

PHONETIC PIONEER.

to *cheque*. Now if *k* be chosen as the uniform representative of that sound, all these forms will be superseded by that letter, and the words will be written, *kil, kan, kwel, kord, yk, akwit, teak*.

This brief glance at the merits of the case may induce some to whom the subject is new to explore these merits more fully. It may also prepare their minds in some measure for the consideration of the question discussed in the following paragraphs—whether the proposed modification of the orthographic basis or apparatus of the language, and the consequent alterations in the spelling of a considerable proportion of the words are on the whole worthy of adoption.

When a change is proposed in any department of human affairs, opposition may be urged on two grounds; first, that the positive advantages to be gained are small and unimportant; or, second, that though considerable they are counterbalanced or outweighed by new disadvantages which the change must occasion. The agitator can have little hope of success unless he can disprove both assertions. In discussing the question of an improved system of spelling, it is therefore proper to consider first the value of the advantages which are to be obtained by it, and secondly the weight that is due to the objections which may lie against it.

1. The chief and outstanding benefit arising from the use of a complete alphabet would be, the greatly increased facility with which the arts of reading and spelling would be acquired. When the letter *i*, for instance, has five different values in *time, pin, pique, firm* and the second syllable of *pinton*, and when the digraph *ou* has four values in *round, soup, mould, touch*, it becomes a very troublesome task to recollect when one of these values must be used in pronunciation and when another. If short and clear rules could be furnished for distinguishing one from another, the difficulty would be much diminished; but all that can be done in that way leaves a great deal in a state of uncertainty; and for the rest, a strong memory, dealing with each word individually, is the only resource. In spelling, the case is a vast deal worse, as the operation of rules is much more circumscribed. The word *pain*, for example, consists of three elements; but the second, which is a vowel, is represented in so many ways that the word may become *pain, paine, peyn, peyne, pein, paine, payn, payne, or pane*; and if we know which of all these is to be chosen, it can only be through a special exercise of memory. So also when the consonant *s* is to be put on paper it is necessary to remember whether *s, se, ce, ss, or sc* is to be used for the purpose: as witness the words *sin, cell, pulse, force, lass and scent*. All such trouble would be annihilated if each sound was uniformly expressed by its own letter: and it is not going beyond due bounds to assert that by a

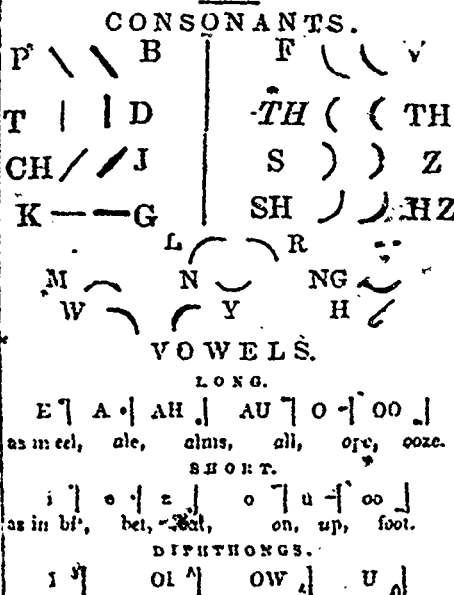
change of system, reading would be acquired in one half, and spelling in one fourth, of the time expended upon them at present. This assertion is warranted by experiments.

(To be continued.)

PHONOGRAPHY.—It is impossible to speak too highly of Pitman's magnificent system of Phonography. Combining in the highest degree the important features of simplicity, terseness and perspicuity, whether considered as a practical art of great utility, or a science which reveals, demonstrates and applies the true principles of articulation, it certainly may be regarded, if not as perfect, at least as incomparably superior to any other known system of chirography. Its use is now chiefly confined to reporters and others connected with the press, and the few professional men and scholars who have had the good sense to see its great advantages, and the patience to study it.

But Phonography is a science that should be as universally understood as language, and, in course of time, when conservative prejudices are conquered, it *must* be. It should be taught in all schools. As it becomes more generally known and understood, the present clumsy and cumbersome longhand system of writing must give way. It cannot stand the test of such a comparison.—*Weekly Tribune, Washington, U. S.*

The Phonographic Alphabet.



It should be observed that the upright strokes under the head of "vowels" are only for the purpose of showing the positions of the dots and dashes which represent the vowels. The dots and dashes are rounded the same in the same position, when placed to any other letter of the alphabet. The true sounds or powers of the vowel characters are shown by the italicised letters in the words beneath.

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