

The Herald.

DEVOTED TO PRONUNCIATION AND AMENDED SPELLING.

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SLURD PRONUNCIATION

Planks 9 and 11 in our Platform are clear, even emphatic, that Orthography should reflect formal or liturgical, distinct from slovenly, speech. There has sprung up a class of linguistic students who treat colloquial speech as alone real, tabuing all other as artificial. The London *Times*, a mouthpiece of general conservatism, recently favored formal speech as being the language. It was in comment on Dr Robert Bridges becoming poet laureate in succession to two Alfreds, Tennyson and Austin. Our language is, shame to tell, best studied in Germany and America. To start to remove this stigma the English Society was formed with a Scottish branch (called Scottish Dialects committee, Wm Grant, M. A., Aberdeen, convener). The Society puts out an annual volume (*Studies and Essays*, Clarendon Press). The first, for 1910, has Bridges' essay "On the Present State of English Pronunciation." Among other slurs Bridges gives:

"First, blurring and running together weak *a, e, i, o, u* [and *y* as in *martyr*] into one indeterminate sound, or in *dinger denja*, in unstressed pronunciations of *and, the, t*; *but, must*, in ^a for *intu*, pronounced *pronounce*, ^a bi or not ^a bi, from *from*, ^a to.

"Next, 'palatization,' change of *t* to *ch* before *u*-sounds, *Nature* is neycher and can hardly be saved; *don't you*, dontshew; *Tuesday*, Choozily; *tune*, chiune. And *d* in the same position is thretend, as in *immedjatly*; *aujins* for *audience*.

"Other mispronunciations: *om b, m, d, in fact, in vain*, are common; *r* dropt before a consonant (*sword* and *sawd*, *Lordland*, *arms aims*, *mourning morning*, are now identical), and even before vowels in a younger generation (as *faa away*, *faa ever ev^a*, *pawing*

EXPLANATION: OMIT useless letters; CHANGE (if sounded so) *d* to *t*, *ph* or *gh* to *f*; *o* to *u* in *to, do, who, prove, move, believe, shoe, canoe*.

For fuller explanation and Platform see cover of Annual of New Spelling (postpaid, 10 c.)

rain for *pouring*). Ad bogus pronunciations due to unphonetic spelling and habit of 'swallowing' words, there is little doubt that speech of educated classes is undergoing serious changes."

Thus *The Times*, which proceeds:—

"These changes are regrettable. Shall they be allowed to work their way unimpeded? Conservatives in language and they who wish to exercise a conscientious care over its beauty and integrity find themselves opposed by a group of scientific linguists who regard attempts to preserve so-called 'purity' of speech as pedantic or futile. History has taught them that the ideal of a fixed language is a vain and foolish dream; they have studied past changes of pronunciation, the result of irresistible forces, and believe we might as well try to control the blood's circulation or planetary movement. 'Beauty,' 'decay,' 'degradation,' 'vulgarism,' have no meaning for them, for 'no difference or superiority can be recognized between speech in a village alehouse and that of the Bench of Bishops.'"

Having reached this "irreconcilable difference" what are we to do about it? If we take the course downward we shall go down, down, (plank 9) until, in words of the Chicago *Dial*, itself conservative:—

"will the language, by clipping and slurring, be reduced to a system of monosyllabic grunts, help out by gesture and facial expression?"

The Times says farther:—

"It is useless to try to defeat science with the bludgeons and blunderbusses of ignorance and prejudice; our conservatives must arm themselves with weapons more modern. Fortunately, Bridges combines with the sensitiveness of a man of letters thorough acquaintance with new-novelty methods. . . . With him the question is aesthetic as well as scientific; that it is no fancy to see beauty in human speech and wish to preserve it. Belief that phonetic decay can not be checked, conscientious reform impossible, he thinks a doctrinaire notion, for successful efforts have occurred before now."

PLEA FOR ONE NEW LETTER

New letters must come if our language is to keep alive at all [as one, not splitting into several] No real grasp of

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