

"sumer"? Why "cow" but "kine"; "cat" but "kitten"; "corn" but "kernel"; "fancy" but "phantom"? If we substituted an "f" for the "ph" would we be less aware of its derivation? Why still retain the "b" in thumb and limb? Why, indeed, unless it be to preserve an effigy of an effete orthography. They come from the Anglo-Saxon "lim" and "thuma." Why "receipt" but "deceit"; "conceive" but believe; "proceed" and "precede"? "Uncle" must be spelt with a "c," but ankle with a "k." Why retain the letter "b" in debt? The French do not use it, yet they are less ignorant than we as to its derivation.

If we can readily distinguish between the hominims "rite," "write," "right" and "wright" when spoken, would there be a greater hardship in making the same distinction when written? A-g-u-e spells a word of two syllables, but if we prefix (pl) we get "plague" a word of one syllable. It would be a work of supererogation for me to add numberless examples of this nature. What I have desired to illustrate is that our present English spelling, through a combined number of causes, does not represent our present pronunciation, and in many cases a pronunciation we ever used in our language. The consequence of this is that we must necessarily experience difficulty in our work. But some say if you write "program," "dialog," "hav," "moov," etc., it will completely destroy the history of our language. Well, what if it does? Language was not made for scholars only, and it must necessarily be in a state of change. If you examine the orthography of Bunyan, Spencer and Shakespeare it will demonstrate to the most ignorant that wonderful changes have been made since that time. Milton wrote "sovrán," "stedfast" and "forgo." Spencer wrote

"seemd," and in "Canterbury Tales" we find "ther," "lern," "fil" and "wondres." If any of these celebrities had to pass an examination before any of our school-boards according to our standard he would be plucked in spelling. Voltaire said "That etymology was a science in which the vowels are worth nothing, and the consonants very little"—and so it would appear, especially with English. We will suppose that it did obscure the history of the word. How many of those who speak our language know or care to know the history of this or that word. The question is not, what is best for the few, but what is the most beneficial for the masses. The more we examine this subject the more we find that bad spelling is prevalent. In our city I observed the other day amongst the signs the following: "a pheaton for sale," "carriage makeing" and "cheap groceries," yet I doubt whether we, as Canadians, are much worse spellers than other people.

Possibly the nearest approach to a philosophical construction of a phonetic alphabet is that of Prof. Bell's "Visible Speech," yet I doubt whether it was the intention of the author to have it come into general use. I believe the system of Visible Speech has been the means of bringing the subject of articulation more prominently before teachers of the deaf; and though I do not consider it of absolute importance to convey speech to them, yet I deem it of vast utility that instructors of the oral method should possess a thorough knowledge of such a system. There can be no doubt, but that our unsystematic manner of representing spelling is a great difficulty in our teaching. This becomes more apparent with advanced pupils who are constantly increasing their vocabulary of words. While our orthography remains as it is, this will not be made easier, but I trust