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especially Norman-French—was as bad in that respect, as we shall presently see, as our own English marking.

The English language practically remained—both for the ear and upon paper—a conglomerate of different dialects, with little or no tendency towards convergence, with perhaps a greater centrifugal than centripetal habit. The vowel-sounds differed, and the modes of writing them were different; certain consonants were favourites in one place and rejected in another; and there was no uniform mode of spelling English down even as late as the end of the sixteenth century.

Our English notation having been thus left uncultivated and uncared for during many centuries, there now appeared upon the scene a force which might have done much for it, but which in reality did little or nothing—but a good deal against it.

This force was the Revival of Learning, which introduced the nation to the riches of Greek and Latin literature, and made learning an established power in England. It introduced us to books; and from these books—through the eye, and not through the ear—there came into our mother-speech thousands of words like *virtue*, *suggestion*, *opinion*, *alter*, *determine*, and so on. But these Latin words were perfectly regular, and were written in a quite self-consistent and harmonious notation; and, being introduced by the eye from books, mistakes were not made in the transcription or the printing of them, but they were transferred