

The Herald.

DEVOTED TO PRONUNCIATION AND AMENDED SPELLING.

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—*Spelling* is the title of a new quarterly published by Library Bureau, 32 Hawley St., Boston, Mass., at \$1 a year. We welcome it to our exchange list, and, as a co-worker, hope it will have abundant success. Like our pages, it is "devoted to Simplification of Spelling," giving views held and promulgated by the linguistic wing of those favoring Amendment of Sp. It is, too, mainly in a degree of amendment like what we use. For a fuller stage, digraphs (ch, sh, th = þ, dh = ð, ng, zh) for consonants are used; with 8 vowel signs (a, a, e, i, o, o, u, u), which, by mark of *quantity*, ignoring differences of *quality*, over any of the 8, (as, ā, ō, ū, ũ) give 16 distinctives of sound. It is well to have light from all quarters. Our own pages are a forum on which, as in an assembly, every one rises to give vent to his views. Between what we quote and what others and we say, every point is well discussed. It is wisht that *Spelling* will do likewise, steering clear of *ex cathedra* dogmatism, and ever ready to give a reason for the truth that is in it. There is room enough in this broad field for all workers in broad liberal spirit. Our fellow-worker may rest satisfied that it will not get the support it deserves. The latest number just to hand is dated Dec., 1887.

PRONUNCIATION.

(Continued from page 137.)

Altho *ɛ* is not in standard Eng. as now spoken, it was once in our speech, as it still is in parts of British Isles. Thus, Mr Jones tells us (p. 140, top) that "Welsh *u* is difficult to distinguish from Eng. *ɛ*". Welsh *u*, we venture to think, is Ger. *ü*, sounded *ɛ*, as in Volapük (vo lu pük). The sound however was current formerly, as in Shakspeare's line:

"Muling and puking in the nurse's arms"
which in his day was pronounced:
me:ling and pe:king in the nürsez armz
but which is now:
mū:ling and pū:king in the nursez armz.
These old forms are heard still in some rustic dialects, as Tennyson's "Northern Farmer", who manifestly says nürs insted of nurs. By the lips, great variations and

changes have occurred in our vowels, especially in 16th and 17th centuries variations first, then changes. This is what is meant by: "Then great changes took place in the whole gamut, so to speak, of our vowel sounds" on p. 104. It will be necessary to consider changes in 'the whole gamut' which we hope to do in time. Meantime, and as illustrat'n, let us consider *ɛ*, close *ɪ* lip-protruded:

In Shakspeare's time (died 1616), what is now *y'd a*, (= *yu, yu, yu, or y u*, as in *you*) was pronounced as *ɛ*. Then the vowel weakened, probably thru open *ɪ*, to consonant *y*, and is now perhaps about to vanish altogether. Concurrently, lip-protrusion at first but a modifier, has developed into the great labial vowel, *u*, or close *u*. These were the stages probably: *ɛ:u, ɛ:u, ɛ:u, ɛ:u, ɛ:u, ɛ:u, ɛ:u* (now the prevailing pronunciation, the "down east", in New Eng., they have reached) *ɛ:u*. Superior letters are used to denote rather feebler sounds than is denoted by same letters of full size. It should not be supposed that the steps were one after another like going up stairs: several were concurrent. At present, we have *ɛ:u*, or *ɛ:u*, but Webster appears to favor *ɛ:u*, the editor of *Journal Amer. Orthogpy*, who lives in New Jersey, (where did he live aged 25?) says *ɛ:u*, while the New Englander (tho educated) comes out with *ɛ:u* to rhyme with *moon*. An interesting question arises: Did these variations rise in America by natural process as in Britain, or were they imported with the Pilgrim Fathers in 1620 and succeeding bands of immigrants?

At first sight, change from *ɛ*: to *ū* appears farfetched. Its occurrence is undoubted tho. Both are close sounds: *ɛ* is close *ɪ*, *u* is close *u*; no change is requisite in openness or in closeness of mouth, that is, in position of jaw; simple lengthening of vocal tube is needed, with change in pitch from high *ɛ* to low *ū*. Protruding lips lengthen a little, then in position for any labialized vowel, as *u* sounds are *par excellence*, as we have said, p. 137, and when breath is vocalized and of low pitch we have *ū*. Then *ū* grows to *ū*, *z* sinks to *z*, and may vanish ultimately.

(To be continued.)