

—THE STATEMENTS of Prof. Skeat as given p. 64 deserve marked attention from their bearing on problem of obscure vowels. In effect they amount to 1. *N* represents two varieties of sound: first that called vocalic or capable of being sounded alone, and secondly a sound purely consonantal. 2. These varieties need but one sign, *n*, in practice. 3. *L*, *m* and *r* should have similar treatment.

DON'T use complete phonetic spelling in documents intended to be read by the general public. The present general public can't read complete phonetic spelling and won't try. You might as well begin the conversion of the Chinese by distributing among them copies of New Testament in Greek. Secondly, Don't use even amended spelling except according to definite rules. Capricious spelling is bad, whether petrified as in the dictionary, or shifting according to the taste and fancy of the speller. In documents meant to be read by the general public, a certain amount of amended spelling, according to definite rules, excites interest, shows the writer to have the courage of his convictions, and is useful in breaking down prejudice; but if the changes are so numerous as to make the reading difficult to unpractised eyes, the aim is defeated, the article goes unread.—*S. R. A. Bulletin*, May 1886.

—Mr. H. SWEET, M. A., in a paper before the Education Society, teaches: "German short *o*, which is distinct from our *o* in *not*, is the first element of our diphthong *oi*." [Yes, and is not such sound or a very close approximation to it the general short *o* of Europe? Is *Ō* not the very best shape for a sound in such general use? As confirmatory of the view that *o* in Europe is used (besides its ordinary sound in *no*), with a value which often coincides with that in our word *nor*, and in general comes very near it, we quote from Webster: "Properly speaking, the sound approaches *o* in *nor*, and is in fact intermediate between *o* in *not* and *o* in *note*. This at least is true of French, German and Italian." The article in Webster is ritten by Dr. Tomas and will be found on page 1683 of the edition of 1880. The *o*'s in Italian *Livorno* (Loughorn) are exactly those in *nor* and *no*.—Ed.]

LITERATURE.

PREMIER LIVRE DE LECTURE (Méthode Fonétique) par Paul Passy, professeur de langues vivantes. Paris, Hachette, 79 Boulevard St. Germain.

KLEINES LEBENBUCH fuer Kinder von 7 bis 12 Jahren. Gesammelt von Prof. Paul Passy. London, F. Pitman, 20 Paternoster Row.

The first is a primer for teaching French children to read by the *sound* method, the latter a small elementary reading book for German children for like use. Each is useful also to teach the pronunciation of either tongue. As such they are valuable to the student of Comparative Orthoepy. We shall get them for those who wish.

—*Practice* is the noun. *To practise* is the verb. The distinction is often overlooked. In Revised Spelling the verb is *practis*; past participle, *practist*.

—In general we spell by the following rules which are on trial but believed to be worthy of adoption:

A. Omit every useless letter.
B. CHANGE { *d*, *ph*, *gh*
if sounded so { to *t*, *f*, *j*

—*Italic Types* were first made by Aldus Minutius at Venice about 1501 for the exclusive use of which in Italy he obtained a brief from Alexander VI.—This neat letter was modeled after the handwriting of Petrarch.

JAPAN.—A "ROMA-JI KAI" (Roman Alphabet Assoc'n) proposes to use 22 out of present 26 Roman letters, omitting *l*, *q*, *v* and *x*. They accept the consonants at their usual English values, and vowels at those of Italian, German or Latin.—Chinese ideographs are said to be no better fitted to express Japanese than to express Latin or English, and it is estimated that use of the Roma-ji Kai system will reduce by nine tenths (some say by forty nine fiftieths), the labor incurred by a Japanese lad in learning to read. Already the Roma-ji Kai has begun to print a newspaper; prominent journals are devoting a column a day to material printed in Roman letters, and dictionaries, text books, native literature and classic texts are to be thus set forth as opportunity offers.—*American Bookmaker*.