

would be willing to do so? Yet such a step would be the logical result following from their own arguments. As now applied, our spelling is almost anything but etymological. The spelling of a word is influenced by Syncope, as in *head* from A. S. *heafde*, *lord* from A. S. *hlaford*, *round* from L. *rotundus*; by Aphæresis, as *bury* from A. S. *be-byrgan*, *uncle* from L. *avunculus*; by Apocope, as in *page* from L. *pagina*; by Prothesis, as *splash* from *plash*, *estate* from *state*; by Epenthesis, as *corporal* from *caporal*, *further* from *farrer*; by Paragoge, as in *sorcerer* from Fr. *sorcier*; by Metathesis, *burnt* from A. S. *brunt*, *purpose* from L. *propositum*, and also by Grimm's Law of which it is not necessary to give any examples. These examples do not speak well for the consistency of our "etymological" spelling.

To the insertion of extra-radical letters we may often attribute the wrong derivations suggested by the spelling of many words—as *island* suggestive of *insula* instead of *ciland*, *rhyme* suggesting Gr. *rhythmos* instead of *rime*, *hurricane* suggesting *hurry-cane* instead of *ouragan*, and many other such cases of mistaken derivation occur in this way. Again letters are often inserted to mark a preceding long vowel, as the final *e* in so many words, or to shew a short vowel as doubling the consonant, and also to make difficult combinations easily pronounced as in *yonder* where *d* is strengthening, the *n* in *messenger*, and *b* in *climb* and *abridge*. It is often almost impossible to tell which a letter is—radical or functional. The insertion of these letters—or orthographical expedients—is a constant source of annoyance: the radical letters are inserted, and also the extra-radical for the functions indicated, hence the confusion. Most people lose sight of this answer to the etymological objection, and while the objectors hunt up solitary instances of derivation ob-

scured by phonetic spelling and heave them up like huge scarecrows, they too forget these inconsistencies of the system they are defending.

Archbishop Trench, in *Past and Present* (page 297), says: "The most frequent cause of alteration in the spelling of words is the wrongly assumed derivation" (in words like those quoted above, for instance). "It is sought to bring the word into harmony with, and make it by its spelling suggest, the derivation thus thrust upon it. Men will put life into a word—a life of their own devising—rather than it should be a dead and inert sign." Now I suggest that the reason men do so is not because they *will put life into a word*, but because *they are led by the analogy of other words*. These other words have a derivation with which men are acquainted and which is usually suggested by the spelling, hence they will assume that new words should resemble familiar forms in some way. If words were written phonetically no such mistakes could be made. The pronunciation would be absolutely fixed—a fact men could not help noticing, in the printed word especially, and it would be impossible to twist the word into harmony with fanciful derivations. With present spelling the word is certainly before people, but they cannot pronounce it unless they have heard it before. So if an approximate pronunciation can be found it can easily be twisted into a resemblance to some familiar form, and anything plausible will be eagerly seized.

Ability to trace a word by its spelling, though it may often assist us in arriving at its meaning, is not the way by which we generally acquire the peculiar function of each word. It is true we often use this historical spelling to arrive at the exact force of a word, but we could still do so with phonetic spelling, and it is only when we have a fair acquaintance with a