

a healthy re-action. We know a hale and healthy old man who invariably cures himself of a cold by going to bed and eating nothing till the cure is effected. At all events, it is worth trying; and if the "meal skipping" system does not succeed, it is easy to go back to the drugs and lozenges. Dr. Page maintains that the experience of many patients testifies to the success of his system, and also, which we well believe, that it is more profitable to the patients than to the doctors. As a rule, no doubt, the *vis medicatrix Naturæ* is not sufficiently taken into account.

"Dr. Page thus sums up *nature's preventive and curative agents*":—"Pure air, appropriate food, exercise, active or passive, as the case may require, skin cleanliness, with proper ventilation of the surface of the body, i.e., through the use of non-swelting garments, supplemented by rational exposure of the entire surface of the body to the air, by means of air baths, sunshine in the house, and 'sunshine in the heart.' With these, and only these, all curable cases will grow to certain recovery: without them no medication will avail."

FIDELIS.

OTTAWA NOTES.

OTTAWA, during the session at least, is the worst place for gossip and scandal in Canada. Whether it is that politics tend to demoralize, whether the fact of many people being thrown together who know but little of each other and suspect ill without reason, or whether it is the fault of the place itself, it is hard to say; but, whatever may be the cause, it does not make the fact any the less deplorably true. Character seems to count for nothing, and even the most damaging statements against man or woman never seem to be resented by those who hear them, but rather to be accepted as most edifying bits of news. If one half that is said be true, Ottawa should get up a movement to remove the Capital to some other place; and if it is not, the stocks should be set up for scandal-mongers.

This is the very busy season of the politicians. There is a feverish anxiety to finish the business, and leave. Nobody seems half so anxious for this as the leader of the Opposition, and if Parliament is not prorogued before Easter it will certainly not be his fault. Late sittings are now the rule, and an adjournment before half-past one the exception. A late sitting, when the estimates are under discussion, is an amusing thing if one is wakeful enough to take in the situation. This session the members stay awake better than usual, as a general thing. On either side of the chamber is a small body of the people's representatives, who look at the speakers as if they would like to understand what was going on only that they find it too much trouble to listen attentively. The talking on the Opposition is nearly all done by the gentleman who leads for the time being, and on the other, by the minister to whose department the estimates under discussion relate. If a member of the Opposition who has some reputation as a bore rises, or if their spokesman occupies too long over one item, the Government supporters begin desk-scraping and other noises by way of protest. It may be worth while to explain that "desk-scraping" is the technical name for a special kind of "parliamentary noise." The members' desks are enclosed down to the floor, and, as an honourable gentleman leans back in his cushioned chair, by pressing the side of his boot-sole firmly against the side of the desk and moving his toe ever so little, he can produce a creaking noise that shakes the nerves of even an experienced speaker and dislocates every joint in his ideas. Some of the hardened ones on the other side, however, seem rather to enjoy the distinction of arousing these protests, and speak all the longer, even if all the worse, while they are continued. Still, when a number of members make up their mind that the orator must give way, they can cause such a tremendous noise that his voice cannot be heard. The work on the estimates is progressing satisfactorily, and there is every prospect that they will be got out of the way in time to get through the remaining business before Easter if the Government is ready to proceed with other business.

The Hudson's Bay railway scheme has come before Parliament in a new, and rather unexpected, shape. There are two companies incorporated to build to the Bay, one known as the "Winnipeg and Hudson's Bay Railway and Steamship Company," the other as the "Nelson Valley Railway Company." Propositions were made looking to amalgamation, and for a time it seemed certain that there would be only one company, but, owing to differences between the promoters of the respective schemes, nothing came of it. It has since been announced that the Government will not merely give so much land at fifty cents an acre, as was at first proposed, but will render substantial aid to whichever company proves itself best fitted to carry out the work, or to the united companies should they yet decide to join hands, although, long after such steps are allowed under the rules of the House, the Winnipeg and Hudson's Bay Company has come forward asking for certain amendments to its charter which will put it in a much better position than its rival. The Bill to make the amendments came in under special suspension of the rules. The Railway Committee of the Commons had already held what was supposed to be its final meeting, but it was convened again to consider the Bill and did so on Friday. The Nelson Valley Company represented by its solicitor, strongly objected to the passing of the Bill, but passed it was, so far as the Committee was concerned. The strongest opposition will be given to it, in the House, but the Government stands pledged to make definite progress with the Hudson's Bay scheme this year, and, as this seems to be the favoured company, the Bill will probably be pulled through at any cost. Given a good crop in the North-West and work actively proceeding on the Hudson's

Bay route, the people of the prairie country will forget their grievances and say nothing more for a time at least against the tariff or the Canadian Pacific Railway monopoly. Besides the assistance to the road, the Government promises to send out an expedition to the Bay and Straits to ascertain definitely the possibilities of navigation there.

The division of the Fishery Award is not a dead question yet. Mr. Davies, of Prince Edward Island, wants a portion of the money given to that Province. He argues that the right of Americans to fish in the Island waters was sanctioned by the Local Legislature before Confederation, and that some compensation should be given to the Island for those rights equal to what it would have got had Confederation not taken place. Meantime the intention of the Dominion Government seems to be to hold the money until some authority on the subject turns up.

The irrepressible Chinese question has taken a decided step toward settlement this session. A motion in favour of restricting and regulating the immigration of the Orientals has passed, and the Government has promised to appoint a commission to investigate the question and decide to what extent the restriction and regulation shall be carried.

Mr. Charlton got after the Government with a sharp stick on Friday. He found fault with the expenditure, and presented a mass of figures to show that the country is in a bad way financially. He marred the effect of his speech by a too apparent effort to make a party gain by contrasting the results of Conservative and Reform rule.

ED. RUTHVEN.

Ottawa, April 7th.

CORRESPONDENCE.

SPELLING REFORM.

To the Editor of The Week:

SIR,—The letter of "D. W.," in your issue of 27th March is before me, as is also Mr. Houston's reply in that of April 3rd. "D. W." has made two extracts from a St. Louis publication which is at hand. As specimens of phonetic spelling they must be considered misrepresentations. In such publication five samples of amended spelling are given side by side, as tentative examples for choice. One has no new letters; others have from three to fourteen. The latter is put forth only as *ideal*, i.e., not advocated as adapted to popular use unless by someone of extremely utopian views. "D. W." having chosen such extreme specimens, out-Herods Herod by printing such in ordinary type! innocently, or otherwise, supposing that such small differences in the shapes of the letters could make no difference, whereas they make all the difference. "Hamlet" is not "Hamlet" with *Hamlet* left out. The only difference between "i" and "j" is the tail of the latter. If he were to print all his j's as i's and multiply such by fourteen, with other changes innumerable, he would have just such a jumble as he has presented, and which neither fanatic nor maniac would own. No wonder Mr. Houston disclaims owning such.

It is not out of place to ask attention to certain new letters already introduced. This retrospective view will illustrate the necessity of the prospective introduction of other new letters. J and j were formed from I and i by tailing the latter, introduced during the Cromwellian period. In an old Queen Elizabeth Bible, I find "Iesus," "Iohn," "Ieremiah," "Iudges," "Ionah," etc. The folio edition of Shakespeare, 1623, has no j. In fact, even to our day, I and J are mixed up in indexes and dictionaries. So, often, are V and U and J are new letters. They occupy an irregular place in the printer's case for that reason. The old Latin alphabet had a V with the force of modern U. Roman coins and inscriptions show the name of Julius Cæsar as IVLIVS. Even as late as the last century the capital for "u" was of the same shape as the small letter. Separate and definite functions were not assigned "u" and "v" until about 1630. "Deliver us from evil" was printed "Deliuer vs from euil," the forms "u" and "v" being strangely mixed up. In the reigns of the Stuarts there was seldom a separate type for "w." It was then a newish letter, and was made by actually putting two v's together, thus, vv. Still other letters have been introduced. The old Saxon had a single sign for the th in *thin*, as also a different sign or letter for the th in *thine*. These were in use in Britain as late as the fourteenth century, when they were unfortunately dropped out. Their restoration will help to simplify and amend our wretched orthography. Most people suppose the alphabet has come to us direct from Cadmus—not so, it has been supplemented. How could we get along without such new letters now? Our ancestors saw the necessity for such, and supplied it in part. Let us, if not completing it by having for each sound one sign, at least in some degree approximate that.

Those familiar with Greek know how a different shaped letter is used for long "o," than for short "o," as also for long and short "e." They also know how very much these two simplify reading Greek. In like manner, differences of shape, often only slight modifications, will indicate differences of sound for us. Let it not be forgotten that the Greek alphabet lacked its full complement of twenty-four letters in its early days. Four (ϕ, ψ, ω, and ξ) were introduced at Athens in the archonship of Euclides, B. C. 403. It is thought the Cadmean letters were sixteen in number. When the sprightly Greeks felt the need of new letters they introduced them, and even four at a time. That was certainly better than resorting to the misuse of those in vogue as we do. Why are we so slow to adopt a common-sense remedy, especially as we boast so much of our modern advances in so many other respects? Instead of having a separate sign for a long "e," as the Greeks had, we now have twenty different ways of representing that sound, very puzzling to remember. Other sounds are about as badly off. Such new letters as are most urgently needed should be introduced, as did the old Greeks, as did our forefathers in the Tudor and Stuart dynasties. Let us restore also the Saxon dropped letters, or such shapes in their stead as suit our modern typography. We badly need a separate letter for each vowel. We have a full dozen such, while we have but five letters for them—*a, e, i, o, u*—only five tools where we should have a dozen. We are hence like a carpenter with less than half his complement of tools—compelled to bungle his work by having to use a hatchet in place of a saw, a screw-driver in place of a gimlet, etc.

As Prof. Max Muller wrote recently, in the *Fortnightly*, something more effective than ridicule must be resorted to before the advocates of amended spelling are to be