

good one, no matter whether it slants or stands erect. It is likewise true of hundreds of English words that there is not at present any only one-right-way of spelling them. One person may prefer the forms, "dyke," "fyshe," "diagramme," "programme," "honour," "labour," "doctour"; another commits no sin who writes these words: "Dike," "fish," "diagram," "program," "honor," "labor," "doctor." The preference may not be merely a habit, imitated by accident; the first person may be disposed to cling to "the good old way," while the latter would hasten "the good time coming." Or, it may be that the first in writing, forms such as "programme" and "honour," feels, not affection for the past, but a sense of pride in advertising his knowledge of the history of the words. He is like Mr. M.

Mr. M.—Another thing, I wish you to put a pair of buttons on the back of the coat.

The Tailor.—Most people do not wear buttons on the back of their coats now. It takes time to sew them on, and they are not of any use. May I ask why you wish them?

Mr. M.—Yes; I wish people who walk behind me to be reminded of the good old time when men used to tuck their coat-tails into their trouser-waists. Do you not perceive that the buttons were useful then?

The Tailor.—Ha! ha! ha! Yes; I see. I'll sew them on.

The kind of man who insists on the coat-tail buttons is likely, also, to insist on tacking "ue" to "catalog," and "me" to "program," and the insertion of "u" in "labor."

The last word recalls a new reason that has recently been given why the people of Ontario should write the longer forms of certain words, namely, to show that they "are not Americans." The reason, clearly not a very scientific one, may have weight with some who labor under the mistake that the movement to rationalize English spelling originated in the United States. We have heard of people who have given away a new hat, rather than wear it after a neighbor was seen with one like it.

But the truth is that the agitation for the improvement of English spelling was begun by eminent scholars in England. At the annual conference, in 1876, of the National Union of British Teachers, representing a membership of about 10,000 teachers, a resolution was adopted declaring the desirability of spelling reform, and calling upon the Government to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate the matter. The London (Eng.) School Board, by a vote of 26 to 6, in December of the same year, adopted a similar resolution, and also advised the appointment of a Commission. The Board's action was supported by a general conference of British scholars held in London in the following May. Probably the severest oburgations of English spelling that are in print were made by British scholars before the subject of reform was taken up in the United States. It was Lord Lytton who said:

"A more lying, roundabout, puzzle-headed delusion than that by which we confuse the instincts of truth in our accursed system of spelling was never concocted."

Bishop Thirlwall, the learned author of the "History of Greece," said:

"I look upon the established method of spelling—if an accidental system may be so called—as a mass of anomalies, the growth of ignorance and chance, equally repugnant to good taste and to common sense."

Max Muller, Professor of Comparative Philology in the University of Oxford, described the current spelling as "Unhistorical, unsystematic, unintelligible, unteachable, but (Heaven be thanked) not unamendable."

Columns of strong condemnation of our methods of spelling, from the mouth and pen of the most eminent British scholars, published before the American Simplified Spelling Board was thought of, show that sympathy with spelling reform does not prove its possessor to be an American. To state that the demand for simplified spelling is distinctly American, is to expose one's ignorance of the history of the movement. To the United

States, however, does belong the honor of being first to organize the forces of reform with a view to effective action. The British press will receive the credit of being more tolerant of and sympathetic towards the recently-organized English Simplified Spelling Society than the American press was towards the corresponding Society when it was organized in the United States. The School Government Chronicle, London (Eng.), of Nov. 8th, voiced the views of a large number of British papers, in the following words: "We welcome the Simplified Spelling Society in England, and we greet its American prototype, the Simplified Spelling Board, that lends the name of its distinguished President, Dr. Lounsbury, to the list of the British Society's vice-presidents, as the joint and several preservers of literary English, in that they are to be not only its stubborn protectors against crude and destructive interference, but the guides and cultivators of its continuous organic growth."

It remains yet for another letter to tell the methods by which the above-named learned societies are trying to reach their praiseworthy aim.

J. DEARNESS.

Something About Our Women's Institutes.

I.

I have just laid my hand upon a copy of the report of the Women's Institutes of Ontario, held at the Agricultural College, Guelph, in December, 1906, and most excellent and interesting reading it is. I am rejoiced to learn that the number of these Institutes, with the sense of their value, is increasing yearly, that new fields for their usefulness are being opened up, and that more and more women are taking an active, practical and intelligent share in their development.

What nobler motive could be offered as the foundation stone of any great work than that which inspired that magnificent gift to the nation, the Macdonald Institute, at Guelph,

"For the cause of truth for its sake, for the good of mankind for their sake, for the glory of God, and for the good of all," and it is for the expansion of this spirit, as well as for its practical issue, that the women of Canada join hands to-day.

"If you know a good thing, pass it on," is the motto of one of the Institutes, and for this purpose these gatherings of the women folk of our land offer splendid opportunities. It has been my privilege to hear many an admirable address by the thinking women of the Dominion, but seldom have their speeches contained more valuable gems of thought, quoted, or original, than appear even in this two-years-old report of the addresses given at Guelph. Let me offer you some of them. On the subject of education, Dr. Annie Backus says: "Remember that education is an entirely different thing from learning, and bears to learning the same relation that wisdom does to knowledge. To think aright, to have established principles, with no comparison between right and wrong, with no maudlin sentiment, but brave and true in right doing, this should be the basis of all education. So, you see, it is not learned men and women we need, but educated; not dreamers, but workers. The life that counts is the life that does things." Then Dr. Backus gives, in admirable illustration, the care bestowed upon the growing colt, the level floor, the well-lighted stable, the choice of fitting food, the avoidance of anything in manner or method which may spoil its disposition, etc., etc., following her remarks by the question, squarely put, "But, when we go into the schoolhouse, do we find the same care and precautions to keep our children's bodies right? What about the ventilation?" she asks. "Are not the chairs too high and the desks too low, with the attendant risks of the little ones developing stooping shoulders and narrow chests? It is the mothers who should, if only they were given the right, insist upon proper sanitary arrangements for the physical welfare of their children, and yet we do not find a mother's name upon their school boards."

Surely this question as to the wisdom and common sense of giving to the women whose children are being educated in our schools, and whose daughters are many of them teachers in the same, a voice and vote on the school boards of our land, is one which should commend itself to the Women's Institutes of the Dominion.

In this connection, I rejoiced to see in the report of the Women's Institute Convention, held so lately at Guelph, that one of the questions put into the question drawer was, "Are there any W. I. branches agitating to have women on the school boards?" And it was replied to by an emphatic "I hope so," from Mr. Putnam. Thus emphasized, might not our Women's Institutes, amongst whom are so many of the mothers of our country, take this subject into their earnest consideration, and seek for women amongst themselves who would be ready to undertake the responsibilities of so honorable an office, if the opportunity to do so would be offered them?

But to return to the 1906 report, from which I quote, I would venture to note the clear grasp of their several subjects, shown in the addresses by the several presidents of Institutes, the almost unanimous advice given for the promotion of unity in good work, and the desirability of carrying it on upon the widest possible basis. "There should be no drones in office," says one. "Do not be content with subjects already worn threadbare, or with the mere repeti-



Mount Sir Donald, from the East, B. C.