

THE OBSTACLES TO SPELLING REFORM.

After struggling for a year or more with the vast and venerable question of the right spelling of English words, a committee of eminent educators has timidly suggested an improvement in the spelling of a dozen or so of notorious offenders against etymology and phonetics—our old friends “programme” and “pedagogue,” and “through” of course leading the list.

If this is all that the friends of spelling reform can offer us, the outlook for phonetic English is discouraging. The hope of reform is dwindling instead of increasing.

While the feeble proposition is made to spell a dozen or so easy words as they are pronounced, the pernicious influence of an effete aristocracy in English is corrupting the pronunciation of hundreds of other words, and the decree of a London fashion is absolute. Americans otherwise sane are heard to call a “clerk” a “clark,” and to speak of a paper as a “piper.” In London a lady is a “lydy,” to-day is to-die, fate is “fite,” and even one’s name is “nime”—and so on through a list of degraded pronunciations not altogether confined to the cockneys, many of which have already crossed the Atlantic, and all of which may be expected.

What is the use of cherishing any hope of spelling reform under such difficulties? Why struggle to adjust the spelling of one word to its pronunciation when we are shifting the pronunciation of countless categories? Why not give it up as a bad job, as it certainly is and always has been? Neither Chaucer nor Washington could spell correctly, and the greatest spelling reformer in English literature was Artemus Ward—but the job was “2 mutch” for him.—N. Y. *World*.

MAKING STEEL PENS.

Pens are made by machines of wonderful ingenuity. The steel is cut into ribbons as wide as the length of one pen; these are fed to machines which cut out the blanks, then fashion, stamp them, split the points, and place the maker’s name on the backs. The pens are now complete, save the annealing, and this forms a separate operation. After being annealed, they are counted and placed in boxes. A machine has been invented for performing both of these operations.—*School Journal*.

WAR CORRESPONDENTS AND THEIR COST.

The cost of maintaining its war correspondents around Cuba involved one New York newspaper in the expenditure of about \$5,000 a week. The Associated Press of America and Reuter’s News Agency spent a much larger sum.

“I didn’t know,” said an old lady, as she put down her newspaper, “that thieves were so scarce that they had to advertise for ’em and offer a reward for their discovery.”

TYPEWRITING.

The time required to learn typewriting varies according to the aptitude of the learner; a certain number of lessons from a qualified teacher are enough to master the mode of operating the machine, but considerable practice is necessary to acquire speed and accuracy.

HUG AND HIS EXCHANGE.

DREADFUL MIX-UP OF PROPER NAMES IN CHICAGO.

From the *Chicago Record*.

There must have been many mistakes on the day when the names were parceled out. The short man is Long, and the latest queen of Afro-American melody is Miss White. A man named Shepherd will be found running a low dive calculated to trap the innocent, and a fellow named Primrose will be operating a garbage wagon. On the South Side a man named Wink will appropriately operate a large soda fountain. Mr. Mix conducts a saloon and Hartshorn is proprietor of a drug store.

Perhaps the one in the whole list that is fullest in suggestion, being directly in line with a threadbare joke on which the changes have been rung in a thousand different ways, would be found in a sign in the downtown district, in which a man named Hug advertises on his window that he is a dealer in typewriters.

Don’t fail to acknowledge an invitation as soon as received. A tardy response is sometimes unpardonable. Like in the answering of personal letters, a few lines will often cover questions asked and desires expressed.

Don’t fail to inclose a stamped envelope when an answer to a business letter is required. In all such matters it is necessary, but not in private correspondence.

Don’t, when writing a letter, cross and recross the pages; a dancing up and down of the words which the reader tries in vain to decipher. Number your sheets of letter paper; that is, if the letter is a long one, clearly and distinctly, so that the message to be read proves a pleasure instead of a worry.

“I hardly think,” said the lawyer, “that you can get a separation from your wife on account of her making a practice of throwing things at the dog.”

“But, Great Caesar, mister,” said the man with the haggard look and the black eye, “every time she throws at the dog she hits me.”

The teacher was telling them about the different seasons. He asked, “Now one of you boys tell me which is the proper time to gather fruit.” “When the dog’s chained up,” replied Johnnie.

See photograph of large class-room and Students of the Metropolitan Shorthand School and Business College, 2265 St. Catherine St., in our next issue.