

**SPELLING REFORM,  
FROM AN EDUCATIONAL  
POINT OF VIEW**

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Spelling reform, from an educational point of view by J. H. Gladstone

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**J. H. GLADSTONE**

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# SPELLING REFORM,

*From an Educational Point of View.*

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## SPELLING REFORM,

FROM AN EDUCATIONAL POINT OF VIEW.


THE present movement in favour of a reform in the spelling of the English language has been principally taken up by two classes of the community, the philologists and the teachers. It is of course from an educational point of view that the question is regarded by the School Boards for London, Liverpool, Bradford, Birmingham, and other towns, which are now asking for a Royal Commission of inquiry. The main argument employed by these Boards, and by persons engaged in tuition, is that the present spelling causes a very serious waste of time in teaching to read and write correctly. Yet the vaguest notions

prevail as to the amount of this waste, even by those who have paid attention to the subject. It appeared to me desirable to form some estimate on trustworthy grounds, and to look carefully as an educationist into the other arguments that might be advanced, either for or against the simplification of our orthography.

I tried to determine in the first place how long a time is actually devoted to the arts of spelling and reading; and in the second place how much of this time may be fairly ascribed to the difficulties attending our present un-systematic spelling.

#### PRESENT EXPENDITURE OF TIME.

In determining the first question I have considered individual cases of no value, as the aptness of the teacher and the pupil are elements for which proper allowance could not



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be made; I have rather sought to obtain evidence from those institutions where education is given on a large scale. Had there existed in our English public schools any general instructions as to the time to be devoted to different subjects, that would have afforded valuable information, and would have virtually answered the question. In default of this I have examined the time-tables of a great many elementary schools, generally talking at the same time with the teachers on the subject. In order that the inquiry should fairly represent the general education of the country I have drawn this evidence from National, British, and Wesleyan schools as well as from Board schools; and from village schools as well as those in provincial towns and the metropolis. The inquiry has been restricted to Government inspected schools; and I have had the advantage of learning the opinion of some of the Inspectors.