A SYSTEM OF ORTHOGRAPHY FOR NATIVE NAMES OF PLACES.

THE Royal geographical society of London, and the Société de géographie of Paris, have each adopted a system of geographical orthography which is intended to put an end to the existing confusion in the mode of spelling in maps and books. We fully agree with the first rule set forth by the Royal society, — "No change will be made in the orthography of foreign names in countries which use Roman letters: Thus, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, etc., names will be spelt as by the respective nations." The second rule is, "Neither will any change be made in the spelling of such names in languages which are not written in Roman characters as have become by long usage familiar to English readers: thus, Calcutta, Cutch, Celebes, Mecca, etc., will be retained in their present form." Though this rule may give rise to some doubt as to what names have become by long usage familiar, it may be accepted. We should prefer to retain anglicized foreign names, e.g., Munich for München, Milan for Milano, Normandy for Normandie, instead of introducing the original form, as the first rule demands. The new system does not provide for the spelling of names in languages written in foreign characters. Of course, German and Danish must be classed among the languages to which the first rule refers. But it is doubtful how Russian and Polish names shall be spelled. In the Polish language the Roman, in the Russian the Cyrillic, alphabet is used, and yet the sounds of the languages are very similar. It would be inconsistent to apply to the one the first rule, while the other is spelled merely according to the sound. It would have been desirable that the society should have expressed its opinion on this point more precisely. The phonetic rules do not decide whether it is correct to spell Kasimov, Kasimof, or Kassimov, nor will we be able to decide whether it be correct to write Trnova, Ternava, Ternova, or Tirnova.

The third rule is, "The true sound of the word as locally pronounced will be taken as the basis of the spelling;" and the fourth, "An approximation, however, to the sound, is alone aimed at. A system which would attempt to represent the more delicate inflections of sound and accent would be so complicated as only to defeat itself." Both these rules are good, as far as they go. Any linguistic alphabet would be too complicated for the general reader, and therefore the idea of applying it must be at once rejected. The alphabet upon which the society has decided follows the principle that vowels are pronounced as in Italian, and consonants as in English. This does away with the *ee* for the sound *i* in 'ravine,' and with the *oo* for the *u* in 'flute.' The rule that vowels are shortened in sound by doubling the following consonant is not good, as repetitions of consonants occur in many languages, and short vowels are of more frequent occurrence than long ones. Therefore it is better to mark the long ones. The French alphabet is in many respects better than the English. This is particularly true in regard to the introduction of the circumflex for marking the length of a vowel, and of the apostrophe for indicating exploded sounds. The German *ö* and *ü*, which are not in the English alphabet, are expressed by the letters *oe* and *ü*. The use of *dh* for the soft *th* (as in 'these') is another improvement.

Both systems, though materially improving the system of orthography of geographical names, are open to criticism. Whoever has any experience in reducing languages to writing, and has compared his notes with those of other students, or even the notes written before any knowledge of the sound and structure of the language was obtained, with later ones, will acknowledge that the sound as perceived by a traveller is in no way binding. The individuality and nationality of the author give the sound a peculiar character which not at all corresponds to the word as pronounced by the natives. In Central Africa, for instance, we find *r* and *l* or *j* and *ch* constantly interchanging, according to the nationality of the explorer. The rules adopted by the societies named can only help the explorer who is not at all acquainted with linguistics — which every explorer ought to be — to write down the names in an intelligible form. They are in no way sufficient for determining the proper spelling. This ought to be done by linguists, and the results of their studies laid down in a gazetteer. It is impossible to decide by a rule whether it is correct to write Uganda or Waganda; Urua, Warua, or Kerua, though the linguist will know that the first is the name of the country, the second that of the people, and the last the adjective form. On the English admiralty charts we find numerous mistakes. Native names are mistaken for English, and misspelled so as to make the meaning intelligible. In Davis Strait we find the name 'New Gummi Luck.' The correct name is 'Nugūmiut,' and means 'the inhabitants of the cape.' On the north-west coast of America we find the place 'Bella Bella.' Though this name has become that of a settlement, its origin dates back to a misunderstanding. The channel on which it is situated has the name 'Milbank Sound.' The natives of that district cannot pronounce this word, and say 'Bilbal,' which is transformed into 'Bella Bella' by the English traders and seamen. Similar mistakes occur everywhere. For these reasons it is impossible to

lay down a few rules that would enable us to spell any geographical name correctly. The system adopted by the Geographical society, however, is a decided improvement, inasmuch as every letter has only one meaning, and there is no room for doubt in the pronunciation of a written name. Therefore *Science* will adopt this system, with the improvements made by the French geographical society.

The pronunciation of letters will be as follows: —

a = *a* in 'father.'
e = *e* in 'there.'
i = *ee* in 'feel.'
o = *o* in 'mote.'
u = *oo* in 'fool.'
ö = *e* in 'her.'
ü = *ü* in German: München.
ai = *i* in 'ice.'
au = *ow* in 'how.'
b, d, f, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, th, t, v, w, z, ch, as in English.
g = *g* in 'garden.'
h is always pronounced, except in *th, kh,* and *gh.*
kh = the oriental guttural.
gh = another oriental guttural.
y = *y* in 'yard.'

Vowels are lengthened by a circumflex. Letters are only doubled when there is a distinct repetition of the single sound.

PSYCHIC BLINDNESS.

In this book Dr. Wilbrand has put together a most valuable and interesting series of facts and discussions concerning certain curious and important morbid phenomena. The appearance of such a book furnishes an excellent illustration of the great value and importance of the new view of brain-physiology. This view really takes its origin in the discovery of the electric irritability of the cortex by Fritsch and Hitzig in 1870. Their results at once led to more exact and adequate conceptions of the nature of brain-centres; and, when the pathologist and alienist came to study the forms of brain-lesion and impairment of function with the conceptions derived originally from physiological experiments, the advance step was a great one. And finally psychology must already acknowledge a debt to pathology probably greater than it owes to any other of the many sciences with which it is so intimately associated. Our mental structure is so extremely intricate and so wonderfully formed, that we must use all possible devices to simplify the problems it offers to the psychologist: hence the study of the less complex minds of the lower animals, the observation of the developing faculties of children, and the records of the primitive culture of man, derive their importance. Pathology performs an even more delicate service. It takes away or incapacitates more or less of this complex machinery, and shows in what way the working of the apparatus is thereby affected. Just as we never really appreciate the value of an object until we are without it, so the importance of certain brain-cells to mental sanity is not realized until disease renders them useless.

Die Seelenblindheit als Herderscheinung und ihre Beziehungen zur Homonymen Hemianopsie zur Alexie und Agraphie. Von Dr. Herrmann Wilbrand, Wiesbaden.

Some years ago Professor Munk described the condition of dogs from whose brains a certain cortical area had been removed, and gave it the name of 'psychic blindness' (*Seelenblindheit*). A dog in this condition can see, for he avoids all obstacles as well as ever, but what he sees has lost all meaning for him. If, for example, the dog was accustomed to jump over a rod when it was held before him, he no longer recognizes this signal: his whole psychic life is duller, and, in particular, the world of sight has lost all significance. This is now only one of a large series of phenomena which show that there is one centre in which an object is seen and another centre in which it is perceived, or, better, apperceived. Disease may injure one and leave the other intact. Dr. Wilbrand records two very remarkable cases of this nature, in both of which the patient retained normal intelligence, and accurately described the symptoms. The first is reported by Charcot, and relates to a highly intelligent merchant well versed in several languages, and reading the classics fluently. Up to the time of his attack, he could repeat the whole of the first book of the Iliad, beginning at any point. He had from his boyhood a most remarkable memory, which was almost exclusively a visual one. He could read pages of his favorite authors from the visualized picture of the page which he carried in his mind. If an incident of his many travels was spoken of, the whole scene appeared before him, vivid and complete in every detail. He was an expert draughtsman, and often sketched interesting portions of the landscape on his travels. As a consequence of serious business troubles, his health gave way: he became nervous and irritable, and the peculiar visual symptoms appeared. He found that the sight of the buildings and the scenes of his daily walks seemed strange. If asked to picture a certain place to himself, he was unable to do so. The attempt to draw a church-spire resulted in a rude childish scrawl. He could not remember the faces of his wife and children, and even failed