

And what is the time lost in this work. About ten years ago at the suggestion of the then Superintendent of Education for the Province, Dr. Allison, I took some very accurate statistics for the solution of this problem in the town of Pictou, Nova Scotia, of whose schools I was then Principal. I prepared blank forms for each department to contain the names of all the pupils of each. The teacher was instructed to obtain from each parent or guardian an accurate statement of the time taken by each pupil in the study of home lessons—of each home lesson. From these returns it was a very simple thing to calculate the percentage of home study absorbed in the department of orthography. From the time tables in each department, the percentage of time devoted to orthography in the school room was computed. The gross results were briefly as follows:

Pupils from	5 to	7 years	were spending	74 per cent	of time	on spelling.
"	"	7 " 9	"	47	"	"
"	"	9 " 11	"	37	"	"
"	"	11 " 13	"	25	"	"

That is forty-nine per cent. of the whole time of study at home, and in school for the first six years was absorbed in spelling lessons. Or over forty per cent. of the first eight years of school time. But making allowance for other work done incidentally in connection with the spelling, such as the study of definitions, etc., and of incidental reading, expression and elocution in the higher classes, more than twenty-five per cent. of the first eight years of school work was absorbed entirely in overcoming the difficulties of our orthography, such as do not now exist in simplified phonetic languages as German, Italian, Spanish, Danish, and even Welch. There is nothing more clearly proved to my mind than that English children is handicapped to the extent of two years' work by the difficulties of our orthography as compared with those of the nationalities above referred to. What a tremendous boon a relief of two years' work would be to our crowded course of study in our elementary schools! What a splendid opportunity would be given for the study of the correct and fluent use of the English language under such circumstances! Now the most of our time is spent in drudgery in what is not English language at all, though so closely connected with it as to create in advance a distaste for the study of the language itself by the unfortunate association.

In the London schools, and in the schools of several of the larger cities in the United States, similar investigations have been made, all proving that the loss of time is from two to three years. Such, beyond the limit of any reasonable doubt, is the time lost in this one feature of our system.

But there may often be worse than lost time in it. Of all tasks for young children, spelling with its polyglot affinities, its half phonetic, half hodge-podge orthography, is the first, as a general rule, to beget a distaste for school life. Those naturally crammers pass. And here we get a glimpse of another possible effect. I fear our spelling in the elementary stages of school life tends to sift from the great current of potential scientific scholarship in its earliest manifestations, the more original and inventive minds. The assimilator passes, the inventor is disgusted. No wonder we have no Shakespeares in these days of spelling drill. No wonder so many geniuses arise outside the ranks of the school-trained. Chinese culture may be very delightful to those once intoxicated with it, but the science-loving, common-sense Japs will conquer. "But surely the evil of our system is exaggerated by this presentation?" I fancy some one says. That is just what I wish to have carefully examined.

Max Muller says: "English spelling is a national misfortune, and in the keen international race between all the countries of Europe, it handicaps the English child

to a degree rough quarters year, and years to let H. Gladstone English state a line: "If the Italian would be satisfied in his education capped by thorough.

expressive, in the trend of the trend cent. more cent. expression of orthography As compared to the S shippi to the S "Spelling his takes to learn they say, in a

In this connection published in a the National primary school in a twelve-month useful study a lost in every grade

He goes on motives. If this computed, that brains of our children and printers and publishers

Were our spelling could be mastered foreign countries schools at first

They then pass B. Burnz, of Newville), as elsewhere could be accomplished common method, children in passing satisfactory would William Colburne, who is now a few out the slightest New Testament for I am his teacher