

pointed Fabers. In a cosy little office adjoining the school-room, I had the pleasure of meeting the shorthand firm of Brown & Holland. The Professor, as Mr. Brown calls himself, is a true and earnest disciple of Phonography, and boasts of as much enthusiasm for the art, after nineteen years' experience as a reporter, as when he first began to manufacture pot-hooks and curves *a la* Benn Pitman. Mrs. Holland, his business partner, is an active, bustling little American lady, and bears an enviable reputation as a most accomplished and proficient shorthand writer.

At present there is a decided boom in the art in Chicago, but only really good writers are wanted—not those who have a theoretical knowledge of shorthand and a meagre business education. There is a steady demand for writers, but the salaries are by no means massive. They range from \$50 to \$100 per month. The ladies are fast becoming a numerous, and, of course, highly important element in the profession, the universal use of the type-writer doing away with the trouble they would otherwise experience with their unbusiness-like handwriting.

It is certainly gratifying to see this prosperity in the West, and no true lover of the art will either demur at the assertion of Messrs. Brown and Holland, that Chicago is the bright star in the phonographic heaven, or object to wishing them and all the members of the profession in the West a hearty "God speed."

PHONETICS.

BY PROF. J. H. BROWN, BELLEVILLE.

How shall we best bring about spelling reform? This is a question of vital importance to all who take any interest in phonetics. While I am convinced that the primary aim of orthography should be to analyze sentences into words, words into syllables, and syllables into sounds, that each character should have a fixed sound, and that no sound should have more than one sign to represent it, yet I believe that if we are going to bring about a system of spelling more phonetic than our present one, it must be accomplished by degrees.

To the ardent admirers of a reform in spelling this may appear dilatory; but when we consider the enormous difficulties that present themselves against the advocacy of a sudden and complete revolution in the representation of our language; the converting of the masses of people, who know little of its phonetic principle and care less about it, and convincing them of the desirability of its utility—the adoption of such a course is, I think, impossible. We want to consider the possibility of producing practically effective results in the initiatory step of spelling reform by still retaining the Roman alphabet as a basis of such phonetic construction.

If all the English-speaking people on the earth, or if the English-speaking people of one country, were willing and ready for the inaugu-

ration of phonetic system of spelling, then the introduction of a new and purely phonetic alphabet would be advisable. But we are forced to admit that that time, though devoutly wished for, is not come. I am ready to confer all honor to the pioneers in the cause of spelling reform. The originators and promoters of any reform have difficulties to contend with, unknown to its disciples; but is there not a tendency oftentimes, while handling reforms in their infancy, through over zeal in the cause to attempt too much, and thus endanger or retard the progress of it?

The alphabet used by Mr. Pitman is possibly as good as, if not better than, other alphabets I have seen, but its general appearance is so different from the existing one that few outside of those directly interested in phonetics read it with any degree of fluency or for pleasure. In my opinion this has retarded the cause of spelling reform, possibly more than many are aware of. Even if we had a phonetic alphabet in general use, great care would have to be taken that the writing of language would be phonetically correct. In an article in the *Phonetic Journal* before me, the word *little* is written "*litel*." This certainly is not correct. In speaking the word the tongue does not leave the front part of the upper gum after taking the position for "t" until "l" is sounded, while if "e" or any other vowel were spoken there must be no obstruction of the sound. "*Possible*" is also written "*possibel*," while in the articulation there is no sound of "e." My conviction is that we must adopt a few reforms in the beginning; if possible get our public journals to use them, and we will have laid a foundation for spelling reform. We must get in the thin end of the wedge first—work upon the principle that half a loaf is better than none, and we shall slowly but surely pave a way to the final goal of triumph.

It has been my duty for several years to teach our alphabet phonetically, with its various combinations and peculiarities, to children who have never heard a sound, and no one has experienced the want of harmony, its defects, inconsistencies, and redundancies more than I. The work of teaching the various sounds is accomplished by the aid of *visible speech*. After that is done I introduce the common Roman letters, which they learn to sound simultaneously with their practice of the symbols taught. On account of the very unphonetic character of the alphabet, I make use of a few diacritical marks to distinguish the different sounds of the one letter. Thus in all cases where the sound of "s" is the same as that of "z" it may be represented with a dot as "s," examples--as, has. In all cases where "c" has a soft sound it is written thus c. "Th" voiced is written th a small stroke under it. All silent letters are crossed out. If the writing were on paper the pen would be drawn through such letters as "a" in "meat" and "e" in "some."

These may appear of little consequence, but