

wheels of trade are not to be blocked. Now, can any rational and efficient solution of the problem be suggested?

The following is offered as the true solution of the silver problem. First fix the ratio between the two metals, be it $15\frac{1}{2}$, 16, $16\frac{1}{2}$, or whatever a competent international convention may agree upon. The relative values of the two precious metals once determined, make all debts payable *half in gold coin and half in silver coin*. Then, should any depreciation of one of them take place, from increased production or other causes, it would be exactly balanced by the appreciation of the other. Suppose a bond for a thousand pounds to be given now, payable twenty years hence. The holder at that future date would receive five hundred pounds in gold sovereigns, and five hundred pounds in English silver crowns, or American silver dollars, all which coins would be par value the civilized world over. No loss to the creditor could accrue, for if a loss there were on the silver it would be balanced by a corresponding gain on the gold, and *vice versa*. In the compensation pendulum, the ball hangs on a series of steel and brass rods placed alternately. These two metals are so differently affected by heat and cold respectively that the pendulum, as a measure of the time beat, is not affected at all. The action of one metal is compensated by that of the other, so that the ball neither falls with heat nor rises with cold, but remains constant at the same distance from the pin upon which it swings. The chronometer balance, used for first-class watches, is another application of the same principle. This may be taken as an illustration of the true solution of the silver problem—of the problem of two metals circulating side by side—the value of each and every payment of a thousand pounds or a thousand dollars remaining a constant quantity, because made half in gold and half in silver coin. JOHN MACLEAN.

SPELLING REFORM.

A LEARNED gentleman of advanced views has been making arrangements at a recent meeting of the Canadian Institute for a wholesale reform of English spelling. We presume he is a leading member of The Spelling Reform Association, under the auspices of which the *Fonetic Nuz* has been issued with such excellent results in the way of amusement to its bemused readers. He waxed eloquent on the sufferings and privations of the sorely afflicted rising generation under our present barbarous orthography; and gave way to joyous anticipations, in which every tender heart must sympathize, as he pictured the emancipated bliss of the coming juvenile, with his reformed primer. Here is a specimen of the spelling that is to be, in the happy times when advanced views get fully carried into practice. Let our readers understand that it is literally extracted from one of the publications of the St. Louis Spelling Reform Association, which has for its motto: "The best ejuceshun for ech and ol without west of tim, muni, or enerji." The editor introduces it with this commendation:

The following has only "one sign for one sound" and therefore represents the fewest letters possible to express the words: No marked letters are used.

UROP AND AMERICA.

Fu topics ar mor invitin or mor fit for filozofiol discussn tan te acsn and influens ov te Nu World upon te Old; or te contribusnz ov America to Urop.

Her obligasnz to Urop for siens and art, laz and mannerz, America acnolejez, az se ot, wit respect and gratitud. And te pepl ov te United Stats, desendants of Englis (or Inglis) stoc, gratif for te trezurz ov nolej derivd from ter Englis ansestrz, acnolej also wit tanks (or tances) and filyl regard, tat, amun toz ansestrz, undr te cultyr (or eulcr) ov Hampden and Sydney (proper namz ar not canjd) and oter asiduous frendz, tat sed ov populr liberti first jermiated, wie on or sol, haz sot up to itz ful hit, until itz brancez oversado al te land.

This is serious; and deals with Sydney, Hampden, "and others who called Chilton friends." But as the reform specially aims at relieving suffering infancy and tender youth, in their first orthographic throes, we shall select a lighter piece, only remarking that in the latter example, the original spelling is helped—or supposed to be helped a little,—by sundry dots, and tails to the vowels, which our unreformed founts will not reproduce. The piece is Charles Mackay's "Come and Help":

Cum forth from the vali,
Cum forth from the hil,
Cum forth from the wurkshop,
The min and the mil:
From plezhur or slumber,
From studi or ple,
Cum forth in yur miriadz
Tu ed us tu-de:
Thar'z a wurd tu be spokn,
A ded tu be dun,
A truth tu be utterd,
A coz (cause) tu be wun,
Cum forth in yur miriadz!
Cum forth everi wun!

Perhaps the reader can recall the time when he first peeped into Chaucer, and tried to spell his way through the old orthography of the "Canterbury Tales." If so he will appreciate the good time coming, when

all the literature of Pope, Addison, Goldsmith, Cowper, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Scott, Dickens, Macaulay, Freeman and Green, will be even more incomprehensible to the happy race of the new golden age.

We live in an era of advanced views; social, political, moral, and religious. As to alphabetic writing, it originated in hieroglyphics; why should it not return, like all else, to its second childhood?

The error which lies at the foundation of much that is at present written on spelling reform originates in the assumption that the sole function of the alphabet is to represent sound. This is a fallacy. Sound is a spoken, not a written thing. Spelling appeals to the eye, not to the ear. Whether we write ideas graphically or phonetically, we use a device intended to represent the word, and its meaning or idea, to the eye. A printed book represents the idea to the mind of the deaf mute who never heard a sound, just as clearly as to the reader gifted with hearing. To the latter *air* and *hair* are the same sound. He learns by the context which of the two ideas is referred to. So with *right*, *write*, *rite*, *wright*, and many another familiar example. Pronunciation, moreover, is far from stable. Chaucer rhymes *plough* and *enough*; and Pope, in his famous lines on Addison, makes *besieged* pair with *obliged*, as the pronunciation of the latter word fully justified in the last generation.

As to the orthographic reform, a steady, almost unnoted process goes on from generation to generation. The spelling of Pope's or Addison's original editions are by no means those of our own. Neither, for that part, is the grammar of Addison—prince of essayists,—always the grammar of to-day. Those silent, unnoted changes are the healthful vital process of a living language. Our prayer-book, for the most part, with characteristic ecclesiastical conservatism, will still be found spelling *musick*, *catholick*, &c., just as our clergy still make a distinct syllable of the final *ed*. But the world moves, in spite of such jealous conservatism; though happily not at the mad rate that the advocates of advanced views, communism, agnosticism, and all the other nostrums of the restless lovers of change for its own dear sake would have us resort to. D. W.

SOCIETY IN MANITOBA.

CONVENTIONALLY speaking, society does not yet exist in Manitoba. Among the negations by which a certain class of people describe the drawbacks to life in the North-West, "no society" figures conspicuously. Members of society, in the technical sense of that phrase, do not make their way to new countries, except under stress of a stern necessity. They are wholly destitute of the pioneer spirit, and, with all their self-importance, are only the bric-a-brac of humanity. Even in Winnipeg, society is as yet in a crude, primitive, chaotic state, but the crystals are already forming, and it is evident that they are taking on shapes and forms peculiarly their own.

Manitoba is almost wholly devoid of the rough element so prominent in the western and north-western States. The typical American and frontiersman is a *rara avis* there. Gamblers and blacklegs have found their way to Winnipeg in small coteries, but law and order are fairly established in the young city. It is the Chicago of the North-West only in rapidity of growth and commercial importance. Winnipeg, like every other city, has its cave of Adullam, and its haunts of vice, but their frequenters make no mark, even in municipal elections. Outside the city, the lazy, rollicking, devil-may-care species has hardly a representative. Industry of some kind is a necessary of existence, and those who aim to live by their wits have no vocation. A wonderful sturdiness characterizes the race that is moulding society in Manitoba. It is no country for weaklings. The rigor of the climate, and the fact that subsistence must be won mainly from the soil, put an effectual check on the influx of effeminate and *dilettanti* settlers. Only *men*, in some true sense of that significant word, can get on there. Goethe says that without energy it is impossible for a two-legged creature to be a man. Goethe's "man" invariably falls in love with the North-West. Its "illimitable possibilities" charm his mind and heart, rouse his indomitable spirit, and fire the energy that is latent within him. The statement that there is no society in a country where such men are attracted, is true only when and where but one is present. Give him a companion, and at once, like kindred drops, they mingle into one. A bluff, hearty friendship springs up between such congenial spirits. Yet rudeness and impoliteness are uncommon. The writer has been in many new countries, but never in one where courtesy was so uniformly the rule. Most of the settlers are educated people, if not in a scholastic sense, in that of being self-taught, self-reliant, and self-poised. They have seen the world, gained some polish and much breadth, know their bearings, and instinctively steer their ship clear of rudeness and discourtesy.