

our people. Even our representatives and government officials, in the great majority of cases, have never yet happened to think of it. But the special difficulty is general agreement upon the most practical scheme of reform. Some are extremely radical, wanting no change until a complete phonetic one may be made, which can embrace all languages. Others, simply radical, will accept nothing less than a perfect phonetic system for English, which they would form by retaining all the useful letters at present used, and making new letters for the remaining sounds. And still others will grant nothing more than the omission of silent letters.

This is another illustration of the necessity of making an effort to secure an authoritative deliverance which shall command the assent of at least a decided majority. The essential values of the reasons determining the conviction of the majority will undoubtedly in the long run determine the final acquiescence of all. Is not the joint authority of the "Philological Society of England" and of the "American Philological Association," greater in a matter of this kind, than a one-man dictionary which merely professes to re-utter the crude orthography uttered before?

WRITING.

And finally, when we spell phonetically why should we not write phonographically? Once on a time the artistic monks indulging in the leisure of their monasteries could make each letter a work of art. But now as the world is living faster, time is felt to be so valuable that the shorter method is worth more money as compared with the longer methods. Why should we continue to represent a sound by a drawing containing perhaps two or three straight lines and curves when the same might just as legibly be made by a single curve or dash? Why should not a legible system of short hand be the one taught in the Public School from the first grade upward? The pupil could do his written exercises at home in at least one-third of the time it takes him at present, so that there would not be so imperative a temptation for him to spoil his writing as exists at present. Who does not know that the writing of a schoolboy varies in beauty inversely as the amount of writing he has to do, and that by the time he gets through College even an Assyriologist may be incompetent to decipher his hieroglyphics? A very legible short hand can be written in one-third of the time taken to write the same in the ordinary long hand. When leaving the elementary school every pupil would be able to do three times the amount of writing in one hour under such circumstances that he can do at present. Some would be able to report slow speech verbatim. This power would thus become the inheritance of all passing through the elementary schools, and it would do more for literature ultimately than all our present forces combined, as well as reduce written language nearly to the same degree of convenience as speech. And yet the schools would have no new burdens added to them. In fact the burdens would be reduced by the amount of time saved as well as by the amount of material (pencil, ink, and paper) saved. Now, should any one learn short hand, he will find it useless for purposes of correspondence, and as a consequence its practice is discontinued, and the art may be lost even after the expense of acquiring it. Then, even without school training, people would fall into the short system, because it is essentially more simple than the long system. And only just think how pleasant a prospect it would open to him who could afford to do as much correspondence with one clerk as he can now do with a staff of three or four!

But what system shall we adopt? There is the rub. This matter must be decided for the non-technical educators who are not in a position to settle the matter