

Mr. Doyle then followed for the negative.

MR. CHAIRMAN, etc.—From what you have just heard about the simplified spelling you naturally would conclude that it is an innovation to create unlimited confusion with regard to the spelling and meaning of words. But it is not. This reform which has recently received the advocacy of the President of the United States, is simply an acceleration of an established and historical process which has been going on gradually and without confusion ever since the language began to be printed. Our words are not spelled now as when they were first used, neither are they spelled like those of Shakespeare or Bacon. The reform may be defined as the removal of the silent and superfluous letters from the spelling of the three hundred words proposed, and an attempt to establish, where possible, an analogy in spelling along phonetic lines so as to make both spelling and pronunciation more uniform. It is not an attack on the language of Shakespeare because it is in many instances a going back to the forms he used, nor is it an attempt to do anything sudden or violent but just to cast what weight can properly be cast on the side of popular forces, which are endeavoring to make our system a little less foolish and less fantastic. In this step there will be found no cause for the alleged confusion nor no cause for any disturbance among philologists.

The logic of spelling words as they are pronounced cannot be denied. Unless words are pronounced as they are spelled many complexities arise not only among the poorly educated classes but also its difficulties extend into the daily writings and correspondence of professors of English literature, and, since this is the case, it is fully justifiable to reform our system of spelling upon a uniform basis so as to reduce the liabilities to mistakes. It is with this object in view that the said President with his associates have made a vigorous attempt to put into effect a revised system for spelling certain of our words in common usage which have suffered many abuses since time immemorial. The most adverse criticism offered by its opponents is the contention that by changing the spelling of English words we destroy all semblance of their derivation. This objection is logically taken from a strictly literary and sentimental point of view but the language must be used by all persons, literary and otherwise and its simplification means an unlimited benefit to the language and its