

words, the foundation should be thoroughly laid in the primary grades. What the boy needs at 13 and 14 is a knowledge of the fundamental operations, with integers, fractions, common and especially decimal, skill, and accuracy, so far as it can be obtained, in reckoning, and such a training of the faculties as oral arithmetic will give. That is the work of this age, and is enough. The child does not get it now, simply because he is hurried into work that he very naturally cares little about; and so these processes learned remain in the mind through the examinations, and then most of them are forgotten. We would introduce the algebra into the two upper grammar grades as recommended by the committee (not doing too much, however) dividing the time with the arithmetic, and give one hour a week to the latter branch in the High schools,—the work there being as we have said, the solving of the problems of the banks and the shops.

—*Exchange.*

A writer to the *Times* says :

Let me mention a few instances of doubtful spelling and yet more doubtful English.

In the Authorized Version of the Bible and in the columns of the *Times* we find "judgment," but in ordinary prayer-books and in the Revised Version "judgement" is the form. The introduction of the central *e* seems unnecessary. Again, some writers have a weakness for doubling letters not only at the ends of such words as "downfall," but also in the middles. "Batting" is all right, but why should a man be described as "combatting" the arguments of his opponent? "Coquetting" is all very well, as far as the word is concerned; but ought we to speak of attention being "rivetted" on a speaker?

It would be well if we could all make up our minds as to such words

as "shew" and "show," "enquire" and "inquire." There seems to be a growing tendency to spell the verb one way and the noun the other, as also with "practise" and "practice," "prophecy" and "prophesy."

We must yield to necessity, and accept "bike" as British for "bicycle," and "navvy" as short for "navigator," but we need hardly give up the plural forms "dragomans" and "Mussulmans," and substitute "dragomen" and "Mussulmen." The mythical lady who treated *omnibi* as the plural of "omnibus" has been outstripped by the actual gentleman who regarded *alibi* as the plural of *alibus*! I have read—not in the *Times*—of a *strata*; and a newspaper lately informed us of an Arabic MSS.

You, sir, startled me, and perhaps others, a couple of years ago, by deliberately substituting "Tsar" for the time-honored "Czar."

Perhaps it was done "by command;" otherwise, though phonetic, it seemed needless pedantry. It reminds us, in fact, of the pedantic youth who calmly read out of the Bible, "Hoots his first-born and Boots his brother." It is curious that, whereas since Voltaire's days, the letters *oi* in certain words have given way to *ai*, we still talk of "reconnoitring" the foe; and I hope we shall never do otherwise.

Some speakers and writers tell us of an "union" and an "university;" in fact, this is getting fashionable. If we pronounced "union" like "onion" it would be right, but when the first letter is pronounced like "you" it surely needs no *u* before it.

There is a terrible word "dynamitard" which has grown up since the days of Nihilism, and has probably been imported from abroad. The final *ard* seems to connect it remotely and wrongly with petard. An Englishman would naturally say "dynamiter" if he must use the word at all.