

OPINIONS & COMMENTS.

Mr Geo. C. Holland writes from Ottawa: "In spelling, I conform to prevailing usage, arbitrary and unreasonable tho' it often is. I do not look upon spelling by sound as altogether utopian but think it will not accomplish much in my lifetime.* When those whose profession it is to educate the public are brought to see the wisdom and utility of a less arbitrary mode of spelling, something may be done for the next generation, but till then those of us who have been drilled by a different order of instruction are likely to maintain the old standard of orthography."

[*In our old Latin exercise book, we read "The good man plants trees of which he will never see the fruit." The case is not so far off as that; there is some fruit already. By the wise forethought of our ancestors, we enjoy much; we should do as much for posterity—yes for ourselves.]

†Teachers say the demand must be from the outside; they are powerless, though commonly willing, to change, unless the Education Department sanctions, and it in turn is powerless, even if willing, unless the public demand, at least gives silent consent to change. How can we better become a multitude than by a league—Union? "Drops of water turn a mill." How can we promulgate views better than by a little journal whose price is the veriest trifle? Yet sending that trifle is an earnest and will help it to be established. Every little helps. Besides, we do more than talk; we give examples of earlier steps; we exemplify a stage employing a sign for each vowel. We thereby demonstrate its *simplicity* and *practicability*. We have begun—a good beginning is half the battle. We must begin somewhere if we are to accomplish.

‡How can they be brought to see it unless we urge it upon them?

§We should be neither expected to do so nor compelled. You can and should allow your neighbor to do so if preferred; and so not be obstructive.—Ed.]

CONCORDIA SALVS writes "that, while forming an alphabet, we should

i. Be strictly and consistently phonetic both in simple letters and in digraphs.

ii. Recognize only broad typical sounds

in deliberate pronunciation.

iii. Choose existing letters for the sounds they most frequently represent in the old orthography.

iv. (A corollary to i.) If a diphthong is not to be differently sounded by good speakers in different places, it should have a new sign."

[Many consider (iii) questionable if construed to mean our language only instead of agreement between nations; using Roman letters. Confirmation to the spirit of the "Open Letter" on p. 19 is important, perhaps essential. Again, (iv) is probably a good suggestion, cutting the Gordian knot—rather than untying it by giving a quite satisfactory solution.—EDITOR.]

Rev. Howard Crosby, D. D., LL. D., writes to the *Home Journal*: "The change of *ph* to *f* is a very proper one even on antiquarian grounds. The Greek letter *phi* was a single letter for a single sound.* What we now need is some central authority, like the Academy in France, to set us a going. The omission of the mute letters will be easy, but changes of letters will require a great deal of effort. The addition of new letters will be hardest of all to establish. Next to an academy the newspaper press is the best power to forward this matter.†

[**F* was the Latin equivalent of the Greek letter. In Italian, the lineal descendant of Latin, *f* only is used. It is the same in Spanish.]

†The order of difficulty is very well put. It is a law in dynamics that all motion is in the direction of least resistance. Accordingly, Rules A and B point out a definite, considerable, and perhaps easy line of advance. How generally acceptable it will prove we wait to see.—Ed.]

§JEWELLEERY is an odd collocation of useless letters. On more than half of the sign-boards we read *Jewelry*.

JAPAN.—The Japanese are moving towards reform in writing and spelling. They propose to lay aside their old Chinese characters which they heretofore used and introduce Roman letters employed in phonetic fashion. As it is, it requires a large part of a lifetime to learn their alphabet.—*Shorthand Writer*.