

once was so foolish as to keep a class, or a part of a class, until March, at the poor, miserable bones when the living, speaking, acting words were waiting within their reach. I wonder now that a long-suffering public did not chase me from the school-house and warn me to leave the place.

Does it need argument to prove that it is easier for a child to learn the name of a thing than, by synthesis, to find it out? The truth is so apparent that it seems superfluous to assert it, but, lest any may still be unconvinced, let me ask how nature teaches the child? Does he first learn that this is the leg, that the round, the one the back, the other the bottom, that this is wood, that paint, this cane, and, finally, that the whole, leg, seat, cane, back, bottom, altogether is a chair? Does the medical scientist first find certain unknown substances which he terms bone, tendon, muscle, nerve, blood, hair, etc., etc., and then, finding out their properties, decide that these arranged in a certain way form a man, in another way a dog or a horse or an ox? Need I answer that the child first learns that this is a chair, and may not for years learn how it is made; that this is an apple, and has no knowledge of its parts, possibly until he is a man; that the medical scientist first takes the completed body as he finds it, and, by analysis, finds out its component parts and their various forms, and that, having made a few careful analysis, he is, at once, able to tell me that this is bone, that flesh and this blood, and that the whole makes up the original body. We study the diamond that reflects the light from its score of faces before we crush and subject it to the chemist's art to discover its component parts. We learn of nearly everything, in fact, by the process of analysis, but in reading we have been trying to invert nature's process and build up, we know not what, out of symbols that are as meaningless to the child as Egyptian hieroglyphics.

Some have claimed that the "Look and Say method" develops bad spellers, but I challenge the correctness of this opinion. True, it may be, that a poor use of the method might turn out bad spellers, but this is not the fault of the method but of the teacher who manipulates the method.

That bad spelling exists is but another argument for reform in teaching reading, for good teaching analyzes the words taught and shows how the results have been reached; that such a method could be held responsible for bad spelling is almost inconceivable. Bad spelling is largely the result of negligent reading and the most unnatural ways in which we teach spelling; but of this I must not speak at present.