ones—look sharply."

The list completed—"We will look over this new list together. What will you remember about the word *thieves*?" "The *i* before the *e*." "Right. What about *stories*?" "The *i* in place of the *y* before *es*." "Yes." "O, Miss C—," exclaims one child, "there is an *es* at the end of every word!" Miss C— gives him due and glad credit for his discovery. Then she says, "Look silently at each word until its picture is in your mind." With intent faces the children study the words—one can see there is thought work being done. "Are you ready?" "Yes, Miss C—." In a flash the list of plurals disappears from the board. "Class, face. Take pencils. From the list of words on the board you may write the ones we just made and studied. Work."

Shortly the slates are ready for inspection. We find a great many perfect ones. The mistakes are greeted with, "You will watch closer next time, won't you?" "You didn't think when you looked at the words."

What did the lesson illustrate?

First.—Every lesson in spelling should aim directly at the formation of two habits, that of correctly seeing words and that of accurately reproducing them.

Second.—The meaningless copying of words a certain number of times as preparation is usually a waste of time. Thoughtful copying may be of benefit, after the children have been trained by persistent daily efforts to make the exercise mean something.

Third.—The reasons given to the children for failure were scientific. Nine-tenths of the poor spelling arises from lack of trained power to see words as they really are. If the perception is clear the meaning will take care of itself.

As I watched the quietness, alertness, and interest of this class in even a spelling lesson, these words of Thackeray came to my mind:

"Sow an act, reap a tendency; sow a tendency, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny."—*Intelligencer*.

## JOE'S SUM.

JOE brought his little arithmetic and read aloud the problem, "What will eleven yards of cloth cost at seven dollars a yard?"

But Joe could not see through it to the answer, and it took the best part of half-an-hour to conquer it.

We commenced in this way: "What does one yard of cloth cost?"

He replies, "seven dollars," with a tone of certainty firm enough for Wall Street. He knew it.

The second step was to measure a second yard and then ask him, "What will the new yard cost?"

His reply was firm, "Seven dollars more."

Now take the two yards, and his answer was prompt and sure, "Fourteen dollars."

Right. Yet as the object was to teach him the process as well as the answer—so it was recited slowly to him and he repeated again and again until he had the formula in his mind, "If one yard costs seven dollars, two yards will cost two times seven dollars, which is fourteen dollars."

It was slow work, a struggle, but he was willing and eager, with a helping word and a little praise now and then. He fixed it strongly.

Meanwhile all the scholars near his age, sitting at the desk close by had got into the work and would gladly have stopped their own work to take part in Joe's struggle; but this would have been a damage both to them and to Joe. So their eager looks and half audible answers were politely checked, and we two worked on.

The third step was easier. Take another yard, Joe. Now what will three yards cost?

He cast his answer very fairly into the proposed form, more readily than before.

It is needless to detail our steps farther, yard by yard, till he marched with the air of a conqueror through the last answer, "If one yard cost seven dollars, eleven yards will cost eleven times seven dollars, which is seventy-seven dollars."

The feeble footsteps had been many, but the conclusion was firm and victorious.

Joe has learned how to think out that sum for himself, and in doing this has been taught how to solve all others like it.—*Ex.*

## Correspondence.

## A PERTINENT QUESTION.

To the Editor of the EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL:

SIR,—It is certain that our Public School Geography is lacking in one very important point. Our teaching of that subject is year by year drifting away from minor points in physical features, etc., and more stress is rightly placed on the trade relations of one country to another. Our text-book pays great attention to the products of all kinds, but the paragraph dealing with the trade (home and foreign), is very scant, especially for our own Canada.

Boys and girls preparing Entrance Exams. are required to know whence we import every article brought into the country and to tell every country to which we export an individual article, as is shown from the following exam. question, 1892: "To what countries does Canada send her surplus flour, peas, barley, eggs, horses, pigs, lumber and salt? Whence does she get her molasses, wine, silks, oysters, oranges, bananas and cotton?" Now every boy would answer that question in his own way, for he knows where each of these articles is produced, but his answer is only a guess, as he cannot find from our Geography with what countries Canada carries on her trade in these articles. Their answers would in nearly every case be, "England" or "United States."

Now how are our classes to distinguish whether we get precious stones from Brazil, Southern Africa or Australia, or whether we export wheat to any country but England? How can they learn what trade we carry on with France and Spain? Yet they are required to know.

Would you kindly give me some light on the subject by answering the quoted question, or in some other way.

Yours sincerely,

GEO. B. SNYDER.

[We know of no book to which to refer our correspondent save the Parliamentary Reports and the Official Year Book, neither of which is well suited for the purpose. Perhaps some of our readers could direct him to some convenient summary.—ED. EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL.]

## Question Drawer.

J. Mc. asks us for examples of kinds of questions likely to be asked on an entrance paper in British History. His class having reached the George IV. period, he wishes to know whether it is best to keep on or begin at the beginning.

As to the second point, by all means take your class through the remaining part of the history, in preference to reviewing the earlier part. While a general knowledge of the main facts of British History from the beginning to the present year is required from Entrance candidates, the history of our own times (George IV. to Victoria, inclusive) is of peculiar importance and interest. For the history of the past three years (not given, of course, in the text-book) it would be well to read, say, one of the many biographies of Mr. Gladstone which appeared in the daily papers at the time of his resignation last winter. The *Globe's* sketch was particularly good.

To ascertain the kind of questions likely to be asked, the best plan is to consult examination papers of previous years. For example, these are some of the questions asked in the years 1893, '92 and '91:—

1. What caused the Wars of the Roses?

Give an outline of their history, naming and locating the principal battle-fields and explaining the results of the wars.

2. Any three of the following:—

- (a) Mary, Queen of Scots.
- (b) Sir Thomas Wentworth.
- (c) John Hampden.
- (d) The Duke of Monmouth.
- (e) Lord Nelson.
- (f) Sir Robert Peel.

3. Give an account of the Irish Parliament (1782-1801.)

Public School work in history should be mainly biographical, the chief facts and incidents being grouped about the great actors. In this form the subject is both interesting and easy to young minds. Then special attention should be paid to those subjects which are connected with matters of present and vital interest, e.g., just now, an examiner would naturally suppose the children's attention had been called particularly to the Irish question, and the course of history bearing on this, to the history of the English House of Lords and the present agitation against it; to the history of the English church and what the question of disestablishment means. Just now, too, when interest is being revived in the Napoleonic story, the life of Napoleon, as far as concerns English history, should be carefully noted. The successful teacher of history must be a man of the times, and should carefully note the events which are taking place in his own times.

J. J. T. asks for "a brief but full account of the Hawaii trouble. See article in Current History Department.

A SUBSCRIBER.—It would be impossible to condense a serviceable sketch of Gladstone's remarkable career within the limits of space available in our columns. On the occasion of Gladstone's retirement a few weeks ago, nearly all the leading dailies had sketches of his life. Probably you could procure a copy of the *Globe*, of March 5th, '91, which had a good summary, by writing to the office of that paper.

S. O. B.—The cities in Ontario with their approximate populations are the following:—Belleville, 10,000; Brantford, 12,700; Guelph, 10,500; Hamilton, 50,000; Kingston, 19,500; London, 32,000; Ottawa, 44,000; St. Catharines, 9,000; St. Thomas, 10,500; Stratford, 9,500; Toronto, 181,000; Windsor, 10,500.

## Literary Notes.

THE *Review of Reviews* for June is just to hand with its usual rich freight of notes of the Progress of the World, Records of Current Events, *resumes* of leading Magazine articles of the month, Notices of New Books, Current History in Caricature, etc. This magazine is, as it is intended to be, a veritable *olla podrida*, in which are served up together a great variety of ingredients selected from the best periodical literature of the day. The strong and in some respects unique personality of its originator, Mr. Stead, underlying and to some extent pervading it, will be to many readers, not the least among its attractions.