

SPELING 200 YEARS AGO.

Montaigne's quaint wisdom was not lessend by his indifrence to spelng. In one of his essays he says: "I neither concern myself with orthograpy nor pointing, being very unexpert both in the one and the other." A similar freedom pervaded the translator of the 1700 edition of his essays: sevral words ar acorded dubl representation, many possess more fonetic form than now, others hav had to bow to mutativ forces ever at work in the dres of words.

That "sharp" preterits ar renderd in poetry by final t is not at all strange or unwelcome (see Tennyson and Landor); but to find them so in plain prose is unuzual. Montaigne's translator and the publishers of current issues of this edition make them "body forth" in this atire. Here ar a few:

stopt, fixtly, rapt, opprest, askt, tost, vext, perplext, dispatcht, mixt, lookt.

"Flat" preterits ar givn so: govern'd, beg'd.

Some foneticians contend that words ending in en and er ar not separat sylbls, and this finds countenance here, as in fahn, hardning, engendring, befalln. happed, stoln, entring, evertowring

Obnoxios ough is cashierd from tho, altho.

In many words where we omit u, as in "emperour", it is retaind in most cases; yet in a few others it is dropt, as in color, succor, humor, honor.

As this was 200 years ago, the charge that omitting u is American innovation fails.

Final e either by intention or accident is omitted in some forms, thus:—

imagin, tooth-ach, troublesom, irksom, judg, judg's, hodg-podg, machin.

Contrarywise, where we hav dropt final e, it is retaind in

ruine, sollicite, oxe, undergoe, agoe, vermine.

Where we hav final e, in a few forms vowel-length is indicated by a digraf, as: meer, theam, shoar, stroak, spehar, compleat.

Those oposed to orthografic change perhaps wil recognize "the hand of time" in

attaque, atacquos, targuet, lacquey's, masques, musquet, coits, phrensie, and how metamorfosic forces play havoc in woolf, woolves, shool, sawses, cloaths, pidgeon, chirurgeons, chusing, suddain, alledge.

Certn words which we render with dubl consonants wer then content with one:—

dazle, setled, scribled, tramel, buz, expresly, foretel, befall, juglers, embezled.

On the other hand we find:—

drugg, christmass, barr, farewell, byass, wooll.

Why such forms as the foloing hav been alterd, is dificult to say:—

fansying, perswasion, disbursments, forein, plum, soverain, priks, acquies, stedfastly.

The "hand of the destroyer" has eliminated k in such words as "public", and, as if by way of compensation, has substituted it for que in "musquet". The orthografic mil grinds slowly, but surely. Let us hope that by the advent of the new century many more silent and useles letters wil hav been ground out of existence.

Hetton-le-Hole, Eng.

H. DRUMMOND.

CORRESPONDENCE.

LINDSLEY'S WORK.

SIR: Ever since receiving yur HERALD of July, 1897, containing likenes and obituary of D. P. Lindsley. I hav desired to rite and thank yu for that notice of one whom I new wel and who labord earnestly and judiciously for spelng reform. Other men enterd into his labors; for he was a pioneer in straitening crooked places without a strictly fonetic alfabet. His plans for gradual revision ar now endorst by Lerneal filologists and the Century and Standard Dictionaries, who however never mention the name of Lindsley.

Walters Park, Pa. ELIZA B. BURZ.

[His co-laborer wud be doing good work in puting on record somewhere fuller account of what he did and advocated. Our account, necessarily condense, was a synopsis of information got with difficulty from sevral sources.—EDITOR.]

-SION—STANDARD SPEECH—AGENT-NOUNS—DUBL CONSONANTS.

SIR: I note yur -sion (s'ion, s'ion) insted of -shun, as "atension" for "atenshun". I wish authorities had it sh'ion or sh'yon, as that comes nearer my pronunciation—not sh'ion, but sh'ion with o haf way between o (not ø) and u.

*Le Maitre Phonétique* for May last, in anser to yur articl, "Dialectles Speech", in April HERALD, quoting last paragraf, has:

"Tel yu what is receivd French, English, etc.? That is what we cannot do, for a simpl reason: We do not no what it is; and dout very much whether such a thing exists apart from a very vazue compromise between varios individual and local varieties of speech."

Wel, that 's too bad! Let its editer get either a *Standard*, a *Century*, or, if mater of price, a *Webster's International Dictionary*, and study a litl bit. He might hav to choose between two variant forms ocasionaly; but anything is beter than the English printed in his colums. Then he wud not say ən for *and*, ə for *are*, əz for *has*, ə for *a*, ðət for *that*, or ekslənt for *excellent*. Besides slouchines in its English, ther is, to me at least, lots of horror in its German. I can say, like Mr Kidder of English, If German "is spoken so anywhere on the face of the erth, may God hav mercy on the place and send a scoolmaster!" So, even in French and other languages, I fear to take my pronunciation from *Le Maitre Phonétique*. It might not be what intelectual peopl consider best.

I like yur rule for agent-nouns, or use of -er as in *editer*, and hope that it it wil become universal.

I wud divide "spel-ing" so. Mr Holt surely wud not divide fee-ling, dea-ling, loa-ling, flu-ting, etc. To divide repres-ented leads to rong pronunciation; besides it takes s from the third sylabl where it belongs, and ads it to the second.

Saint Louis, Mo.

N. J. WERNER.

[In the books publishd by Holt & Co. ar frequent violations of the rule givn by Mr Holt. To exemplify, see "author-ity", page 198 of "The Federalist" (edited by Ford, 1898). In "repres-ented", orthoepy and this arbitrary rule giv the same result, rep-re.zent'ed. But orthoepy dominates. The third sylabl has high stres: and this attracts s to it.—EDITOR.]

MORE ABOUT DUBLING CONSONANTS.

SIR: Let us not uze two where one is sufficient. Tho claimd that we hav in it a