

The Herald.

DEVOTED TO PRONUNCIATION AND AMENDED SPELLING.

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DUBL* CONSONANTS.

There is much diversity of opinion as to doubling consonants or omitting one. In an article by Miss Rudeboc in *Jur. Amer. Orthoepy* for Mar. this is pointed out but no rule or remedy is suggested. We read:—

“THE HERALD drops one consonant in *passing*, *clipping*, *different*, *grammar*, *letter*, *better*, *intelligent*, but retains both in . . . *correspondent*, *correct*, *call*, *small*, notwithstanding the editor's rule to ‘omit useless letters.’”

Distinction must be made between Amended Sp. merely and a notation giving Pronunciation. In first set of words above a single letter is enough; in the others, we have open *o*, *o*, and it is unwritten law in present sp. that to indicate broad or open *o* and distinguish it from close *o*, *o*, two consonants are to follow. There are many exceptions—there always are in Eng. Such second consonant is not ‘useless.’ Shud *o* or any other sign be agreed on for open *o*, it will be useless. Till then, make no change. The fundamental value of *o* is *o*, and a cons. may be omitted from *droll*, etc., not from *doll*, etc.

Some maintain that in *passing*, etc., the double cons. shud be retained in accented syllables, the second cons. being the orthographic equivalent for orthoepic accent-mark: as, *clipping* = clip'ing. Such hold that a cons. shud not be doubled where there is no accent, as in *benefited* with single *t*. A selection on first p. of HERALD for Oct. gave spelling in comparative accord with this view.

“In *hammer*, *rubber*, *drummer*, *robber*, etc., etymology requires no double letter, as their roots are *ham*, *rub*, *drum*, *rob*, etc. . . but . . . ease of utterance requires it.”—*Ibid.*, page 41.

How this is is not explained. It is easier to sound one only; one only is heard, though the *Jurnal* editorially thinks a ‘faint’ second perceptible. The editor ‘takes a hand in,’ but arrives at questionable conclusions:—

“When a consonant ends an accented syllable, unless the succeeding syllable be inflectional, we begin the next syllable (provided the vowel in the next is not already preceded by a consonant) with the same consonant. . . The consonant is faint.”

Addle, etc., are given as ad'dul, etc.; Mur. gives ad'l. Taking this word as type of its class, let us examine its history: thru the fonetic stage of our lang. it was spelled with but one *d*. The *Ormulum*, ritn about 1200,

*REVISED SPELLING:— OMIT useless letters; CHANGE *d* to *t*, *ph* to *f*, *gh* to *f*, *sch* to *sch*, if sounded so

is an exception of course, and the only one before 16th cent. Its author was a sp. reformer who proposed indicating short vowels by doubling succeeding cons. in all cases. So, in *Or.* we find ‘addlenn,’ just as ‘Iann itt iss addledd’ in line 6235. *Ælfric*, about 1000, says (*Enigma* in *Cod. Exon.* 110, 1): “Dæt her yfle adelan stinceþ.” Single *d* lasted till 18th cent.; *dd* began in 16th c.: so that struggle of *d* with *dd* lasted thru 16th, 17th, and 18th. The worst survivors like much else in our spelling.

He then proceeds to teach that a final cons. is held before an inflectional syllable is added. This is often so; but not in *selling*, a type word of those he gives. It is not always held when inflectional syllable begins with the very cons. the word ends with; thus, if *actual*: ‘take *ly*, we have ‘actuali’ (Murray.) He says that but one cons. is held in such words; granted, but it is not held. *N* is held in *sudden* before *-ess* is added, as also *n* in *openness* and *l* in *wholly*. *Bell* has a sign called a ‘holder’ put after any letter to show that it is held, as is done too in music. Let us, *pro tunc*, denote a held sound by small capital; so that these words are pronounced sud'nes, op'nes, hol'li. But *x*, *l*, etc., are orthoepic devices like the accent-mark—not to be dragged into Orthography any more than certain other marks in Elocution. Orthography, Orthoepy and Elocution are quite different—different in degree, not in kind. What shall we do in Ortho. when a sound is held? Answer, leave it doubled till a better way is promulgated. Our German coworkers have reached the same conclusion; that is, if we put proper construction on the words translated last month as ‘No double cons. in same syllable.’ The orthographic syllabification of words above appears to be *sud'n'nes*, *op'n'es*, *hol'li*. Like holding is found too towards beginning of words especially if the remainder is still in use as a separate word. Thus, *unecessary*, i.e. *gal* = *illegal*. During *x*, *l*, etc., the tongue does not leave mouth-roof: if it does, the cons. is doubled, not held. Like held, (or doubled), cons. are quite a feature in Italian; as *immonso*, *addio*. In our word ‘innocent,’ *n* is not held: we have no word ‘nocent’—short of a Latin participial.