

When one hears persons objecting to a reformation in spelling because it would destroy resemblance to originals he can scarcely repress a smile, and wish they would inform themselves more fully upon the subject. Saxon (or rather Gothic) words contribute only about eight per cent. of our present vocabulary; but as they are the words of common life, they constitute about one-third of the words employed by writers of the present day. Of this eight per cent. only about three per cent. are spelled as they were in the golden age of Saxon literature; all the rest have been corrupted until many of them exhibit only faint traces of their origin. When I see how successfully time-saving machinery has multiplied the possibilities of life in other departments of industry, I am astonished at the passivity which tolerates a language insuperable to foreigners, and one which

takes the entire period of minority for natives to acquire.

Not twenty per cent. of educated people can write a dozen pages absolutely free from errors in orthography, and those who did not learn to spell early in life are in almost as hopeless a condition as foreigners. A language which makes memory the sole guide in orthography must either impoverish literature or violate its own rules; for when the reasoning and emotional faculties become sufficiently aroused to be interesting, memory is either partially or wholly suspended. If we could have a phonetic language the antagonism between sound and sight would vanish, and spelling would no longer be the art of concealing pronunciation. All efforts to obviate the difficulties by improved methods are lost labour; the language *itself* must be reformed.—*Education*.

THE *Publishers' Circular* gives the following particulars with reference to the number of new books and new editions published in England during the past year:—Theology, sermons, Biblical, etc., 596 new books, 193 new editions; educational, classical, and philological, 435 new books, 90 new editions; juvenile works and tales, 727 new books, 260 new editions; novels, tales, and other fiction, 306 new books, 124 new editions; law, jurisprudence, etc., 52 new books, 23 new editions; political and social economy, trade and commerce, 145 new books, 44 new editions; arts, sciences, and illustrated works, 264 new books, 80 new editions; voyages, travels, geographical research, 204 new books, 40 new editions; history, biography, etc., 361 new books, 91 new editions; poetry and the drama, 158 new books, 23 new editions; year books and serials in volumes, 255 new books, 14 new editions; medicines, surgery, etc., 119 new books, 58 new editions; belles-lettres,

essays, monographs, etc., 92 new books, 14 new editions; miscellaneous, including pamphlets, not sermons, 264 new books, 92 new editions—total number of new works, 3,978; of new editions, 1,146. Taken together the number of publications issued is 5,124. This shows a slight falling off in the production of books, as last year the figures were 3,410 new books; 1,296 new editions; total, 5,406. The *Circular*, however, remarks: "It is not improbable that the real value of the literary works of 1882, whether viewed from an intellectual or from a material standpoint, is superior to that of its forerunners."

As for harmless amusement and still more for the free exercise of the fancy and imagination, I know few studies to compare with Natural History, with the search for most beautiful and curious productions of Nature amid her loveliest scenery and in her freshest atmosphere.—*Kingsley*.