

BETWEEN DECADES.

Between 1883 and 1893 much hapnd in the filologic world having special bearing on our problems. In 1884 (with preface dated Nov., 1883) apeard the first part of NEDict'y, and twenty years of stedy and consistent toil has publisht ful haf of it. But the first and evry succeeding part has a "Key to Pronunciation" prefixt, in itself the most admirabl analysis of normal (receivd or standard) aspects of our language that has ever apeard. This analysis not only has worn wel for twenty years, but, in our opinion, outdistances evry competitor. Of this, more soon.

Our readers wil remember that in 1886 we announced the erly appearance of *The Phonetic Titsher*, publisht in Paris and edited by Prof Paul Passy. From 1888 this became a polyglot calld *Le Maitre Phonétique*, representing all the principal languages, many others, and some dialects, in one alfabetic symbolism. This has made comparativ filology more of a sience than ever before, as comparisons ar now made from original observations the world over by actual recorders, machine or personal. These observations, like those of astronomers, ar having an efect in eliminating eror and crystalizing truth.

The last part of Ellis' great work (EE Pron.) apeard in 1889, giving systematic exposition of all dialects in Britan from Lands End to John o' Groats and even beyond, for it includes those in the Orkney and Shetland Iles, and Australia.

Beside these remarkabl pieces of work by Murray, Passy and Ellis, the filologic societies on both sides of the Atlantic publisht papers containing important points of advance. The U. S. Navy publisht a method of transliterating foren geografic names. The Eng. S.R.A. publisht nothing after 1883, tho it showd signs of life until 1887; the American one publisht (1884 to 1892) several bulletins and six numbers of *Spelling* at irregular intervals. Larison's *Journal* kept up a stedy fire evry month begining Jan., 1884. Fernald's *Our Language* apeard monthly for three years begining April, 1891. Last but not least, Sir Isaac Pitman kept up a vigoros and incessant popular propagandism.

A RETROSPECT: ONE DECADE.

In 1893 Prof. F.A. March rote a report on Speling Reform for the Bureau of Education at Washington (*Circular of Information*, n'r 8). In it (p. 24) is a specimen of New Speling from which is made this extract, corecting five manifest misprints:

"Dhi haiest wurdz ev dhi niu scolarz ar 'pgress' and 'pauer.' Niu trüth dhē wēnt,

and niu früt everi dē in dhi imprüvment ev dhi stät ev man. Cultyur türnz frēm ficshun tu fact, frēm pōetri tu saiens. Linggwistic studi..... haz türnd frēm driming över öld luv störiz tu dhi studi ev nēshunz and ev man az recörded in langgwej. Dhi filelojist raivalz dhi jiel-ojist in riding dhi recerdz ev dhi rēs in dhi fesilz ev lauggwej. Hī iz a histōrian ev dhi taimz befōr histori. Hī givz us dhi pedigri ev nēshunz hūz nēm and plēs nō modern man cud ges."

Now compare this with the 1883 specimen on our p. 118: the sign *i* apears in both, a sign so much and long uzed for *i*-difthong (as in *eye*, *aye*, *I*) as to caus confusion. For this reason, aparently, the *Standard* dictionary, the first haf of which apeard too in 1893, uzed *i* insted of *i*. To ad more markt leters shud be avoided. A beter way is: drop the macron of *i* on the body (*i*), a restoration to what was uzed before puting the dot on came in.

In like maner, the sign *ē*, much uzed for *e* in *me*, causes confusion if uzed for *e* in *they*. In the selection on our p. 118 *a* is uzed insted of *ē*. Rather than discard *a* for *ē*, let us improve *a*. Bring the macron either before or after *e*. Then we hav *æ* conjoind (for which *æ* is a temporary substitute). Insted of improving *a*, March went to *ē*, and the *Standard* in the same year uzed *ê*, not *ē*. Now *ê* is even worse than *ē*. One reason is that *ê* has a cosmopolitan use in French for prolongd *e* as in our word *mét*. The regular French sign for *a* is *é* (as in *coupé*, *café*). This misuse of *ê* by the *Standard* is something March (who has a reputation to lose) shud not endorse. To put himself right, March in 1893 came out with *æ* alongside *ê*. Now *æ* and *é* ar justifiabl, *ê* is not. Historically, *æ* and *é* ar the same. In script, before the advent of printing, *é* regularly apeard as *ê*, with *æ* as a later development of *é*.

Again, *a* has its diferential from *e* at its botm. It shud be atop for legibility, or in Javal's line of vision. If, then, *æ* or *é* hav its mark incorporated, we hav an much improved, which may be acceptabl, and which avoids more markt leters.

This has the spirit of the extract, p. 118:

"Let us do the practical thing. Take this alfabet as a provisional basis and proceed to make the best alfabet we can by improving these leters or selecting beter ones."

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