

# The Phonetic Herald

DEVOTED TO PRONUNCIATION AND REVISED SPELLING.

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## SHAKSPERE'S ORTHOGRAFY.

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Referring to my facsimile reprint of Shakspeare's works, 1623, I find in the "Tempest" alone the following:--

SHARP CONSONANT ENDINGS - *drencht, chopt, leapt, vezt, voucht dropt, mockt, compost, clipt, prickt, husht, fixt.*

FLAT CONSONANT ENDINGS - *performd, curld, abhord, entertaind, staind, robd, dround, dismaid.*

They illustrate that elementary LAW: Verbs ending in sharp consonants, *f, k, p, s, sh, ch*, form past participi with a sharp sound, *t*, while verbs ending in flat consonants, *v, g, b, z, j*, take flat *d*.

The above are good old fonetic spellings in vogue long before Landor, Lamb, Hare and Thirwall attempted their restoration. But this is not all. I find other classes of words more consistently spelled, more fonetic, and more in accord with English analogy than the current fashion, such as *shat, dwel, tcl, hit, stil, od*, etc., with single instead of double final consonant. Why were the second *l* or *d* added in modern times? What use?

Again, we have *hart* for *heart*, *brst*, *iland*, *rime* for *rhyme*, *shoo* for *shoe*, *ake* for *ache*, *frend*, *hony*, etc. The following also, all from the "Tempest", are more in accordance with English analogy than the modern spellings: *peeces, yeeld, yeer, beleve, greef, relevee, neer, cheef, feend*.

These words have been altered for the worse in modern times by somebody, nobody knows why. Why not go so far at least as to support a return to better old spellings in these and similar words?

Since Shakspeare's spelling has altered for the better in the following respects:

1. Useless double consonants have given place to single ones in these words and the like: *pitty, linnen, marriner, felony*

*widdne, comming, pulluce*. 2. Duplication of a final consonant with an added *e* has been dropped as in *shippes sonne tarre logge, legge*. 3. Unnecessary dropping of useless final *e*, thus *cheere, drinke, looke*, etc., are altered to *cheer, drink, look*, etc. Why should not a clean sweep be made of similar rubbish from modern spelling? 4. The most important improvement was introducing three new letters. It is not non to whom the credit of this is due, but they deserve a monument for their courage and success in overcoming the prejudice of their age.

*J* is not found in the 1623 edition, at least I have not found it. I find *Julia, John, Iack, Juno, Inpiter, iust, iest, zoyne* etc. for *Julia, John, Jack, Juno, Jupiter, just, jest, join*, etc. In the title page we have ornamental *I* (which may have suggested new *J*) in ORIGINAL, but in the body of the work *J* is not.

Again in the 1623 edition we find 'vv' in separate types for *v*, though *v* as a single type is often found. As a new letter *W* is fully established. We find *University* for *Univarsity*, showing that modern functions of *U* and *V* had not been definitely fixed. *U* is our third new letter introduced with a definite power since 1623.

What can be the objection to farther development of new letters as needed?

The practical and material question now is: if all these changes have taken place in the past, why should they stop short now? A dead language like Latin may become 'fixed,' 'established,' but for a living one there can be no finality.

—The Canada Pacific Railway adopts the 24-our plan on its western portion and will perhaps do so on the eastern. Other lines will follow suit. Galileo's exclamation "It moves for all that" (*E pur si muove.*) is still true in a double sense