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

PURPOS OF A PRIMER.

A suitable primer should fulfil four conditions: (1) It should thro'out be a *drill on sounds*, so as to lay foundation for distinct and accurate pronunciation. (2) The spelling it gives should be approximately free from the too numerous irregularities of our orthog. at least so far as is compatible with (3) Allowing ready transition to ordinary literature, the bridge to which will be books of the Robinson Crusoe class. These sustain the pupil's interest without resort to any transition reader. (4) It should use cosmopolitan or international values of letters, not national ones. What will be the final Notation of speech-sounds for general scientific and popular use can be dimly forecast to some extent, depending on certain fixed principles involved—Such Notation is the problem now present. The model primer should be a sort of half-way-house between current spelling and such Notation so that pupils taught by it will be so far familiar with this Notation and not puzzled by varying systems as now puzzled by different dictionary nomenclatures for indicating pronunciation. The second edition (500 copies) of Mr. Knudsen's *Primer*, just from press, gives a practical fulfilment of the four conditions better perhaps than any other in the market. No transition reader is needed. Where such is requisite it indicates that the primer has gone too far in departure from current forms of words. The *Primer* mentioned is published by Golden Bros., South Norwalk, Conn., at 25 cents. We give a specimen from the *Bee*, p. 36:

"Hwen shi has gath'erd a gud lord, shi flis hom tu her hvy, tu mak lit'l sels tu hold her hon'i, and tu kip it for the cold dus ov win'ter, hwen the flou'ers ar ol gon, and it is tu' cold for the B's tu go out."

— *World English*, a work by A. Melvil Bell, will be issued shortly (N. Y., Hodges; London, Tribner) demonstrating fitness of Eng. for adoption as universal language. The only drawback to its extension hitherto has been its difficult and unsystematic spelling. "World English" provides an amended alphabet, with new letters for unrepresented sounds. Ordinary orthography remains undisturbed as "literary Eng." The aspect of words is so little unlike in both systems that readers of either will decipher the other without special instruction. — *The Week*.

THE DEF-DUM.

(To Editor Canadian Silent Observer.)

SIR,—Your paragraph is a surprise as these pages have never had a word about "the def-dumb in general nor "the Ontario Institution" in particular. Did your supper disagree? and give you nightmare? Ar you "spoiling for a fight?" and so attack one until now quite dumb, (altho neither blind nor deaf), like the doughty Spanish Don Quixot, who attacked a wind-mil, to show how brave he was!

You object that changes are "too radical." Herein, nothing is adopted beyond

THE FIVE RULES:

1. Omit *e* from the digraf *ea* when pronounced as *e*-short, as *hed*, *helth*, *spred*.
2. Omit silent *e* after a short vowel, as in *inav*, *giv*, *liv*, *definit*, *hostil*, *genuin*.
3. Write *f* for *ph* in such words as *alfabet*, *fantom*, *camfor*, *filosofy*, *telegraf*.
4. When a word ends with a double consonant, omit the last, as in *shal*, *clif*, *eg*.
5. Change *ed* final to *t* where it has the sound of *t*, as in *lasht*, *imprest*, *fixt*.

Farther changes are actively discussed. The spelling of this communication will exemplify the Five Rules. Any farther is yet on trial.

The opinion of Rev. David Swing, the eminent Chicago preacher, is that "we ought to make a distinction between mere feelings and reasonable feelings, for if we have permitted ourselves to become so attached to an old wooden plow that we would not exchange it for the best steel one, we are not persons of deep feelings, but rather of deep babyhood and stupidity. The human race that will from deliberate choice spell program, programme, and tizic, phthisic, and which, when its folly is pointed out, will proceed to affirm that it prefers the longest way of spelling a word, should be compelled to go back to canal-boats, pack-horses, dipt candles and sermons two hours long. Progress is a universal movement of all things."

You are doing noble work: rescuing def-mutes from being compelled to herd with idiots and imbeciles and making of them useful, intelligent and self-supporting citizens. Follow the footsteps of Abbé Sicard, Gallaudet and our own Macgann. The natural impulse of every warm heart is "to lend a hand" to such work, and "give a lift" to def-mutes. In refusing to help mend spelling, however, you keep a stumbling-block in their way. What would you think of a man who keeps stumbling-blocks and pitfalls before a blind man! Yet this is what the spelling you use does for def-mutes, more particularly for those who learn lip-reading. Silent letters are stumbling-blocks, pitfalls, and mislead. The silent *b* in *debt* and *doubt* misleads the trusting def-mute to expect before *t* in each word a voiced labial, *b*, indicating complete closure of lips which does