

appealing to amiable ignorance and superstition raised the big structure that has for years amused and amazed a considerable part of the world. It is a little hard to believe that a man in so many ways intelligent was sincere in his grotesque pretensions, but probably he was, and there was a large element of method in all his madness. He has been a charlatan, but one on the whole rather likable and decent, and though in the course of his strenuous career he secured a lot of money from his dupes on what, strictly speaking, were false pretenses, he gave them a good deal for it, and perhaps full value. As a manufacturer and merchant he seems to have been skirting bankruptcy for some time past. The expected crash has not come, however, and it is not quite impossible that if DOWIE could have avoided the physical weaknesses of old age—as he should have done, with such powers of “healing” as he asserted—he might have put at least a few of his enterprises on a firm footing. That the new “Overseer” will have any success is more than doubtful. His talk is much more sensible than were the tirades of the “prophet,” but he has yet to prove the possession of the “prophet’s” genius for controlling large numbers of emotional people and for making them put their pocketbooks in his keeping. As outlined, his programme is altogether too sensible—for the conduct of a Dowie “Zion.” With the reforms he suggests all the enthusiasm and self-sacrifice will disappear, and his dividends will have to be in dollars instead of in the spiritual comfort and exaltation with which Dowie was able to content his faithful followers. It takes a wonder-worker to work wonders, and as a business man Mr. VOLVA will find himself in competition with business men at least as able as himself.

### Finding Fault with Gen. Wood.

How it does bring back the early days of our Philippine venture to hear from Washington, Boston, and other nice, safe places harsh criticism of the methods selected by Gen. WOOD for subduing the Moro bandits! It seems that instead of killing them to a man—and to a few incidental and indistinguishable women and children—in the crater of Mount Dajo, he should have laid regular siege to his enemy and starved them into submission. We never heard that Gen. WOOD was a particularly bloodthirsty ruffian, and it occurs to us that perhaps he knew the conditions he had to meet just a little better than do his long-distance advisers. Perhaps it wasn’t quite practicable with a few hundred men to surround a big mountain, thickly grown with tropic jungle, and to invest it so closely that active savages, perfectly familiar with the country, could not have supplied their simple wants for an indefinite period. Possibly the General studied the situation with some care before he ordered the attack that was, at least from a purely military standpoint, so brilliantly successful; it is not unimaginable that his vigorous action saved ten lives for every one it cost. Sieges, especially in the tropics, have their fatalities, just as do charges up steep mountainsides, and when a Moro fanatic has determined to conquer or die, our own opinion is that he should not be allowed to—conquer. The slaughter on Mount Dajo was horrible enough, but it might have been worse, and that part of the archipelago is likely to have peace for some time to come.

## TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

### Spelling Reform Financed.

There will be very general interest, we think, in the news that Mr. CARNEGIE has turned his always effective attention

to the subject of spelling reform, and is not only willing to finance the movement, but has already organized a “Simplified Spelling Board” composed of men of the very highest authority in this enormously important matter. The mere reading of their names is enough to convince one that as usual Mr. CARNEGIE has sought and found good advisers, and it ought to convince all that under such auspices the prospects are that there will soon be “something doing.” This prospect, of course, will be pleasing to far from everybody. Many people are instinctively and strongly opposed to any except the slow and inevitable changes in the spelling of English. They admit the absurdities and the inconsistencies and the difficulties of our present orthography, but the result of any simplification is in their eyes a hideous barbarism, and they recur again and again to the pleasure they take in the sight of a word that, as they say, tells its history by means of its now silent letters. Of course this position is understandable enough, and denunciation or derision of it is worse than useless, but the fact remains that the logic of every argument against spelling reform is extremely weak, and in the last analysis every one of them comes down to a mere liking for the familiar and the old. Perhaps nine-tenths of our words are fairly well spelled as it is—as well spelled as they can be with an alphabet as imperfectly adapted to the needs of the language as ours is. A purely phonetic system is out of the question without a much larger alphabet than we have now, but a vast improvement could be effected by reducing to some sort of regularity the spelling of the much-used tenth that makes most of the trouble. That done, children would be saved a very large amount of time and labor that could be applied to more profitable tasks and the foreigner could attempt the learning of the language without running against a stumbling-block that now drives him almost to despair. The fear that reform in spelling would cost us the history of our words is without the slightest foundation, and there is little more basis for the assumption that the present forms teach etymology. They are explained by etymology, but they rarely teach it. Of course the new board will not try to reach an impossible perfection. If they attained it to-day it would be lost to-morrow. They can, however, make English spelling as good, say, as that of Spanish or German. Incidentally, we hope that they will have a few words to say to the American publishers who of late years have been doing their best to rob us of gains already made in this country, merely that they might sell the same editions in England and here.

### Dowieism in a New Phase.

If there is still life enough in the remarkable DOWIE for him to follow with interest the fortunes

of what was once his own private “Zion,” he must be much worried over the latest developments in his carefully constructed enterprise. The subordinates he left behind to “run the business” during his absence in search of health still profess belief in his claims to supernatural authority and powers, but they have seized upon the cash box and have cruelly informed “Elijah III.” that his drafts will not be honored unless his private deposits, as distinguished from the funds of “Zion,” are kept adequate to his demands. This means, of course, that Dowieism is at an end, for DOWIE is all there ever was to it. His shrewdness in