

difference to the spoken form, is more singular when one reflects upon the utilitarian drift of theories and methods of education, the ultimate goal of which is the number of dollars a child may grow to win rather than the kind of man he may grow to become. It is difficult to see why an extra *l* in parallel should have a greater economic value than *o* in history. "Economic efficiency" would seem to be served quite as well by the spoken *o* as by the written *l*. Why, therefore, infinite time, patience and pedagogic energy should be expended in compelling pupils to write parallel with three *l*'s, and no energy whatever expended in compelling them to pronounce history with an *o*, is a question that finds no answer in common sense and must probably be referred to psychology for a solution. The practical fact seems to be that a superior importance of correct spelling is a delusion, a venerable prejudice that has no substantial basis in linguistic history.

Some attention is given to pronunciation in the primary schools, very little in the high schools, and none at all in the colleges. The primary teacher can not entirely escape responsibility for the oral speech of young pupils. The reading book compels it. But such attention hardly extends beyond enunciation; pronunciation is quite another matter, a large requirement, for which the teacher is generally inadequately equipped. And so misplaced accents, corrupt vowel sounds, and bungled consonants are fastened upon children's minds as life habits. And the pity of it is that these slovenly habits of a life time might be prevented by a very little systematic effort in the schools. But here the monumental paradox lifts its overshadowing presence. Thousands of dollars will be willingly expended to save the written *l* in parallel, while not one dollar will be expended to save the *o* in history. Teachers and pupils alike are subjected to rigorous examinations to avoid the disgrace of bad spelling and are made to pay heavy penalties for their blunders, but are allowed to proclaim to

the world, without shame or rebuke, their ignorance of pronunciation.

With the high school rests the final responsibility for such refinements of speech as are likely to prevail in a community, yet there is no official recognition of this responsibility whatever. There is elaborate drill in the technique of rhetoric, the architecture of paragraphs, and the subtleties of punctuation—all the devices of artistic written expression, long before the student feels any natural craving for artistic expression, which alone can make this sort of instruction useful. There is some study of literature, and even the delicacies of Shelley's lyrics and Tennyson's idyls are discussed, but in a language often befitting a backwoodsman. As one listens to these performances, conducted with careless unconsciousness of any requirements of artistic oral expression, one comes clearly to understand why foreigners speak of our language as the "American dialect" of the English tongue.

But the college furnishes the most open and free field for orthoepical vagaries and vulgarities, for within the college domain there are no abatements or abridgments of free speech. Our "young barbarians at play" may convert language into a barbarous jargon of slang and slouchy pronunciation, and yet they become Bachelors of Art—yes, even *cum laude*. Alma Mater is too tender-hearted and too timid to offend her children by correcting their faults. I have seen a sedate professor drilling a college class in the elements of punctuation, with earnest and scrupulous thoroughness, while the students in rendering an oral account of their comprehension of his rules for the use of the comma were drawling and mumbling and mangling their words almost to the point of unintelligibility. And the professor seemed to be quite unconscious of the incongruity. But the free and easy use of language is not confined to the students. I have heard in college class rooms, within the space of half a day, three different pronunciations of the same word by as many professors, and all of them wrong pro-