

PHONETIC PIONEER.

vctayles " victuals
yerarchy " hierarchy
ympnoe " hymn

The question naturally arises, Are the changes in English orthography, which have been going on through successive epochs, likely to continue to the same extent in time to come? It is not difficult to find a satisfactory reply to this question. Our orthography will not change to the same extent in futuro. There are now causes in operation which tend to give greater stability to it.

In this place, it may be mentioned that one fruitful cause of change, which once operated in full force, and transformed not only the orthography, but the whole structure of many of the European languages, has now ceased to be felt. I allude to those vast emigrations, and to those sudden conquests by foreign races, of which we read in history.

But perhaps the cause which now tends more than any other to retard changes in orthography is the introduction of the art of printing. This wonderful art multiplies to an unlimited extent the number of copies of a book, in which each word is spelled exactly in the same manner. Not only may an unlimited number of copies be issued of any one edition, but edition may follow edition, each successive one being an exact reprint of those which preceded it. Shall I add, that by means of printing and the multiplication of books, the forms of words become familiar pictures to the eye, and are impressed indelibly on the memory? The case was very different in times gone by, when books only existed in the form of manuscripts, rarely to be met with and little read; each of which, moreover, was copied separately by scribes, who were constantly liable to err from ignorance or carelessness.

Another cause tending to give uniformity to spelling, and to prevent capricious changes, may be found in standard dictionaries. The compiler of a good dictionary is careful to select that spelling which appears to be sanctioned by the usage of the best writers. He comes before the public, not in his own name only, but supported by the authority of the highest names in literature. His dictionary is regarded as a standard of correct spelling, and is appealed to as a convenient book of reference in all cases of doubt. I am persuaded that Johnson's Dictionary has contributed largely to fix English orthography.—In fact, down to the present day, those who deviate from this standard must be prepared to give good reasons for it, or they will be set down as imperfectly educated.

It may be added, that the learning and critical skill of the grammarian, which act with more and more influence as time flows on, unite with those of the lexicographer in giving uniformity and certainty to orthography. By carefully studying the analogies of the language and the etymology of partic-

ular words, he can sometimes bring the public round to his views, and for ever fix a spelling which was before uncertain.

It is not, however, to be supposed that any, or all of these causes united, can entirely prevent the changes incident to a living language. Notwithstanding the conservative causes now in operation, there is reason to believe that alteration in the spelling of particular words will continue to go on, tho' silently and almost imperceptibly.

Mrs. Grammar's Ball.

Mrs. GRAMMAR once gave a ball
To the Nine different parts of Speech,—
To the big and the tall,
To the short and the small,
There were pies, plums and puddings for each.

And first, little Articles came,
In a hurry to make themselves known—
Fat, A, An and The,
But none of the three
Could stand for a minute alone.

Then Adjective came to announce
That their dear friends the Nouns were at hand.

*Rough, Rougher and Roughest,
Tough, Tougher and Toughest,
Fat, Merry, Good-natured and Grand.*

The Nouns were, indeed, on their way—
Ten thousand and more, I should think;
For each name that we utter—
Shop, Shoulder, and Shutter—
Is a Noun *Lady, Lion, and Link.*

The Pronouns were following fast
To push the Nouns out of their places,—
*I, Thou, You and Me,
We, They, He and She,*
With their merry, good-humored old faces.

Some cried out—"Make way for the Verbs!"
A great crowd is coming in view—
To *Bite* and to *Smite*,
And to *Light* and to *Fight*,
To *Be*, and to *Have*, and to *Do.*

The Adverbs attend on the Verbs,
Behind them as footmen they run
As thus—"To fight *Badly*,
They run away *Gladly*,"
Shows how fighting and running were done.

Prepositions came—*In, By, and Near*,
With Conjunctions, a poor little band,
As—"Either, you *Or* me,
But *Neither* them *Nor* he"—
They had their great friends by the hand:

Then, with a *Hip, Hip, Hurrah!*
Rushed Interjections uproarious—
"O, dear! *Well-a-day!*"
When they saw the display,
"Ha! ha!" they all shouted out, "Glorious!"

But, alas, what misfortunes were nigh,
While the fun and the feasting pleased each,
There pounced in at once
A monster—a Duxer,
And confounded the Nine parts of Speech!

Help, friends! to the rescue! on you
For aid Noun and Article call,—
Oh, give your protection
To poor Interjection,
Verb, Adverb, Coujunction and all!

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