A Brief History of the English Language

The Romans in England. About 55 years before Christ, when Julius Caesar was conquering the Celtic tribes in Spain and Gaul, the attention of the Romans was attracted to an unknown land whose shores were seen from the northern coast of Gaul. The Romans were fond of geography and of exploring unknown regions, and their generals had a passion for extending the Roman dominions. Caesar determined to explore the country on the other side of the Channel; and it is to the records of these explorations by the Romans that we owe our early knowledge of the early inhabitants of England. It was not then known as England. The Romans named it Britannia, and it inhabitants were called Britons. Caesar's own account of his expedition has been preserved, and from it we gain a very clear idea of his experiences in this then unknown country.

He tells us that the Britons were brave, fierce, and warlike. The more civilized people, who lived in the southern part of the country, cultivated the land; but the inland tribes of the North had no knowledge of agriculture. They lived by raising flocks and herds, and by hunting wild animals. Julius Caesar did not succeed in conquering the warlike Britons, although for nearly five centuries after his invasion the Romans regarded Britannia as one of their provinces. They sent several expeditions to explore the country, but did not discover that it was an island until more than a hundred years after Caesar. The Romans held Britain in military subjection, keeping some of their legions there to overawe the people. Meanwhile the Romans were doing much to improve the country. They made roads, established trading places, taught the people to build houses and temples and baths in the Roman fashion. But when Italy was invaded by barbarians from the North, the Romans, finding that their capital was in danger, withdrew their army from Britain in 426AD.

Besides the soldiers and those directly interested in the government of the province, so few Romans came to live in Britain that there was almost no intermingling of the races. For this reason, the language of the country was changed little. Not more than one hundred Latin words have been added to our language by the five centuries of Roman rule. Most of them are proper names, nearly all ending in *-port, -caster, -cester,* and *-chester*. The word *street* is derived from *strata via*, "paved way," the name applied to the Roman roads.

The Teutons. A second great band of people who made their home in Europe were the Teutons or Germans. They were separated into various tribes, those of the greatest historical importance being the Goths, the Vandals, the Franks, the Angles, and the Saxons. A Roman historian, Tacitus, gives us a long account of these people.

They did not live in cities, but each family occupied a little village of its own; and so in time the families grew into tribes, and the tribes into kingdoms. They spent much of their time in fierce quarrels among themselves, or in battle with their neighboring tribes. They invaded neighboring provinces, and killed or drove away the inhabitants, and set up kingdoms of their own. The Franks settled in Gaul, and from them the name *France* is derived. The Goths set up a kingdom in Spain and one in Italy. It was when the Goths and the Vandals invaded the Roman provinces that the Romans had to withdraw their legions from Britain to defend their capital. They meant to return, but they never did; for the Roman Empire was destroyed by these barbarians. Three of these Teutonic tribes, the Jutes, the Angles, and the Saxons, lived on the sea-coast near the mouth of the Elbe. They were bold pirates, who regularly attacked their neighboring countries, often ravaging the coasts of Britain.

The Angles and Saxons in England. It was about twenty-five years after the withdrawal of the Romans that these Teutonic invaders came into Britain, led by two chiefs, Hengist and Horsa. The Britons met them at Aylesford, Kent, and a great battle was fought, in which the invaders were victorious. The inhabitants were either slaughtered, enslaved, or driven far to the west, and the German tribes were left in possession of the greater part of the island. The exiled Britons fled to the mountains of Wales and Cornwall, to the islands adjoining Britain, and to a province in France, which is still known as Brittainy. Meanwhile the Jutes, the Angles, and the Saxons continued to come over to Britain, where their power increased, until there were seven prominent kingdoms. The Jutes owned one kingdom, which retained its British name of Kent. The Saxons owned three kingdoms, - Wes-sex, Es-sex, and Sus-sex, the names being equivalent of *West Saxons, East Saxons*, and *South Saxons*. The Angles owned the largest territory, having three kingdoms, Mercia, East Anglia, and Northumberland. East Anglia, the home of the East Angles, was divided between the *North-folk* and the *South-folk*, from which names we get Norfolk and Suffolk. In time the kingdom of the West Saxons became the ruling one; their most famous king was Alfred the Great, who became king of Wessex in 871.

As the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes mingled more and more, great changes became apparent in their form of speech, and in time the spoken dialect of the West Saxons became the language of literature and law. This is what is known as *Old English*, which resembles modern German more than it does modern English. We can understand now what all this has to do with the history of our language; for England is a contraction of *Engle-land*, and means "the land of the Angles" (or Engles), and these German tribes united to form the *Engle-ish* or English people.

These English invaders brought with them the worship of the sun and moon; of Tiw, the god of heaven; of Woden (or Odin), the god of war; of Thor (or Thunder),

the god of storms; of Frea (or Friga), the goddess of peace and plenty; and of Seterne, of whom little is known except the name. Our names for the days of the week were first given in honor of these gods and goddesses.

Christianity in England. It is not known just how Christianity was first introduced into Britain. It is evident that some of the early Celtics embraced Christianity before the Anglo-Saxon conquest. After the Celts had been driven into Wales and Cornwall, the Christian religion continued to spread among them. More than a century after the settlement of the Saxons in England, they were converted to Christianity by Roman missionaries, chief among whom was Augustine. The story of their conversion is told by the Venerable Bede, an Anglo-Saxon monk who was born about seventy-five years after Augustine went to England, and who wrote the History of the Anglo-Saxon Church. The church services were conducted in Latin; and probably many words which have come to us from that language were introduced into England by the missionaries, during the sixth and seventh centuries, along with the knowledge and use of the Roman alphabet.

The Danish Invasions. The enemies whom England had to fight in the days of Alfred were the Scandinavians, often called simply the Danes, and sometimes the Norsemen or Northmen. During the ninth and tenth centuries the Danes often invaded England, sometimes making an alliance with the Welsh, and ravaging the adjoining kingdom of Wessex. They were often defeated in battle, but never lost a foothold in the country. Sometimes they obtained control of the kingdom; so that in the list of the kings of England during the eleventh century there are several Danish names.

The Danes belonged to the same Teutonic race with the Saxons; so it was comparatively easy for them to settle down in England as part of the English people. They were soon converted to Christianity, and became almost as civilized as the Saxons. Among the words introduced by the Danes are *bait, fling, gust, ransack, rap, whisk, whirl*, and those that began with *sc-* and *sk-*, such as *skin* and *sky*.

The Northmen. While some of the Norsemen were plundering England, others of them were making the same sort of trouble in France. Under the leadership of the Vikings, as their chiefs were called, they made their first visits to the coast of France during the reign of the great emperor Charlemagne, around the year 800. Again and again they came in ever-increasing numbers, and many times they seized upon portions of the land and lived there. Finally the French were obliged to submit to their remaining in the country, just as the English had to share their possessions with the Danes in order to make peace with them. At the beginning of the tenth

century the king of France ceded to Rollo, the leader of the Northmen, a large province in the north of France. This was called Normandy, and its inhabitants came to be known as Normans. They soon learned to imitate the manners and customs of the French people, and to speak their language. The ruler of the province became a vassal of the French king, and had the title of Duke. When the Normans had lived in France for one hundred years, they were, in some things, far superior to the English. Their speech was more refined, their social habits more polite, and their minds much better cultivated. Being so near neighbors, they were well acquainted with the English, and some of the early English kings married the daughters of the Norman nobles.

The Norman Conquest. William, Duke of Normandy, determined to become king of England. He claimed that the throne had been promised to him by Edward the Confessor, the English king who built Westminster Abbey. Edward's mother was a Norman lady, and he grew up in France. When he became king, he offended his subjects by showing his partiality of the Normans too plainly. He invited the Norman nobles over to England, and appointed them to the highest offices in the kingdom. Edward had no children, and so the Saxon people were concerned who would be his successor. They favored Harold, the brother of Edward's wife and the son of Godwin, one of the Saxon nobles. Not long before this, Harold had been shipwrecked on the coast of France, and had been befriended by William. While Harold was at the court of Normandy, apparently a guest but really a prisoner, William made him promise that in case of Edward's death, he would do all in his power to help William gain the English crown. Edward died in January, 1066, and in spite of his promise to William, Harold made great haste to be crowned in Westminster Abbey. When William heard of this, he spent several months collecting an army, and then sailed for England. Harold, at the head of the Saxon army, marched to meet him at Hastings; and there a terrible battle was fought, in which the Normans were victorious, and Harold was slain. This battle of Hastings, fought on October 14, 1066, is regarded as one of the most important events in English history.

When William of Normandy, better known as William the Conqueror, became king of England, the Normans came over in great numbers, seized the estates which belonged to the Saxon nobles, and took the political and religious government into their own hands. The Normans tried to have their language become the national speech. It was spoken in the schools, the camps, the courts, and the churches. It was also the language of the higher circles of society. Thus it happens that we have many Latin and French words pertaining to military science, to the law, to art, to poetry, and to the courtesies of social life, most of which were brought by the Normans. We must remember that they spoke what was called the Norman-French which was really the Latin language, which had been corrupted by the Celtic speech of the Gauls and by

the Teutonic tongue of the Franks, and which was possibly modified by the Norse dialects.

The main reasons why the Normans did not succeed in making French the language of England was that the Saxons were so much more numerous than their masters, and they refused to obey the dictates of the conquerors. In their homes and about their daily business they used the familiar Saxon words, instead of the more polished speech of the French. As time went on, the two races intermarried; and so these simple Saxon terms came into general use. If we compare some of our Saxon words with those of like meaning which come to us from the Latin, we shall notice that the "every-day" words are commonly Saxon; and the more ornamental ones are from the Latin.

For example, we have...

Saxon	*Latin*
like	similar
many	numerous
almighty	omnipotent
heavenly	celestial
truth	veracity
happiness	felicity

This period of French influence on the language is known as *Middle English*, and introduced the habit of borrowing words from other languages.

Modern English. Since the Norman Conquest there has been no invasion of sufficient importance to cause any great change in the language. The English of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is really the same language that we speak. It does not look like it to be sure; but then, neither does a child a year old look as he does when he is fifty. The language has "grown up," as a child does.

The years from 1400 to 1600 were arguably the most dramatic for English spelling because of the influences of commerce, education, science, and discovery. The permanent revival of a uniform spelling standard for English began to occur when a capital was established in London in the fifteenth century. When political power shifted to that central location, large numbers of important legal documents sharing the same London standard began to be circulated nationwide, and this standard which the Chancery scribes eventually settled on, has lasted, in large part, to this present day.

As civilization increased, the English became great travelers and traders, and sent out colonies into all parts of the known world. Naturally, the travelers introduced foreign terms in telling the stories of their journeys; and the traders brought back to England with the products of other lands, the names for the articles. Some-

times the name was derived from the name of the place from where the merchandise came; for example, *damask*, from Damascus, *calico*, from Calicut in India; *sardine*, from Sardinia.

The growth of our language is mainly due to the increase in learning due to the birth of the Renaissance and Reformation, and to the multiplication of books. In the Middle Ages almost all books were written in Latin. The learned men of that time knew more about that language than they did about their own. Before the invention of printing, the making of books was almost entirely confined to the monasteries, where the patient monk spent years in copying a single Latin work on philosophy or religion. A great many Latin words were introduced into our language in this way. The first known use of paper in England was in 1309, and during the period of almost two centuries that followed, it replaced parchment as the material of choice for manuscripts. This introduction of paper allowed for the increase in book production that made private reading possible for the first time. This development, combined with the founding of universities and an increased wealth in the middle class, created an unprecendented demand for books - a demand that was eventually answered by the widespread use of the printing press. When a paper mill was finally established in England by John Tate in 1495, the cost of printing was significantly reduced, and brought within reach of the common people the thought and research of all the centuries.

In this way, mainly, has come into use a vast number of foreign words. In time these words came to be Anglicized; that is, the spelling and pronunciation are changed to make them look and sound more like English words. From the Italians we have obtained our musical terms, and from the French our terms of cookery and fashion. Many such words can be traced back to the Latin. We can generally tell whether a word comes directly from the Latin or indirectly from the French, by noticing its form. If the spelling has been changed, it is almost sure to have come through the French. We can see this in the following examples:

Latin	*Directly from the Latin*	*Through the French*
Populus	popular	people
Fructus	fructify	fruit
Deceptum	deception	deceit
Fidelis	fidelity	fealty
Regis	regal	royal
Fragilis	fragile	frail

The prominence that was given to classical studies during the Middle Ages will account for the fact that most of the terms which were peculiar to the sciences then known are of classical origin. In the modern sciences, scholars have followed the same usage, borrowing almost invariably from the Latin and Greek. With the

progress of education, these technical terms, as they are called, have become more and more widely known; and they form an important element in our language.

Many words have also been added to our language as a result of the mechanical ingenuity of English-speaking people. Instead of forming words out of elements in their own language, they go to the Latin or Greek to find names for their inventions and discoveries. We have, to be sure, such words as *typewriter, railroad*, and *oilwell*, which were formed from elements already in use; but they are few, as compared with the names of classical origin, such as *telegraph, locomotive, bicycle, petroleum, telephone,* and *computer*.

The infusion of words from other languages to make book-printed authors seem more scholarly added confusion to the spelling and meanings of words. The basic spelling rules were those of an earlier era, but the spelling and pronunciations had changed drastically. Two factors influenced the slowing of the phonetic changes in the English language, thereby stabalizing it. The first was the Industrial Revolution. With the expanding middle class, the aristocracy no longer controlled the written language through books and the spoken language through a hierarchy of acceptable speech patterns; the middle class now printed newspapers and guided pronunciations through their businesses.

The second influence came through the work of Noah Webster. In 1755, the poet Samuel Johnson had published the most complete English dictionary up to that time. This served to unify English spelling and pronunciation. After the War for Independence, Webster felt strongly that Americans should develop educational material which did not rely so heavily on the mother country. In 1783 he produced *The American Spelling Book*, also known as "the blue-back speller", to teach American spelling, as opposed to English spelling. It set publishing records and was used in schools for a hundred years. The literacy rate at the founding of our country was an impressive 95% of its citizens thanks to the extensive use of this spelling book.

Not long after the speller's completion, he began corresponding with Benjamin Franklin, who had written a book twenty years prior entitled *Scheme for a New Alphabet and a Reformed Mode of Spelling*, which proposed a radically different spelling system. While the specific plan Franklin proposed seemed impractical to Webster, he agreed with the sentiment behind it and began designing his own spelling reform: a pattern of simplification for many words based on eliminating silent letters. A few of these examples are the elimination of the final *-k* in *musick* and *politick*; the dropping of *u* in the words *honour (honor), favour (favor), saviour (savior),* etc; the substitution of the suffix *-er* instead of *-re* (*theater* instead of *theatre*). In 1828, he published the *American Dictionary of the English Language* in which he based his pronunciations on determined roots for the words and the relationship of modern words to these roots, and included his own spelling reform. He expanded the

dictionary in 1840, and most modern English dictionaries are based on Webster's work.

Classical Method in Education. Our Western Christian civilization has realized the greatest advance in education known to mankind. Two components combined to bring this about. First, Christians gave to the world the hope of redemption in Jesus Christ, the hope of fulfilling the original divine cultural mandate here and now with the ultimate hope of living in a city "whose builder and maker is God." Man could now move ahead and away from the darkness of paganism; the shackles of sin which kept mankind from entering into their freedom were broken. All men could now enjoy the blessings that came from obedience to the Creator and Redeemer. Second, is a philosophy in education which Christians invented in the 5th and 6th centuries. This pattern has been practiced and sustained throughout the succeeding generations up to the present to some degree. The practice has not always been consistent with the original philosophy, but those bright eras in education have been marked by a return to these basic principles.

So what are these basic principles? They are the foundation for the long-tested curriculum called the Seven Liberal Arts as advanced by Boethius and Cassiadorus in the 5th and 6th centuries. They believed that God is the sovereign Creator and Determiner of all things. He created a beautiful, productive world in which to live, but it was a world that must be subdued by man's creative effort. Man in this perspective is basically an *active* being, but a being whose every action is governed by *purpose*. Theory and practice are happily combined. He learns in order to serve and worship God more perfectly, and also that he may fulfill all the duties that God requires of him. Learning, then, always has an end outside itself.

This method in learning stems from the Seven Liberal Arts which are divided into the *Trivium* and *Quadrivium*. The *Trivium* consists of what Dorothy Sayers calls "the lost tools of learning", and it alone remains unchanged to the present. It consists of three parts: grammar, dialectic and rhetoric. The *Quadrivium* had four subjects: music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy, but these can change with the expansion of knowledge. The original subjects of the Quadrivium represent those various academic disciplines, each with a mathematical structure to it. With this structural model in a discipline, there is direction for data gathering, and a means by which to handle and use the information gathered from research.

The Trivium contains the heart of this philosophy, and the basic ideas of the Trivium remain unchanged, even though the complexion of schooling has altered considerably. The goal of these tools of learning, according to Dorothy Sayers, is "to teach men how to learn for themselves; and whatever instruction fails to do this is effort spent in vain." In taking prospective scholars into our care as teachers, we see

our task as that of developing *skills* in the individuals. Our duty is not to cram as much subject matter into the cranium as possible. To begin with the idea of *imparting knowledge* is to assume that the teacher's role is to indoctrinate the young. To begin with the *goal of developing skills*, academic or otherwise, is to believe that the teacher's duty is to develop in the student the ability to learn for himself. In one case, the student is by and large passive; in the other he is active, for he is gaining self-sufficiency in the learning process. In one case, the teacher is the prime interpreter of life; in the other, the student is learning principles so that he can arrive at his own views intellectually.

This Classical model, then, holds that self-sufficiency in learning is the outgrowth of training in skills. A model for this method can be that of a carpenter using tools and skills necessary to carry out his vocation. He has a plumb and a line as one tool among many. He must possess skill to use this tool properly, so that the house he erects will be straight according to its design. An apprentice will be instructed in the skill and practice under the supervision of a master carpenter. Once this skill is perfected, the apprentice is now ready to be self-sufficient in this aspect of his work. There are many other skills and tools to master, each with its own particular application to the trade. All of these particular skills and tools must, then, be seen as a means to build a structure. The end is not for the sake of the skills and tools but to build something useful.

A further analysis of this model shows that there are *three distinct steps* involved in becoming an able carpenter. The *first* part of the method is to take each tool and study each particular feature and use of that tool. The *second* thing is to merge all the particulars together so that the apprentice now has in view a full range of potential uses of that tool. Steps one and two are followed closely together in regards to the tools of carpentry, and, although he is a master of each particular tool, his skill it is not yet sufficient to become a carpenter. The *third* stage is learning to take all these particular tools and see how they work together to do the work of carpentry.

These three steps are an analysis of what happens when learning carpentry. They are not intended to limit the instructor from using all three steps simultaneously in the instruction process. For example, when a carpenter's level is studied, it would be natural to point out that this tool along with the plumb and line assists in the proper alignment of a house before the apprentice learns how it will indeed do that. One may also show how the level and plumb both have related functions before all is known about either. Here the third step is introduced before the first step is mastered. Although there may be apparent overlapping in the instruction process, yet the order of the steps remains unchanged in bringing one to the mastery of carpentry.

The model for the academician is that of a workman trained skillfully in learning. The first tool of learning is the *grammar* level. This is the introduction to a given

body of knowledge by looking at the facts associated with it. General principles are not mastered here, but particular facts receive concentrated attention. This is the time for mastery of detail. It is like walking in the midst of a forest learning the details of each tree.

The second tool of learning is the *dialectic* or *logic* level. Here the particular facts are put into a system in the sense that one emerges from the trees and looks back to see that he has been in a forest. A generalization is made about all the particulars, and they are pulled together into a whole, so that each detail is seen as a part of the whole. For example, in this stage, adding, subtracting, multiplication, and division come together in the study of mathematics as the whole subject.

Rhetoric is the final stage of the Trivium. Whereas dialectic zeroes in on particular systems of thought or subjects, rhetoric takes the next step and brings all the subjects together into the whole. Sometimes the logic that was so emphasized in the dialectic stage must now to some extent be distrusted, for the student begins to learn that the logic of any particular subject will not answer all the compelling problems of life. In other words, life is more than mathematics, more than science, more than history, more than politics, more than religion, and so on. One comes to see that one subject does not give us a solution for life until it can be fit into an overall worldview of life.

The Trivium Applied to Reading and Grammar. One of the first steps in formal education is to learn to read. Learning the sounds of particular letters or associating sound to symbol can be likened to the grammar tool of learning. Putting these symbols together into a single word brings a learner to the dialectic level. Here all the particulars fit together into a system, namely, a word. The student will continue to learn more symbols and put them together to produce a multitude of words, but his learning is not compete until these words can be put together to express a complete thought, namely, a sentence. Seeing the interrelatedness of words in a sentence brings the student to the rhetoric level. The three tools in this subject are the symbol (the particular), the word (the system), and the sentence (the relationship of many systems).

From the standpoint of learning grammar, the properties and forms of words may be viewed as the stage of particulars. A student at this first level learns to master the classification of words, referring to the parts of speech. The properties of words are mastered; that is, the qualities of a word within its classification: gender, number, case for nouns, voice, mood, tense, number, person for verbs, etc. Moving into the dialectic level, a student begins constructing sentences according to syntax, the relationship the words have to each other. Here they learn principal and subordinate elements of sentences, forms of sentences, rules of usage, and punctuation. At this

level he is putting sentences into systems, called paragraphs, to communicate a larger message. Finally one must put paragraphs together to make a story or essay. The rhetoric level brings all the skills together to communicate in various means: stories, essays, reports, and research papers.

Education in Colonial America. Agreement on the importance of classical learning among the colonial intellectuals was so widespread that relatively little dissent can be found in the literature of much of the colonial period, especially among Calvinist and Anglican writers. Such men as John Cotton, Nathaniel Ward, Thomas Shephard, Increase Mather, Cotton Mather, and a host of learned Puritan ministers were children of the Protestant Reformation, and made the study of the classical languages and literature of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew the staples of secondary education. During this same period many other intellectuals were proponents of the classical Humanism of the Renaissance, but even with these diverse religious and philosophical differences between the colonists, the classical method remained dominant.

Professor Lawrence Cremin, in his book *American Education: The Colonial Experience 1607-1783* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), estimated that literacy in the American colonies ran from 70-100%. It was this high literacy rate that made the American Revolution possible. Like the Reformation, it was a revolution among literate men in which the written word was crucial to the spread of their revolutionary ideas. Professor Cremin writes:

> If one considers the 89 men who signed either the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution or both, it is clear that the group is a collective outcome of provincial education in all the richness and diversity. Of the 56 signers of the Declaration, 22 were products of the provincial colleges, 2 had attended the academy conducted by Francis Alison at New London, Pennsylvania, and the others represented every conceivable combination of parental, church, apprenticeship, school, tutorial, and self-education, including some who studied abroad. Of the 33 signers of the Constitution, who had not also signed the Declaration, 14 were products of the provincial colleges, one was a product of the Newark Academy, and the remainder spanned the wide range of alternatives.

Educational Changes from the American Revolution to the Civil War. The first fifty years of American history are generally passed over lightly by scholars on their way from the Revolution to the Civil War. We know some facts about the Constitution, the Louisiana Purchase, the War of 1812, the Jacksonian era. But we know little about the incredible intellectual and philosophical changes that were taking place in that transition period between pre-industrial and industrial America. History books always emphasize political and military events along with material progress: the inventions of the steamboat, the railroad, the cotton gin, etc.

Probably the most important intellectual event in American history was the

takeover of Harvard by the Unitarians in 1805 and the expulsion of the Calvinists. From then on Harvard became the Unitarian Vatican, so to speak, dispensing a religious and secular liberalism that was to have profound and enduring effects on the evolution of American cultural, moral, and social values. It was the beginning of the long journey to the secular humanist world view that now dominates American culture.

Unitarianism first arose in Europe as a rebellion against the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, and specifically denied the divinity of Christ. It was considered particularly subversive by Protestants and Catholics alike because it undermined the entire foundation of Christianity which is based on the divinity of Christ. The Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - was the essential cornerstone of Christianity. Unitarian thought gained a foothold at Harvard in 1707, and began a century-long struggle between orthodox Calvinists and religious liberals for control.

The issues at stake were fundamental: the nature of God and the nature of man. Calvinist doctrines dominated the Trinitarian beliefs in early American history, and were rooted in a God-centered worldview in which a man's life was determined by his relationship to an all-powerful, objectively real God who had expressed His will in the Old and New Testaments. Unitarianism rejected this unjust God who favors some and condemns the rest, who allows the existence of evil, the sufferings of the innocent, and the general difficulties of the human condition. They accepted the fact that God created man, but they insisted that man determines his own life, and is innately good, rational, and able to be perfected. They believed that the evil in this world was caused by ignorance, poverty, and other environmental and social factors, and education was the only solution. Evil was created by the way society was organized, not by anything innately evil in man. Change society and evil could be eliminated. To the Unitarian, moral progress was as attainable as material progress once the principles of improvement were discovered. In this scheme of things there was no place for a triune God or a divine Christ through whom salvation was attainable.

Around 1837 a new parting of the ways took place between conservative Unitarians who still believed in the one God as an objective reality in the tradition of the Bible, and the Trancendentalists who believed in God either as a spirit among many gods or a pre-Old Testament diety. It was in this context of such spiritual and cultural controversy that New England intellectuals and educators turned to Hegelian statism, a belief in man as the highest manifestation of God in the universe; rational, liberated, dispensing justice and equality by means of the secular state. These educators found what they were looking for in the Prussian state system of compulsory education, graded classes, and uniformed curriculum. And the champion for the statist cause was found in the person of Horace Mann. To Mann, the symbol of the triumph of statism was in the creation of the first State normal school, the state-

financed and state-controlled teachers' college. In the very first year of the very first teachers' college in America, the whole-word method of teaching was taught to its students as the preferred and superior method of instruction.

The whole-word method was invented in the 1830's by Thomas H. Gallaudet, the founder of the Hartford Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, as a method of teaching the deaf to read. Since deaf-mutes have no conception of spoken language, they could not, in Gallaudet's time, learn a sound-symbol system of reading. Instead, they were taught to read by way of a purely sight method consisting of pictures and whole words. As far as the deaf pupil was concerned, the written language was a series of strange little images, like Chinese ideographs, each consisting of an arbitrary number of "letters" arranged in an arbitrary sequence.Thus, to the deaf pupil, printed word images were hieroglyphics or word pictures representing objects, feelings, actions, and ideas and had nothing to do with sounds made by the tongue and vocal chords. He wrote a primer based on that method called *Mother's Primer*, the first look-say primer ever to appear, published in 1835. Horace Mann, who was very critical of the traditional alphabetic teaching method, heartily endorsed the new method as a means of liberating children from Calvinist academic tyranny. So in 1839, the Boston Primary School Committee adopted Gallaudet's primer as an experiment.

But finally, in 1844, a group of Boston schoolmasters published a blistering attack on Mann and his reforms, including a thorough, incisive critique of the whole-word method, which resulted in a return to traditional primary reading instruction. The fledgling state normal schools were simply not powerful enough to exert decisive influence in the local classroom. So the alphabetic method was restored to its proper place in primary instruction. But the whole-word method was kept alive in the normal schools until it could be refurbished by a new generation of reformers in the new progressive age.

The attack against Mann by the Boston schoolmasters served to polarize American educators into two distinct groups with opposing philosophies of education: the "progressives," who viewed public education primarily as a tool for social and cultural reform to be achieved through the remaking of human nature; and the traditionalists, who viewed education, public or private, primarily as a development of an individual's intellectual skills in combination with moral instruction based on Judeo-Christian ideals.

Education Changes from the Civil War through World War I. The man who did more than anyone else to keep look-say alive during the time when McGuffey's Readers and other phonics primers dominated was Francis W. Parker. In 1873 he became superintendent of schools in Quincy, Massachusetts, making progressive reforms which brought him attention and fame. From there he became the

principal of the Cook County Normal School in Chicago in 1883. And from 1899 to 1901 he was principal at the University of Chicago's School of Education. When John Dewey came to the University of Chicago, he used many of Parker's ideas in creating the Laboratory School where reading was taught via the sight, or look-say, method. It was Dewey's book about the Laboratory School experiment, *School and Society,* published in 1899, that catapulted him to leadership in the progressive movement. With this book Dewey had provided the movement with a blueprint for restructuring American education. Dewey's aim was to create among the students a spirit of social cooperation, and he believed that an emphasis on the mastery of symbols of learning turned children inward and made them competitive and independent of their peers. The true purpose of education, according to Dewey, is to help one find their "place" in society, and then to use that "place" to further "shape" yourself and society.

Dewey had a number of enthusiastic colleagues in his quest for progressive eduction. One of the most influential psychologists to join its faculty was Edward L. Thorndike. He was convinced that his discoveries in animal learning could provide a scientific basis for the teaching profession. The theory of evolution, applied to the mind, was used by Thorndike as a basis for building a new theory of learning by conditioning. Children were to be considered animals and the classroom was to be transformed into a laboratory providing the optimum environment in which learning by reflex conditioning could take place.

Edmund Huey, who had never taught a child to read, wrote a book in 1908 arguing in favor of the look-say method as opposed to the traditional alphabetic method entitled, *The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading*. By this time he was already aware that the look-say method was producing inaccurate readers, which was one of the reasons why it had been discarded in Boston back in the 1840's. But he defended inaccurate reading as a virtue when he wrote:

> Even if the child substitutes words of his own for some that are on the page, provided that those express the meaning, it is an encouraging sign that the reading has been real, and recognition of details will come as it is needed. The shock that such a statement will give to many a practical teacher of reading is but an accurate measure of the hold that a false idea has taken of us, viz., that to read is to say just what is upon the page, instead of to *think*, each in his own way, the meaning that the page suggests.

In other words, what an author has to say is less important than what the reader *thinks* he has to say.

The Madness Escalates. It is hard to believe that intelligent men like Dewey and his colleagues had an ulterior motive in promoting poor reading habits, but it was John Dewey who first formulated that high literacy is an obstacle to socialism. High literacy gave the individual the means to seek knowledge independently, thereby

sustaining the individual system which, in Dewey's mind, was detrimental to the social spirit needed to build a socialist society. Thus, the goal was to produce inferior readers with inferior intelligence dependent on a socialist education elite for guidance, wisdom, and control.

It took some years before the views advocated by Dewey and his followers were translated into practice in every classroom in America. Meanwhile, the look-say method had begun to find its way into small, private progressive schools, and finally the public schools. The first use on a large scale in public schools took place in Iowa, and it was not long before they were plagued with "reading problems". The problems were so serious that they came to the attention of Dr. Samuel Orton, professor of psychiatry at Iowa State University. As a neuropathologist specializing in speech disorders, Orton was so alarmed by what he saw that he wrote an article entitled *"The Sight Reading" Method of Teaching Reading as a Source of Reading Disability* which was published in the February 1929 issue of the *Journal of Educational Psychology*. This was the first article in which a trained neuropathologist stated in no uncertain terms that "the sight method of teaching reading" could cause reading disability and be "an obstacle to reading progress" rather than a help. He also made it clear that these "faulty teaching methods may not only prevent the acquisition of academic education by children of average capacity but may also give rise to far reaching damage to their emotional life."

By 1930, the progressives were ready to launch their drive to get look-say textbooks into every primary classroom in the nation. The two leaders in this drive were William Scott Gray, Dean of University of Chicago's School of Education, and Arthur I. Gates, professor at Columbia Teacher's College. Gray was the author of "Dick and Jane" primers; Gates, the author of the *Program of Reading* primers. Both became the dominant reading textbooks in primary schools, and were based on the teaching method of using a small number of sight words serving as stimuli and repetition of the same words as the conditioning response. Also, the books had lots of pictures, for Dewey had said in *My Pedagogic Creed*: "I believe that the image is the great instrument of instruction." Of course, that contradicted all of human history in which it has been proven since the beginning of time that language, not pictures, is the chief instrument of learning and instruction. Only the deaf rely on image more than language, and even they must master language to achieve any high degree of learning.

It is interesting that only five years after "Dick and Jane" had gotten into the schools, Gray, in an article in *English Review* described a whole new syndrome of problems that were causing reading disability: mental deficiency, auditory deficiency, defective vision, congenital word blindness, developmental alexia, dyslexia, congenital aphasia, handedness, eyedness, ambidexterity, etc. Dr. Orton had been right.

The sight method would indeed cause reading disabilities on a massive scale.

There is a METHOD to the Madness. Dr. Samuel Orton launched the first attack on the methods of Dewey and his followers in 1929, and followed up in 1937 with the publishing of his research and remedial methods for teaching reading entitled *Reading, Writing and Speech Problems in Children*. In this book he not only warned about the damaging effects of the look-say, whole-word memorization method, but developed methods of direct teacher instruction in collaboration with other teachers, the most well-known being Anna Gillingham and Romalda Spalding. The Orton-Gillingham and Slingerland remedial methods came from his early research with organically brain-damaged children and adults. Before his death in 1948, he challenged Mrs. Spalding to apply his method for all normal primary school children. Mrs. Spalding went on to publish *The Writing Road to Reading* in 1957, training classroom teachers in Dr. Orton's method.

The PHONICS Road to Spelling and Reading further builds upon these previous methods for home-school parents to provide students the beginning tools of learning for the English language patterned after the classical methodology. This does not teach a kind of incidental phonics so prevalent in today's look-say reading programs. There are no workbooks, no picture-driven basal readers with controlled "sight" vocabularies, no burdensome preparation by the parent/teacher. *The PHONICS Road to Spelling and Reading* offers the parent comprehensive video teacher training with an emphasis on intensive phonics, spelling, writing, reading, grammar, composition, and preparation for *The LATIN Road to English Grammar.*

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