

National Educational Association at its late meeting in Louisville, notwithstanding the repeated assertions by the press. The fact must be recognized that grown-up people are apt to be "sot in their ways." Too many and large jolts and shocks would cause the work of the board to become an impertinence, a revolution—not an evolution, and make it surely fail.

2. The line already followed in more than a few schools in the United States, namely, the training in phonetics by use of an alphabet almost ideally scientific that has been "prepared and promulgated" by the American Philological Association, the powers of the letters of which being similar to those used in the orthography of the United States Board of Geographical Names and in that of the Royal Geographical Society of England, and in the pronunciation of the Oxford Dictionary, which is being pushed to completion by the Philological Society of England, and is followed in the respelling of words for pronunciation in the Standard Dictionary and in some textbooks. This scientific alphabet keeps close to the common alphabet, and gives a symbol for each of the forty elementary sounds of the language.

It passes without saying that every schoolchild should be trained to detect and produce each of the sounds that make up spoken English. The drill in phonetics should begin early—in the kindergarten is not too soon; even better were it to begin in the nursery. Now, let this drill be combined with writing on blackboard, slate, or paper the symbols for the actual sounds in each word, using the scientific alphabet for this purpose; then the next generation will be altogether familiar with the form of each word when phonetically spelled, and no shock or jolt will be given, nor will the attention of the reader be arrested when newspaper, magazine, or book spells "thru," "jok," or any other word in a strictly phonetic way. The letters in this Philological Society's alphabet are so nearly like those of the common alphabet that no word is disguised beyond recognition to any reader of English who has not been thus trained. This work of drilling in phonetics is no innovation in our schools, and we are all accustomed to the use of this or other phonetic alphabet in the respelling of words for pronunciation in dictionaries and in readers and spellers.

The first branch of this twofold work is in the hands of men of tried nerve and level headedness. Like Diogenes, they can't be "derided" even by the typical funny man of the press whom the sight of phonetics is always sufficient to jovially inebriate. And it may be said of the Simplified Spelling Board, as Breckinridge said of Clay when a thunderstorm at Lexington knocked the head from his statue, "Nothing but a bolt of lightning could cause Clay to lose his head." We may all feel sure that this spelling movement is safely progressive in the hands of the twenty-eight men who are in control of it, and in a wise change of this sort we would all do well to ponder Guizot's words:

"Custom contracts our ideas with the circle it has traced for us; it governs us by the terror it inspires for any new and untried condition; it makes us believe the walls of the prison within which we are inclosed to be the boundary of the world, and beyond all is undefined, confusion, chaos, where, it makes us feel, we should not have air to breathe."

This undefined fear that is so apt to make "cowards of us all" has ever given slow progress to civilization. Why would it not be well for us just this once to look a wise, logical change straight in the face, taking counsel of our reason rather than of our inertia, superstitions, and fears?

I. K. FUNK.

New York, March 20, 1906.

SIMPLIFIED SPELLING.

Two Lines of Work, Requiring Patience and Discrimination.

To the Editor of The New York Times:

A correspondent in your columns last week loses patience with the Simplified Spelling Board because it does not go far enough; it should, in his judgment, remake the alphabet, giving a letter for each sound, some forty in all. It is cheering to note that even the editor of THE TIMES, and the editors of some other leading dailies, think the board altogether "too cautious." Good! "The world do move" and Jasper be dead.

- Your correspondent is right in his main contention, but he must be patient, and possibly a little more discriminating.

There are two distinct lines of work to be followed to get English scientifically spelled:

1. The line chosen by the board—that of a conservatively progressive evolution, aiming chiefly at the dropping of silent letters. This is simply to expedite a movement that has been going on during the past century or two—a movement that has made "clipped words" of "sonne," (son—Shakespeare,) "groupe," "publick," "bunn," &c., and which bids fair in the near future, under this new impetus, to give us "coquet," "fetus," "tipt," "tho," &c. A change in the form of a word is too great if it, to a considerable degree, takes the attention of the reader from the thought of the text, as would "trauf," (trough,) "tuff," (tough,) "ruff," (rough,) forms which, by the bye, were not adopted by the