

daughtly) with the difficulty; but it is *thoroughly* (thoroughly) impossible to conquer. I have *sought* (sought) for a clue to the labyrinth, as eagerly as a pig at his *trough* (trough.) All I have gained is *knout* (nought.)  
—*Leigh Hunt.*

**St. Louis Phonetic Schools, May 23rd, 1859.**

Our Phonetic Schools are getting along pretty well, considering the draw backs.—Bad weather has caused an unusual amount of irregularities, and some of the best pupils have been withdrawn by their parents, some to work; others Germans, to study *German*, having learned enough of English. But those who remain are progressing finely. I was in one of the schools a few days ago, and was delighted with the proficiency exhibited. The little fellows called out the letters, with a *promptness, confidence, and correctness* never witnessed elsewhere.

One little boy, only four or five months from Germany, was very well advanced in reading. No one would discover the least German in his accent.

The teacher of his school is a German lady, and was taught by her brother, *her native language phonetically*. Her natural endowments and her early training render her a most efficient teacher.

There are two other schools, which, however, I have not visited, but am told are doing very well. I shall see them in a few days. We do not expect anything more than a *beginning* this year, but in *September* shall commence with the hope of making a successful show at the annual exhibition.

Your's truly, E. H. SPALDING.

**A Cow in a Box.—Or, a Cough in the Chest.**

In the early days of the phonetic movement (1845), the following anecdote was related at a phonetic meeting in Boston, U.S., and reported in one of the city papers. We extract from the *Phonotypic Journal* for 1845, page 215.

We were not a little amused at the Phonographic exhibition, the other evening, by a story told by Prof. Church, with reference to the difficulty he had to meet in learning to pronounce the English language, whose barbarous orthography is so totally at variance with its elementary sounds. The gentleman said that the first time he ever visited London, he caught a violent cold on the passage. He had studied English at the French University, and made about as much progress in giving correct sounds to the words as a green Yankee might be supposed to do in the French tongue with nothing but a dictionary for a guide. Some things he

know, and some things he did not know; one thing, however, he felt, and that was that he needed a physician to cure his cold. Accordingly he sent for one, and in the interim, wishing to show Dr. John Bull how well he could talk English, he took Nugent, and found that "toux" was "cough" in the latter tongue.

"C-o-u-g-h," said the Frenchman, "how they say that? I have him! P-l-o-u-g-h is *plow*, and c-o-u-g-h is *cow*. I got a cow!"

The doctor entered, and began to feel his pulse, where all seemed right.

"I have no trouble dare," said Professor Church, putting his hand to his throat,—*"I got a cow!"*

"Well, I am not a cow-doctor," said the surgeon indignantly; "why did you send for me to see your cow?"

"But you will not understand me!" said the disconcerted Frenchman, "here is my cow—here;" and he thumped his breast in desperation.

The doctor shook his head, as though he thought him demented. The Professor again had recourse to the dictionary, thinking if he got the precise locality of his cow, the doctor would understand. Accordingly he looked for the word "*chest*," and found the first definition to be "*a box*," then, shouting as loud as he could, he exclaimed, "Now, you understand, *I got a cow in my box!*"

The doctor burst into a roar of laughter and the poor Frenchman almost died of chagrin. When the Professor told the story, the audience were perfectly convulsed, and fully appreciated the gentleman's enthusiasm, as he concluded by saying—"If your Phonography can do anything for my cow, it will be a great thing!"—*Boston, U. S. Paper.*

**The Necessity and Present Availability of a Complete Alphabet.**

The signs which we have used to represent the sounds of our language, were originally invented in the East. They were adopted by the Greeks and Romans, and have now become, under various forms, the alphabet of the civilized nations of Europe. The twenty-two signs which originally constituted this alphabet, were not sufficient to express the numerous sounds which can be formed by the organs of the human voice, and which the different nations of Asia and Europe have, in various proportions, allowed to enter into the formation of their languages and dialects.

Two ways were open to remedy this defect. New signs could be invented to represent new sounds, or one and the same letter might be allowed to represent different sounds. The first plan has been adopted with great reserve, and the number of new

signs, whether entirely new or formed by modification and composition, which the Greeks, the Romans, the Slavonic, and Teutonic nations have added to the so-called Phœnician alphabet, is comparatively small; while if we look to the modern languages of Europe, we find but a few letters which are restricted to but one pronunciation, a fact which in no language is more painfully felt than in English. Here one can hardly say that letters which were originally intended to represent the sounds of language, still answer their original purpose. In pronouncing "thigh" we do not pronounce any one of the five letters according to their proper and original power. The spelling of words is no longer phonetic but traditional. To call it etymological would be a false compliment, since it is neither scientific nor systematic. The spelling which in English, as in all other languages, corresponded at some time or other, to the sound of words, has become stationary at various periods in the history of the English language, and it was entirely a matter of chance whether the form, fixed upon literary tradition, preserved more of the etymology or of the pronunciation.

A reform is needed for the spelling of most modern European languages, and it is extraordinary that the art of writing, though belonging to the arts by which our times have achieved the greatest improvements, should have been allowed to remain in the same state in which it was three thousand years ago, with no alteration except for the worse.

Whatever may be done in course of time by the different nations of Europe to ameliorate their own systems of writing, it is clear that, with the defects peculiar to each, none could claim in its present state to be used as a standard system; but it would be wrong to smuggle any of these imperfect systems of writing into those languages which have not yet been reduced to alphabetical writing. The missionary who brings the notion of an alphabet, together with more exalted ideas of religion, of law, of arts and sciences, to the savage tribes of Africa, will be to them what Cecrops and Cadmus were to Greece. He must not think of the present only, but of the future, he must see in his helpless converts the ancestors of mighty nations. He ought to remember that the seeds that he sows in the minds of these people will bear fruit a thousand fold; that it will yield many harvests beside that of religion. Whatever objection may be urged against the adoption of a more rational and scientific alphabet for the languages of Europe, do not apply to the dialects of Africa or Australia. If our own case be hopeless [?] theirs is not, and what with us may remain the scientific alphabet of the student, can with them at once be carried into general practice."—*Max Muller.*