

THAT BAD OLD SPELING.

We no litt about the origin of English speling. We can only say of it as we do of most other monstrositis, it is becaus it is; but if some one had colected the sounds that came from the lips of the gibering lunatics whose tungs wer confused about Babel, strung them together, and cut the string into sections of varius lengths, declaring that each section was the proper speling of words in English, taking them in their order, he wud hav product just about such a system, one just as sensibl and easy and adaptabl to rules, as the one we now hav. F-l-o-u-g-h, piow, t-o-u-g-h, tuf, and so on thru the hole brood of oughs, p-h-t-h-i-s-i-c, tistic, w-h-o-l-e, hol, b-e-n, ben, b-e-e-n, bin, o-n-e, wun and w-o-n, wun, and so on from A to Izzard, thru a thousand and one beastly outrages on senses of hearing and seeing.

From the time a boy first begins to lern his alfabet until he lays down his last book, difthongs, silent leters, and leters that ar wors than silent, lie in wait for him to perplex, disturb, discourag and distract him at evry turn. He may lern evry rule that anybody ever printed in a speling book, and he may make himself master of tle most conceala and indistinct sounds that wer ever supos'd to be hidn in separat leters, but it is of no avail, for evry rule is so undermined by exceptions and evry leter is so prostituted to absurd and imposibl uses that he might about as wel no nothing of either. If he lerns to spel at all he must lern each word separatly, as a pol-parot lerns to repeat it, and from boyhood to old age, when he meets one not in general use, must jump at a dictionary to see if some orthografical crank hasn't invented a peculiarly outrageous way of speling it, a way as diferent as posibl from that in which all other words of similar sounds ar speld, and one containing new welth of silent leters and new riches of leter combinations which ar aparently jerk't in wick the impresion that when thoroly mixt in the mouth they wil produce some sort of a distinct sound that no singl caracer of man's monition represents. So our language has come to be the very worst as to speling ever ritn and printed. Insted of making speling simpl, plain and easy, it is made as complicated, distracting and difcult as posibl, and the ingenuity which the Anglo-Saxon race has displayd in making it distracting and difcult exceeds its accomplishments in other directions.

The only sensibl, short and easy way to spel a word is by using those leters and those only that stand for sounds which taken together produce it. Posibly, in former ages, when no one but professional scolars atempted to spel, and peopl livd on the reputation of their ancestors, ther was

some excuse in the barbaric derivation of many words for the way they wer and ar speld; but now, when evrybody spels or tries to, when the use of evry needles leter is a waste of time, money and brain power, and when we ar all too busy taking care of ourselves to hug the gosts of our far-away ancestors, we o't to get rid of this antiquated but vicius surplusage.—Manchester, N. H., *Mirror and American*.

— Why hav we o in *scourge* and none in *urge* ?

FRENCH INSTRUCTOR (impatiently)—“ Now then, Miss, I want yu to pronounce r more distinctly. Yu may pronounce some American word in which r is.” Pupil (vindicatively)—“ R-r-r-r-rats !”

VOWELS.—The diferent vowel sounds may be said to be the result of gradual elongation of mouth [and throat] cavity combined with alterations in shape and size of its external orifice product by varying lip-action. The foloing is the order of the five vowels in relation to the length of tube rquired for their production, beginning with the shortest: e, a (pronounst like French é), a, o, u (oo.) It was proved experimentally by Czermak that, in utterance of these five vowels, the nasal part of air passage is shut off from mouth by soft palat. In delivering these vowels, the mouth acts as a resonator, the inlet of which is at the bak, and outlet at lips, both orifices being alike variabl in length and shape. On proper production of vowels depends distinctnes of articulation and the final, as it is the severest, test of a speaker's training is the perfection of his rendering a, e, i, o, u. [a, a, e, o, u.]—MOREL MACKENZIE in *Hygiene of Vocal Organs*, p. 157.

SPEECH ANALYSIS AND NOTATION.—At recent meeting of U. S. Modern Lang. Assoc'n in Philadelphia a fonetic section was formd (Melvil Bell, president) to encourage and further fonetic study in this cuntry by public and privat instruction, lectures, exchanges and communications of literature connected with it, and correspon-lence. Attention wil be paid both to improving curent methods of teaching languages and to scientific investigation. For the later, a comitee wil select or arange a standard system of sound notation to be adopted by the Assoc'n., and which, we hope, wil meet with general approval. Equip with this standard alfabet, yung scolars wil be set to work to investigate American dialects, especially the interesting fenomena of Speech-mixture in America. Advice from European scolars concerning the delicat question of Sound Notation wil be thankfully accepted. Communications shud be adrest to me.—Prof. G. KARSTEN, Bloomington, Ind., in *Paris Teacher*,