

does. This is the best affirming word to use first, denoting *action*. Afterward what it is, and what it *receives* passively. Have the pupils utter the sentence distinctly. Ask them simple questions: "Of what do we speak?" "What word represents the object?" "What is said of the object?" "What word represents the act?" "We have now a sentence: Bird flies." "A sentence is a collection of words in which we say something of an object." "Here we have a short, yet complete sentence, containing only two words." "Write it on your slates as on the blackboard, and see that you commence with a capital letter, and write distinctly and spell correctly." "Now, utter the sentence in concert." In like manner extend and write out the same or other sentences, by developing the parts of speech in the following succession generally: The noun, verb, article, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction, interjection, and pronoun. Lead them gradually to the naming of the parts of speech, using such terms as "object words," "affirming words," "quality words," "manner words," "relation words," and so on. This building-up method will admit of five or six courses of gradual progress, each succeeding course containing a larger number of the properties belonging to each part of speech than the preceding. In the *first part* of this series, the parts of speech may or may not be named in the usual way. Several school years may be included in this course; the advanced stage of it immediately preceding the use of the text-book in grammar. A common-sense analysis should accompany this building-up plan. Indeed, one of the most useful methods in the entire course of language-training is to have, frequently, a common-sense talk about sentences, without naming the parts of speech at all. Let pupils analyze their own expressions in this manner. I have found this exceedingly useful.

## 2. MODES OF TEACHING SPELLING.

The great object of learning to spell is to be able to spell correctly in writing. Occasionally a person is called upon to spell a word for another, and among the thousands who go to school, here and there one, in after-years, engages in teaching—spelling, perhaps, as well as other things. But the great mass learn to spell with a view to writing orthographically. To make instruction in orthography, therefore, a practical thing, spelling should undoubtedly be taught through the point of the pen or pencil. This, we believe, has now become a very general mode with small classes. With classes numbering from four to twelve, it does very well to dictate to them short sentences for five or ten minutes, according to the degree of their advancement, requiring them to capitalize, punctuate, put in hyphens, apostrophes, etc., as well as "spell" their words correctly. Then let them exchange slates or papers, and correct each other's work, without any communication between them. This will consume about ten minutes more. Let the teacher then examine the entire work, if not in the recitation room, after the class is dismissed, —the writer as well as the corrector of each having signed his name thereto, before the exercises are delivered over to the teacher for examination. The one who makes the most corrections should be credited accordingly—allowing always one correction to counter-balance one error, if the scholar be so unfortunate as to have made any. Let every error (whether in spelling, or in punctuation, or in the overlooking of an error, or in any other respect) made in attempting to correct another's work, be accounted the same as a mistake in writing the exercise. A daily record should be kept of all this. At first, the mistakes will be so numerous that but little can be given out and attended to. But in a few weeks, if this system is faithfully persevered in, it will be surprising to see what progress is made, and how the errors decrease in number.

One cannot, however, always have small classes. And even if he can, the following method affords a pleasing variety. Say a class of twenty-five has just been organized. The lesson has been assigned, and is supposed to have been studied. The class assemble, and are arranged alphabetically, or by lot, or according to age, as may seem best: if according to age, the youngest at the head, the next in years next, and so on to the oldest, who takes the foot. The lesson begins. It may be in single words, or in sentences. Suppose the latter. The sentences should be short, each complete in itself. The spelling is to be done orally. The sentence is given out distinctly, and the whole class is expected to attend, as it is not to be given out again, even though it is missed. We will suppose numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 successively spell their sentences correctly, capitalizing, punctuating, etc., as necessary. Number 6 misses. The teacher is to take no notice of it, otherwise than quietly and in a manner unobserved by the class, to put a dot with a lead-pencil opposite the name of the one who has thus missed, and in the proper column for the day, in his record-book, which should be open before him all the time as well as the book from which he dictates. Instead of giving the misspelt sentence to the next one to spell, give

out another sentence, just as if no mistake had been made. This, the class should understand beforehand, is to be the case. The first one who observes the mistake, instead of spelling the sentence given to him when his turn comes, pronounces the sentence that was missed, then spells it. If correct, he passes up and takes his place above the one who missed it. If not, the next one may try it; if he misses it, the next; and so on until the work is correctly done. If it should pass the foot uncorrected, and number one spells it right, he "goes up" and takes his place above the one that first made the mistake. That is, if number 6 made the mistake, and it passed around uncorrected to number 1, number 1, who corrects it, takes his place just above number 6. He has virtually passed from one below the foot up to within four of the head again. For passing the head, he is credited one. Should he pass the head again before the recitation is over, he is credited with two "heads." Thus several scholars may pass the head during one recitation; and each therefore is credited accordingly. At the close of the exercise the class are numbered, their numbers recorded, and when they next come together, they take their places in the order in which they stand at the close of day's recitation. If any are absent for a day or more, when they appear in the class again they take their place at the foot, relatively to each other in the order in which they were when they were present last, which is readily decided by a reference to the record-book. To-morrow's recitation, if possible, should begin at that point in the class at which to-day's left off. In this way, all are dealt by equally, and the one who passes the head the most times during the quarter of the session, if not positively the best speller, is the most attentive and most deserving. At the end of the quarter or the session, or oftener if desirable, the record, so far as the number of heads gained is concerned, may be read off; and once or twice a year it does very well to make something of a present to the best one or two in the class. Grown people work better, as a general thing, if they expect to be well rewarded for their labour; and children do better, too, if something tangible in the form of a prize is held out for their attainment.

It will be found that the giving out of a word or sentence but once is an excellent exercise for gaining the attention as well as strengthening the memory of the pupils. Occasionally I have found it beneficial to interrupt the spelling exercise by asking reasons for certain things; as, why *America*, in a sentence like "Columbus discovered America," should begin with a capital; why *web-footed* should be spelt with a hyphen; or *can't*, or *'tis*, or *John's*, with an apostrophe; why the *i* should follow, and not precede the *s* in *business*; why *queen* should begin with a capital in such a connection as "We were introduced to Queen Victoria," and not in such as "We were introduced to the queen;" etc., etc. If *fuchsia*, or *sibyl*, or some similar word occurs, explain its etymology, especially if the class is composed of more advanced pupils. Questions and explanations like these tend to fix the orthography of certain words, or of words under certain conditions, indelibly upon the mind, if they do not really for the first time call the scholar's attention to it.

When any of the class display inattention or a lack of proper study, and in consequence make a certain number of mistakes during the recitation, say three, or even more according to circumstances, an excellent penalty is to require them to copy *literatim et punctuatim* a page of foolscap at the close of the day from their Reader.—N. Y. Teacher.

## 3. FINGER CALCULATION.

A correspondent of the London *Athenaeum* says: The reference of Prof. De Morgan to the employment of the fingers for the purpose of notation induces me to speak of the very ingenious application, in China, of this living abacus to arithmetical calculations, of the faculty it gives for the settlement of accounts, and the easy solution of all sums, whether of addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division, from one up to a hundred thousand. Every finger on the left hand represents nine figures, the little finger the units, the ring finger the tens, the middle finger the hundreds, the forefinger the thousands, the thumb the tens of thousands. The three inner joints represent from 1 to 3, the three outer 4 to 6, the right side 7 to 9. The forefinger on the right hand is employed for pointing to the figure to be called into use; thus 1,234 would at once be denoted by just touching the inside of the upper joint of the forefinger, representing 1,000; then the inside of the second, or middle joint of the middle finger, representing 200; thirdly, the inside of the lower joint of the ring finger, representing 30; and lastly, the upper joint of the little finger touched on the outside, representing 4. Or, again, 9,999 would be represented by touching the side of the lower joint of the thumb (90,000) and the lower side of the joint of the fore, middle, and the little fingers, representing respectively 9,000, 900, 90 and 9. The universal correctness of the accountancy of China, when there is no purpose of fraud, and the