

THE PRINTER'S LAMENT.—What the compositor asks (but at present cannot obtain) is, not that *n* and *u* be made alike, but that each have its distinctive shape; not that *l* be made similar to *l*, but that it be crossed, or else formed after the fashion much in vogue, namely, a stroke more or less sloping, with loop in center on side farthest from letter following it; and lastly, that *i* be dotted, an omission which meets with great favor among authors, tho' very tantalizing to the compositor, since in bad manuscript undotted *i* may be taken for *c*, *e*, *r*, or even be supposed to form part of what in reality is *m*. But if *is* were dotted and *ts* crossed, few complaints would emanate from printing offices, or, indeed, ever be heard, so great an aid is due placing these letter-belongings in task of deciphering.—*Scientific American*. Why not use a type-riter, that never forgets to dot *is*, always crosses *ts*, and whose *us* never resemble its *us*. *Phonographic Magazine*.

—It is difficult to explain how we came to spell as we do. The words *see* and *sea* are spelled differently while pronounced alike; reason: in course of time we had changed our pronunciation. The proposed spelling reform would be very good, tho' I am not a fanatic about it, because perfectly aware of the enormous difficulty attending such a change. A favorite argument in favor of modern spelling was that it is etymologic, but there are a number of words by no means etymologic. A large amount is phonetic. It ought to be phonetic as it once was. Pronunciation changes every day, and it was curious to notice that these changes begin with the lower orders and work into pronunciation of those who might be considered careful speakers. At Cambridge now nobody says "What is the time?" but "What is the toime?" There would be a tendency among the upper classes during the next fifty years to pronounce so. The tendency of written language is to lag behind spoken language, and when printing arose in the 15th century, it had most extraordinary effect, because it induced the idea of having a fixed method of spelling and letting pronunciation shift for itself. Most remarkable changes had been produced in pronunciation. They had taken place in time simply for convenience.—*Prof. Skeat*.

—We use *æ*, rather than *e*, for the "obscure vowel" chiefly because others use *æ*, because already in the printer's case, and because it can be easily joined to other letters without lifting the pen.

—Subscript *u* in areas marked by a cross.

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—The *Norwich Bulletin*, having received a gift of doughnuts, thanks the "doughnor."

ENGLISH DIALECTS.—How far, even in small, educated and locomotive English, we are yet removed from uniformity of speech may be learned by very slight attention to sounds heard in different districts, each of which has its own burr or brogue, less marked perhaps than in Higden's and Caxton's time, but still unmistakable. . . . Caxton (Prologue to *Eneydos*) complains that "comyn Englysshe that is spoken in one shyre varyeth from a nother," and goes on to relate how when "certayn merchantes. . . taryd atte forland. . . and axed for mete and speccially. . . axyd after eggys. . . the good wyf answerde that she coude speke no frenshe. . . and thenne at last a nother sayd that he wolde haue eyren, then the good wyf sayd that she vnderstod hym." —ELLIS on *Pronunciation*, chap. I.

GENERAL IGNORANCE OF SPEECH-SOUNDS.—Our spelling must be the faithful picture of our speaking. This has been attained almost to perfection by such languages as Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian and others. It is with an uncontrollable feeling of sadness and shame that one turns to English spelling, the greatest monument of stupidity that the history of language shows. The notion that words are not letters, but sounds, has been forgotten to such an extent by English speaking people; the confusion between the relations of sounds and their representatives in writing has been carried to such a point, that it would be ridiculous, were it not so harmful. We find poets who rhyme *by* with *beauty*, *was* and *pass*, *known* and *won*, *was* and *alas!* and other words which have nothing in common except part of their spelling. This fact, apparently so unimportant, betrays the deepest ignorance of the nature of language possible to conceive.—F. GARLAND, Ph. D., in *Philosophy of Words*.

—There is a doubtful pronunciation, one cursory and colloquial, the other regular and solemn. The cursory is always vague and uncertain, being made different in different mouths by negligence, unskillfulness, or affectation. Solemn pronunciation, tho' by no means immutable and permanent, is yet always less remote from orthography, and less liable to capricious innovation. Most writers of grammar have generally formed their tables according to cursory speech of those with whom they happened to converse, and concluding that the whole nation combines to vitiate language in one manner, have often established the lowest jargon as model speech.—DR. JOHNSON in *Grammar*.

—Why *ced* in *preceding*, and *ceed* in *proceeding*?