

Next I may be asked: "Why have we not this spelling reform already, when its advantages are so great, and the array of names in its favor so authoritative?" I would answer: For more than one reason. It has not been brought to the notice of our people. Even our representatives and government officials, in the great majority of cases, have never yet happened to think of it. But the special difficulty is general agreement upon the most practical scheme of reform. Some are extremely radical, wanting no change until a complete phonetic one may be made, which can embrace all languages. Others, simply radical, will accept nothing less than a perfect phonetic system for English, which they would form by retaining all the useful letters at present used, and making new letters for the remaining sounds. And still others who will grant nothing more than the omission of silent letters.

This is another illustration of the necessity of making an effort to secure an authoritative deliverance which shall command the assent of at least a decided majority. The essential value of the reasons determining the conviction of the majority will undoubtedly in the long run determine the final acquiescence of all. Is not the joint authority of the "Philological Society of England" and of the "American Philological Association," greater in a matter of this kind, than a one-man dictionary which merely professes to re-utter the crude orthography uttered before?

WRITING.

And finally, when we spell phonetically why should we not write phonographically? Once on a time the artistic monks of the olden times in the leisure of their monasteries could make each letter a work of art. But now as the world is living faster, time is felt to be so necessary that the shortest method is worth more money as compared with the longer methods. Why should we continue to represent a sound by a drawing containing perhaps two or three straight lines and curves when the same might just as legibly be made by a single curve or dash? Why should not a legible system of short hand be the one taught in the Public School from the first grade upward? The pupil could do his written exercises at home in at least one-third of the time it takes him at present, so that there would not be so imperative a temptation for him to spoil his writing as exists at present. Who does not know that the writing of a schoolboy varies in beauty inversely as the amount of writing he has to do, and that by the time he gets through College even an Assyriologist may be incompetent to decipher his hieroglyphics? A very legible short hand can be written in one-third of the