

Note for the teacher.—This lesson is designed to show how reading, spelling, composition, grammar, and study lessons can be concentrated into one subject, one study preparing the others. The language lessons of the Third Reader class should be, on the whole, the same. But word-analysis should be added. In the class of the Fourth Reader the study of synonyms, the forms of composition, and the properties of style should be added; in the Fifth Reader class, biographical notes of the authors should prepare for the study of English Literature. Geographical, scientific, and literary notes should accompany the lesson whenever necessary to a complete understanding of the lesson.—C. FALK, in *N. C. Journal of Education*.

ENGLISH SPELLING.

Sooner or later the movement in favor of reforming our English Spelling is sure to find a certain amount of support amongst the teachers, and as one sign of the approach of the coming agitation it is interesting to note that some educational journals in the United States are giving up to it a portion of their space. At the recent Social Science Congress held at Saratoga, the Rev. H. L. Wayland of Philadelphia indulged in some very strong language on the subject. Amongst other things he said:

"If it were proposed to introduce such a system, we should cry out in amazement, indignant horror: nothing makes it tolerable for an instant, save the fact that we were born into it, and that we had become wonted to all these atrocities before we had sufficient power of reason to understand how monstrous they are. Consider the harm to the child's mind, to his reasoning powers. We say to him: 'Here is this letter; it has this sound, this force.' But he then finds it is purely a matter of chance whether it has this sound, or something entirely different. * * * It is because the child's moral nature has great staying powers that it is not wholly perverted. We say: 'Final e, when silent, makes the vowel of the syllable long.' So the child says, 'b-a-d-e, bade,' and we say, 'no; that is bad.' The child says 'definite,' and we say, 'Oh no; that is definite.' Silent e is a lie. Truth may lie at the bottom of a well; but it certainly does not lie in the primer."

The word *i-g-h-t*, Mr. Wayland says, "is a fraud; out of the five letters composing it only one has the sound that properly belongs to it." The *American Journal of Education* quotes, in a recent issue, the following passage from "The Caxtons," by the late Lord Lytton:

"A more lying, round-about, riddle-headed delusion than that by which we confound the clear intellect of truth in our spelling, was never concocted by the father of falsehood. How can a system of education flourish that begins by so monstrous a falsehood, which the sense of hearing suffices to contradict?"

A comparison of such opinions with those expressed by Professor Meiklejohn, in his "Problem of Teaching to Read," and with the views of Professor Max Muller and other eminent philologists will serve to show that the defects of our English alphabet and the anomalies of our English spelling continue their existence in the face of a strong and growing desire to remove them. The question how far teachers should fall in with any movement in this direction is an important one. No such movement can ever become a complete success without their aid, and sooner or later they will find themselves compelled to take up some attitude in the discussion. Those of conservative tendencies of mind will be the last to recognize the expediency of doing anything to simplify our spelling, while the more enthusiastic members of the profession will render the so-called spelling reformers cordial assistance. In view of the coming agitation it is worth while to at least inquire what the reformers propose to accomplish.

They may be arranged in three classes. The first comprises those who seek to correct such anomalies as may be corrected without any change of alphabet. They admit that such a measure of reform would not be thorough, but they contend that it has the merit of being feasible. Words similarly pronounced should, in their view, be similarly spelled, so far as our present defective alphabet will

admit of it. Some would carry this reform much further than others are willing to do, but in principle and method they are at one. To this class belonged Dr. Webster who, however, was ahead of his time as an orthographical purist.

The second class of spelling reformers embraces those who wish to retain our present alphabet and add to it new characters enough to make it perfect. It is evident that these have undertaken a much heavier contract than their fellow-reformers of the first class. The introduction of new letters to the number of from fifteen to twenty causes the commonest words to take on a foreign look, which must prove an obstacle in the way of the advocates of this method.

The third class includes those who seek to dispense altogether with the present defective alphabet, and substitute a new one which would combine the quality of simplicity of form with that of constancy in the use of the letters. They argue that if we are to go at all beyond the scheme of reform possible within the limits of our present alphabet, it is unwise to stop short of such a complete measure as would be impossible without a totally new set of marks to represent spoken sounds. They allege that the confusion caused by these new marks would be no greater than that caused by necessary additions to our present alphabet, and they contend that the new marks might be made very much more simple in form than those which have come down to us from sources some of which are now of great antiquity. Such a new alphabet is employed by all shorthand writers, whether they write from sound, as in Phonography, or use arbitrary symbols, as in the system called "takingraphy."

This whole subject is commended to the earnest attention of teachers. Whether they approve of any attempt at reforming English Spelling or not they will derive great benefit, even in teaching the written language as it is, from a thorough course in the phonetics of English and the history of the alphabet.

CHATS WITH BEGINNERS.

Assuming, my young friends, that, with a true appreciation of the responsibility of your chosen profession, you have given yourself professional training therefor, let us chat together of some little matters that do not hold a definite place in the curriculum of the best normal school.

You have completed the prescribed course of study for teaching, and armed with note-books and methods, accept your first school with a strong determination to win a name and position among good teachers. You believe that the teacher wields a powerful influence over her pupils, and with glistening eyes and throbbing hearts have listened to glowing descriptions of what the true teacher may accomplish for a human soul. In the solitude of the great congregation, in the depths of your own heart, you have registered the vow, "I, too, will be such a teacher." The dreaded examination is waived in deference to your blue-ribboned diploma, or, with courageous heart and sound knowledge, you have met and answered the questions of the town committee. Perhaps you have left home for the first time, and already realize what otherwise you will soon learn, that you are no longer "child" but "woman" forevermore. You will leave your new boarding-place for your school room, morning after morning, for weeks to come. Pause a moment before you place the pretty hat upon your head.

"The teacher should be herself what she wishes her pupils to become." Is the hair so neat, so glossy and shining that, though God has not given you beauty of face, yet you are a "vision fair to see?" Are the teeth so clean and shining, that, by-and-by when you explain to your pupils the pleasure of looking at the mouth of