

REVISED SPELLING AND THE DICTIONARIES.

Dictionaries are authority not only on definition, but on pronunciation and spelling. In these days of sp. ref'm agitation it is interesting and instructive to no what three latest American dict's have to say.

The first to speak out clearly was the *Century*. In its preface (1889) it says:

"The language struggles toward more consistent and fonetic spelling, and it is proper, in disputed and doubtful cases, to cast dictionary influence in favor of this movement; both by its own usage in the text and at head of articles by the order of forms, or selection of the form under which the word shall be treated."

At end of general vocabulary in *Century* vol. 6 (1891) is a "List of Amended Spellings recommended by Filologic Societies." Prefaced to this list of 3500 amended words we find this by the editor [which embodies statements that readers will characterize as not half-hearted or hesitating]:

"Objections bro't on etymologic, literary and other grounds against correction of English spelling are unthinking expressions of ignorance and prejudice. All English etymologists favor correction of English spelling on both etymologic and higher ground of great service it will render national education and international intercourse. . . No competent scholar has come or could come to a different conclusion, and it may be confidently predicted that future English dictionaries will be able to recognize to the full, as this dictionary is able in its own usage to recognize in part, the English vocabulary's right to be rightly spelled. . .

"The reformed orthography of the present, made with scientific intent and regard for historic and fonetic truth [Platform, plank 7], is more worthy notice, if a dictionary could discriminate as to worthiness between two sets of facts, than the oftentimes capricious and ignorant orthography of the past."

The second dictionary to speak out was the *Standard* (1890). Its preface says:

"In efforts to simplify spelling this dictionary is conservative, yet aggressively positive along lines of reform agreed on almost unanimously by leading filologists of U. S. and England. Whenever found practicable an advanced step has been taken toward scientific spelling. . . .

"The Amer. Filologic and Sp. Ref'm Assoc's recommend immediate application of principles of sp. ref'm to about 3500 words—principles adopted by Filologic Society of Eng. To these reformed spellings vocabulary space is given in the *Standard*. . .

"In recording new wordforms the editors have intruded no new theories of their own, but give only just recognition to forms recommended by many, often used by some, eminent filologists, in nearly all instances indorsed by one or more great filologic societies. . . . If authority of a single author justify a lexicographer in recording a word or wordform, their authority cannot be ignored."

[It is thus that the *Standard* not only "goes and does it" by "giving vocabulary space to reformed spellings" in every page side by side with other wordforms, but it thus "argues the point" in advance with its readers, giving reasons and grounds to justify its course in giving such amended wordforms full place—its "advanced step"—instead of half shelving them in an Appendix.]

In late editions of Webster's *Internat'l*

dict'y (1890), preceding the general vocabulary, this same list of 3500 amended words is printed. The editor says:

"The following list of amended spellings [3500]. . . with rules by which they are indicated, is here inserted as the best result yet attained of efforts to reform spelling in large classes of words. Changes suggested are to simplify spelling, remove redundancies, more plainly indicate pronunciation, and are recommended by filologic scholars."

It is evident that three latest American dictionaries heartily support sp. ref'm, and give authority to 3500 amended spellings of filologic associations—one by incorporation in the general vocabulary, the other two print the list and call attention to great weight of scholarship behind it.—O.C. BLACKMER in Chicago *Record-Herald*.

SPREAD THE LANGUAGE.

The soldier has had his day in the Philippines. The schoolmaster is to have his. The Philipin Commission yields to Filipinos and permits Spanish as official language of the courts for five years. It will be two generations at least before the mass of people acquire English: in five years learned lawyers should be able to use it.

Needles to explain how much would be saved of time, labor, wear and tear of nerve in teaching Filipino children were English spelled as pronounced, remove this obstacle to learning our right language, that our beautiful uplifting primers, books of story, nature study, travel and elementary science, should come to them easily, and we should more rapidly and effectually bring them in touch with progressive ideas and civilization. Missionaries no the terrible clog that English spelling is to their efforts to christianize and civilize. Here are eight million people ready for our language. In God's name shall we improve the opportunity? Let them learn our noble language in spelling freed from defects that make school and reading sore trials to our own children and retard progress of foreigners in our midst.

How could we look the world in the face in view of our protestations of charity and humanity for them if we force on them our antiquated spelling, born of caprice and ignorance, a burden to our children and ourselves, instead of a simple and logical system constructed according to best judgment and experience of foremost scholars.—Editorial (condensed) in *Intelligence*, a Chicago semi-monthly *J*(o)urnal of Education.

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For fuller explanation and Platform see cover of Annual of New Spelling (postpaid, ten cents).