

## A RETROSPECT: TWO DECADES.

In the evolution of New Speling—ther wil be no revolution, no clean sweep with a fresh beginning—progres, to be safe and sure, must be slo. Spasmodic spurts and leaps produce a reaction that retards. Let us in this issue see where the moderats wer twenty years ago. We say moderats becaus it is waste of time to deal with extremists who but defeat their own ends (plank 8). Let us in next issue make a retrospect of *ten* years. Then let us try to get our latitude and longitude *now*.

After the Philadelfia convention in 1876 sevral years wer spent under filologic auspices in trying such new forms as taid i (i), reverted s, a Siamese-twin conjunction of i and e for the vowel i, ç, ŋ, two ligatured th's, etc., oferd as 'transition forms.' Dr March in 1880 rote a Circular of Information (n'r 7, 36 p. 8vo, publisht in 1881) for the U.S. Bureau of Educa'n, but it had no sampl of New Speling. The foloing we take from *The Fonetice Teacher*, organ of the Sp. Reform Aso'n, publisht at Saint Louis, Mo. It apeard as editorial in 'Medel Speling' of the Sp. Ref'm Aso'n. Both words and word-forms sho a master spirit.

"Let us dū dhi practical thing. Tac dhis alfabet az a provizhunal basis, and prosīd tu mak dhi best alfabet wī can bai *impruvving* dhīz leterz ēr selecting *beter wunz*."—Page 77, June, 1883. (A)

It was not put forward as an all-sufficient *ne plus ultra*. It rings with the spirit of progres and toleration. It invites criticism and strengthening of weak links.

The English Sp. Ref'm As'n (establisht in 1879 under filologic auspices too, which makes comparison fair) publisht an Annual Report in 1883. The London Philologic Soc'y and Amer. Phil'c Aso'n never joind hands beyond the Joint Rules agreed on in that year (more sweeping asertions from interested motivs or ignorance to the contrary notwithstanding) and, in efect, almost tantamount to the simpler, more redily rememberd and aplied Two Rules *giving* HERALD Amended Speling. The Eng. SRA's eforts toard New Sp. culminated in 1883 in their Scool Fonetice Alfabet in which was renderd a selection of a page (The Iceberg) from a school reader. It had twelv vowels and ð, ʒ, ŋ. Rendering the selection above, it wud read:

"Let us du dē praktikal thip. Tak ðis alfabet az a provizanal basis. . . ." (B) except the vowel in *take*, *basis*, is (not a, but) e and i conjoind, and for i in *pique* they put j made of the same length as i. We lak type to giv a longer selection, but that is unnecessary.

In the American specimen (A) as compared with the English one (B) the signs

for the vowels in *they*, *keep*, do not conflict tho not the same, nor do dh and ð for *th* in *they*. In (A), however, an *u*-sign (u) is givn the vowel in *us* as derived from an *u*-sound historically or etymologically. If from o (as *come*) it is stil from an *u*-sound as such o comonly sounded ū or u in *put* in the language's erlier stages and stil so in dialects. In (B) an *a*-sign (v) is used in *us* as being, fonetically, often historically, at least allied to the *a*-family.

In (A) the fundamental value asignd o is that in *no*, *potato*. In (B) the keywords for o ar *pot*, *cork*—conflicting. (A) is compeld to invent a diferential (e) for o in *pot*, with (ā) for o in *cork* in which a macron is surely out of place and misleading in a weak word (as *ēr*, *or*, above) or syllabl (as in "refērmēshun" and many such in the *Standard* dictionary). Let o stand in *or*.

So, too, an old sign (a) is in (A) givn *a* in *man* (our æ): in (B) the keywords for 'a' ar *pat*, *part*. (A) is drivn to invent a diferential (ā or ā) for *a* in *part*. Alredy (pages 109, 114) we hav objected to use of ā in weak syllabls. Let 'a' stand in *part*. Later filology requires this.

## THE CORE.

A veteran worker, Prof. F. A. March, advocated alfabetie enlargement before the Amer. Philologic As'n at its annual meeting in New Haven, Conn., last July. He wud ad three diferentials of a, o, u (a, e, u). This question of enlarging the alfabet is the core of the hole mater, becaus "Ther can be no satisfactory speling reform without enlargement of the alfabet."—A.M.BELL. Then comes the question where to begin as holesale enlargement but "defeats its own object by demanding too much" says plank 8. Now, Prof. Skeat has said

"The best method of denoting o in 'come' is the real crux in evry system proposed." and ther shud be no question that the vocal in *but*, *up*, *us*, *come*, is to hav its diferential. In the frase *us they keep from harm* the vowels ar in order of importance as candidates for diferentials. How shal we print *they keep us* is a question we wish setld in the light of latest filology. Prof. Hempl (this year president of the Philologic Aso'n) is at work on a new alfabet or, rather, notation for the Amer. Dialect Soc'y. Tuttle's and a dozen other good ones hav apeard and much has hapnd in twenty years. The Passy-Sweet contention is stil on. Shal we be blind leaders of the blind, or reflect latest light?

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