

Teacher—Spel *one*,
 Boy—Oh-en-ee—*one*.
 T.—*Wonder*.
 B.—Oh-en ee-der—*wonder*.
 T.—Rong. Try *two*
 B.—Tee-doubleyou-oh—*two*
 T.—*Do*.
 B.—Dee-doubleyou-oh—*do*.
 T.—Another mis. *Laugh*.
 B.—(Proudly)—L-eh-you-jee-aitch—*laugh*
 T.—*Calf*.
 B.—Kay-eh-you-jee-aitch—*calf*.
 T.—Rong again. *Enough*.
 B.—Ee-en-oh-you-jee-aitch—*enough*.
 T.—*Stuff*.
 B.—Ess-tee-oh-you-jee-aitch—*stuff*.

SYLLABLES.—A syllable consists of one vowel sound, or two vowel sounds, immediately following each other, and one or more consonants. The vowels require for their characteristic tones a larger space in the mouth than the consonants, and while the mouth is tuned and untuned for the vowel of a syllable, the parts of the mouth on their way forward and backward form the consonants belonging to the syllable. In other words, a syllable is a group of speaking sounds produced by one puls of breath, with various quickly succeeding movements of the speaking mechanism, the mouth opening and closing in tuning and untuning for the vowel. It is on this account difficult to pronounce two consonants, similarly formed, coming close together in same syllable, as, for instance, *d* and *k*, and impossible to form double consonants in the same syllables, as *ff*, *pp*; but it instantly becomes easy when they are separated by a vowel as *tat*, *pap*, etc. When, for example, the syllable *rxn* is pronounced, the tongue-tip forms *r* while the mouth cavity sets itself in tune for *v*; and as it untunes itself the mouth closes with *n*. To speak another syllable there is required a new opening of the mouth and a new puls of the breath.—MADAM SELLER. (*Voice in Speaking*, chap. iii.)

“ENGLISH UNDEFINED.”

The spelling reformer is often depicted as a dangerous revolutionist, ready to disfigure language for sake of fanciful consistency. No description could be farther from truth. The spelling reformer is essentially conservative. Exempt from the common error of confounding the word itself with the form in which it appears in print, he is indeed, anxious to supersede every faulty form of capricious construction, by a perfect form built up in a scientific way. This may fairly enough be termed radical change, and as far as the form is concerned, the description would be strictly accurate. But its purpose is, in best sense, conservative. Form must be corrected in order that substance may re-

main uncorrupted. If words are to preserve their purity of pronunciation, symbols that represent them must no longer deceive. We therefore claim that movement for spelling reform is one that should enlist support of every man who desires to save our noble language from corruption. And who is there among men capable of appreciating the rich music of that language, that does not desire to save it from corruption? A great German scholar once said, “The care of the national language I consider as at all times a sacred trust, and a most important privilege of higher orders of society. Every man of education should make it the object of his unceasing concern, to preserve his language pure and entire, in all its beauty and perfection. . . . A nation whose language becomes rude and barbarous, must be on brink of barbarism in regard to everything else. A nation which allows her language to go to ruin, is parting with last half of intellectual independence, and testifies her willingness to cease to exist.” What Schlegel thus indicated as a privilege of the “higher orders of society,” is the duty of all men, and particularly so now, when the term “man of education” is no longer synonymous with one belonging to what is called “higher orders of society.”

The tendencies that favor spread of corrupt habits of speech are strong and never entirely absent. But agencies that counteract them are numerous, and may be relied on, if strenuously applied, to neutralize them altogether. While, however, corrupt spelling survives among us, itself suggesting corrupt modes of speech, one formidable obstacle stands in the way. That which might powerfully assist in preventing mischievous changes, actually assists in producing them! The future will abolish that anomaly. Meanwhile every individual must resist, as best he can, those little inaccuracies which creep into our speech, sometimes so imperceptibly that no one notices how; and which, trifling perhaps in each instance, nevertheless amount in aggregate to serious changes in the language.

Corruptions are product of ignorance and indolence, propagated chiefly by unconscious imitation. We have noticed with regret that some debased pronunciations have received a sort of quasi-sanction in certain cheap pronouncing dictionaries. The public should be warned against every dictionary not edited by a man of scholarly attainments. The mischief that sanction of a dictionary may do in this way is very considerable. But it is mainly by what we have called unconscious imitation that little tricks of speech, offensive to a refined ear, are acquired. How many of these objectionable little corruptions are current, would surprise anyone who has not paid special attention.—*Pitman*.