

**A SPELLING
BOOK, PP. 1-192**

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A Spelling Book, pp. 1-192 by Georgia Alexander

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GEORGIA ALEXANDER

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SPELLING BOOK

BY

GEORGIA AALEXANDER

SUPERVISING PRINCIPAL IN THE INDIANAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NEW AND ENLARGED EDITION

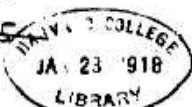
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MARY E. NICHOLSON

PREFACE

IMPROVED methods in the teaching of spelling are replacing old ones as rapidly as the modern principle of teaching form through content is gaining recognition in schoolroom practice. The principles underlying the teaching of spelling are precisely those underlying the enriching and shortening of the entire course of study, by which the child takes a short cut to knowledge through an appeal to his interest and the power gained through the cultivation of his mind. So long as we hammer at the child's brain as though it were so much cold steel in the belief that if we hammer hard enough and long enough some impression must be made, so long will the teaching of spelling meet with a greater or less degree of failure.

It is a common fallacy for teachers to believe that if they teach the letters of a word, time will fill in the empty form with the proper content. Two things are forgotten in this process: first, that in the human mind nothing dwells in isolation and that the child puts some content into every form he learns—a wrong one if he is not supplied with the right one; and second, that the child, realizing that his teacher is indifferent to his knowing the content of the word, grows both mentally and morally careless.

To what purpose did a whole class write correctly the word *error*, when later they explained that "Indians have bows and errors;" that "Errors (Arabs) live in the desert;" and bade one "Be an error (terror, hero) in the fight"? In future when the members of this class shall have need to express the *idea* "error," why should we expect *e-r-r-o-r* to come forth auto-

matically to represent it? Suppose that when the teacher had written the *form* "error" upon the board she had elicited from the class in addition to "two *r*'s and *o-r*" such sentences as: "Mary made an *error* in her addition yesterday," and "Galileo was not in *error* when he declared that the earth moved," would she not have helped her pupils to make that association between the idea and its symbol which must exist before spelling can be of any use?

Repetition and drill are necessary—emphatically so—but they should be preceded by intelligence and interest. Teachers would often be astounded at the results obtained should they put their pupils to the test of using in original sentences the words they spell so glibly. Not until each word in the column has been correctly used can a teacher be assured that the child has added it to his vocabulary.

After interest in a word has been aroused, the child's mind must be concentrated upon the peculiarity of its spelling and appealed to through all possible avenues—the eye, the ear, and the hand. So clear and strong should be the image formed that it becomes individual, even personal. For this reason, words included in this book have not been classified after the "*ace, mace, lace*" fashion, but have been purposely distributed so that each new word invites to fresh attack. There is no less authority for this mode of procedure than Dr. William T. Harris, who says that spelling lists "should be arranged so as *not* to bring together a number of words of the same combination, and thereby paralyze the memory, as is too frequently the case in the lists given in spelling books which, for example, collect in one lesson the words ending in *tion*, or *tain*, or *ture*, or *cious*, etc., thus giving the pupil by the first word that is spelled a key to all that follow." In the first grade, however, there is a list of words containing the fundamental phonograms, for ear training.

Homophones have been introduced separately in order that the meaning of each word may be firmly associated with its spelling before any confusion arises in the child's mind over the similarity in sound. Later, such homophones as the child may actually misuse, such as *there, their; know, no; etc.*, are presented in pairs for contrast.

Spelling is learned primarily through the eye, secondarily through the ear. For this reason, the words in this book have not been syllabicated. The visual and stronger image of the word thus appears as a unit to the child. Later by analyzing for himself the auditory image into its constituent elements, the child becomes more completely the master of the word than he otherwise would be.

From grade to grade are repeated certain words which are particularly difficult for children to master, such as: *which, their, coming, separate, until, necessary, possible*; and it is hoped that if the child meets them over and over again, on some occasion he will learn them.

The child is offered in the pages of this book a most carefully chosen and graded vocabulary. His limited yet constantly increasing power of comprehension and the responsibility of shaping his thoughts determined the selection. The graded quotations from standard authors serve the child in a multitude of ways. They teach him spelling more effectively than do words studied in columns, and they give him vocabulary and style. To know, even in the slightest way, Æsop, Carlyle, Dickens, Ruskin, Browning, and Tennyson, will dignify all life for him. These exercises were selected directly, however, for their practical use to the child in spelling; for instance, Merivale's description of Julius Cæsar on page 185 contains sixty of the most necessary words in the language — words that are in the vocabulary of every educated man and woman, but which the child would not voluntarily use.