

# The Herald.

DEVOTED TO PRONUNCIATION AND AMENDED SPELLING.

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## A MIDL WAY.

Much hostility is due to dread of fonetic speling. The moderat program set forth by British and American filological societies, embodid in all standard American dictionaries, is fairly complete, and satisfies appetite for more. Evidences to the eye of etymology ar respected, traces of false etymology removed, with no haroing of scolarly feelings, but considerabl approximatation of ritn to spoken words, and some sort of regularity imparted to vowels and difthongs. Can "fonetic" spellers be more effectually disarind?—VIA MEDIA in *Academy*.

## AN OUTLINE HISTORY OF SPELING.

Our language has a long, varied and instructiv history which o't to be studid from a fonetic viewpoint. *Spoken* language is alone the tru standard. A comon error regards ritn forms as tru, some considering them almost sacred, deprecating changes however sensibl.

We hav many manuscripts from A.D. 700 in at least three main dialects. In all they atempt obviously to giv the sound, not trying to etymologize. From 700 to 1200 the speling folod Latin models.

The Norman cud not detach himself from his own habit of speling. He respelt English on French principls. Til now the habit prevails. He put French e for Latin æ, œ, and we hav *demon, enigma, phenomnon, cemetery, solecism*. Sixteenth century pedants reintroduced symbols which French speling had rejected, insisting on *aphæresis, cænobite*. Neither old nor new prevails. Many rite *primeval* who hesitate at *medieval*. The scoolboy (not the best judge) inclines to *medieval* as more lerned; his master (who comonly nōz no more about the history of speling than the boy) aplauds him. Hence two distinct and absolutely conflicting rules, productiv of the very caos which, to the speller by the eye, appears as exhibiting the hight of wisdom.

Printing fixt speling, retarded free development, it fel behind, became more unfonetic and caotic, a thing to lament.

Speling was reasonably fonetic (on Latin models) from 700 to 1200; stil fonetic, but on French models, from 1200 to 1500. It remaind the same with much interfe-

rence by teachers of Latin and Greek til 1600 and later. Then it ceast to hav vitality and became a tool for printers.

We ar much behind the age. The history of English is of more account in Germany than here: witnes Viëtor's recent *Shakspear's Phonology* and *Sh. Reader*.

We all rak orthograpy now, ignore b in *debt*, g in *reign*, n in *solemn*, gh in *through*, etc., without hesitation or compunction.—Prof. SKEAT in *National Review*, Oct., 1906.

## SHAKSPEAR'S PRONUNCIATION.

Transcripts of the same pasagès by Ellis and Viëtor sho discrepancy but with litl real difrence. Each points out that his notation must be interpreted with latitude: vowel sounds differ within asignd limits from vowel symbols. This alowd, actual divergense is small. Beside, Elizabethan educated pronunciation was very far from uniform. Viëtor givs Shakspear an arcaic pronunciation, but posibly Shakspear was influenced in this by traditional orthograpy. The initial consonant was not silent then in *kn, gn, wr; gh* in *night*, etc., may hav been sounded slightly as a weak *h* or as a palatal spirant. "Long *a*" in *mane* was *a* in *man* lengthend, *ai* or *ay* as now in Cokny, while *i* in *time*, etc., was Cokny *ee* in *teen* (i. e., *iy*), *u* in *cut, dull*, was unnon, being pronounced as in *pull*. Identification of the vowel in *change, danger* with that in *man* is questionabl, as no evidence is aduced, and seems unlikely on etymologic grounds.—ATHENÆUM, 22d Dec., 1906. in review of Viëtor's *Shakspear's Phonology* and *A Shakspear Reader*.

## NEWS-NOTES AND COMENTS.

—This asks *yu* to subscribe.

—Ald. G. B. Hunter our readers already no as holding decided views on improving word-forms and liberally helping to secure them. He is a man of action too: his shipbuiding firm at the Tyne's mouth recently launcht a monster Cunarder, the *Mauretania*. Fifty years ago the *Great Eastern* was tho't a monster with 27,000 tons displacement. Now the *Dreadnought (Dredno't)* is the largest batlship afloat with 18,000 tons of displacement. The *Mauretania* equals the two together! Now *Kaiser Wilhelm II* holds the speed record at 23½ nots, 27 miles, an our. The *Mauretania* goes 1½ miles an our faster. Her length is 790 feet, bredth 88, hight of masts 216, hight of funnels from keel line 155, diam. of funnels 24.