

writing and typesetting machines, a standard uniform scale for the bodies of our types, a standard uniform thread on our bolts and pipes, etc. For producers in any of these lines to disregard public convenience and adopt diverse standards of their own would show no more narrowness or greater indifference to the interest of their fellow men than does the present practice of different publishers following each his own whim and device, complex and unscientific as these systems all are, in indicating pronunciation in the books he produces. In a matter of such importance and convenience to us all, particularly to our children in school, is it not high time that uniformity should be adopted as it has been in more material fields?

"Professor George Hempl, of Leland Stanford University, formerly of Michigan University, one of the foremost linguistic scholars and dictionary-workers of the world, very cogently put the case thus some years ago;

"If teachers and other adult users of dictionaries find this process (of interpreting the various diacritics used in different works of reference) beset with difficulty, what must it be to the children in our schools? How serious this matter is and how real the trouble, one may estimate when he learns that practical dictionary workers, the men who make dictionaries and are daily employed upon them, and who are supposed to know the different systems thoroly, constantly find themselves misinterpreting and confusing the signs employed.

"Professor Calvin Thomas of Columbia University thus stated the situation;

"We need, the world needs, now, without further waiting, an adequate, simple, precise, unambiguous, and generally accepted notation for the sounds of the English language; a notation that we can teach to the young in school, thereby training their vocal organs and leading them to pronounce the language more accurately and more intelligently; a notation that will at the same time facilitate our learning of foreign languages, and the learning of English by foreigners; a notation, finally, that will enable the educated adult to consult whatever good dictionary comes to hand and find out how a word is pronounced without referring to a special and peculiar "key to pronunciation."

"In securing the adoption of such a uniform key the demand and influence of the educators will be greatest force. The publishers will heed their call. Without it our present vexations diversity will continue.

"Hence the value of your aid and the liberty we take of soliciting it at this time in arousing the interest of teachers and of informing them as to what has been accomplished and is now proposed.

"There is another and distinctly educational phase of this subject, the discussion of which will now be pertinent. Since Dr. William T. Harris's notable 1876 report on the decided superiority of the phonetic method of teaching beginners to read as proved by a trial of ten years in the primary schools of St. Louis, this method has been tried by many others, and has invariably demonstrated its superiority, so far as reported. The great obstacle which has prevented this method from becoming established on its merits has been the want of a simple, duly authorized phonetic alphabet, and of first, second and third readers printed in it. If the alphabet here submitted proves as acceptable to the educators of the country as is hoped, it will be easy for them to induce the publishers of their favorite readers to reprint their primary books in this alphabet and thus render this method practicable. The reprinting of such small books would be a comparatively small expense. The new types are now available in almost any size and at the regular price.

This *Key Alphabet*, as it has been named, was originated thirty three years ago by the American Philological Association. The National Education Association of the United States has been taking the lead lately in securing the adhesion of the Modern Language Association as well as its own constituency to a definite system. To those who may criticize it lightly, it may be said that it is the final result of innumerable discussions during the time of a generation in which at some stage or other, the leading