

The Atheneum:

AN ADVOCATE AND EXPONENT OF EDUCATIONAL, LITERARY,
AND SOCIAL PROGRESS.

“TEACH YOUR BOYS THAT WHICH THEY WILL PRACTISE WHEN THEY BECOME MEN.”

Vol. I.

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No. 1.

The Atheneum:

A NINETEENTH-CENTURY JOURNAL OF PROGRESS;

Devoted to Literature, Journalism, Science, Short-hand, Typo-Writing, Simplified Spelling, Penmanship, Music, and all the Arts of Peace.

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PLATFORM—PURPOSE—PLAN.

THE ATHENEUM is the outcome of an idea which has for years impressed us as desirable and feasible. The idea was that there should be published, at a popular price, a popular journal which could discuss educational matters from the standpoint of practical business life. By education is meant not simply book learning, but rather the practical training of the mind to think, the hand to manipulate, the ear to discern, and the eye to observe. Admirable is our school system; intelligent and progressive are our teachers; yet we believe that the rising generation are not learning sufficiently the practical things of life, and that there is room for great improvement in teaching them the studies now on the curriculum. We shall advocate the introduction into our schools and colleges of the practical and progressive arts—extending the Kindergarten idea beyond the infant grades into those in which boys and girls, young men and women, are being taught. We believe that school instruction should be made more attractive; we know it can be. We believe it should be made more serviceable; we are convinced that it will be when teachers and parents realize the need of a reform and know how to accomplish it. We propose not only to impress the need for a reform, but to show how it can be accomplished.

THE ATHENEUM will not contain dry-

as-dust theoretical dissertations on abstruse questions; it will treat, in a popular style, popular subjects,—its object being to popularize time-and-labor-saving arts; to improve mental methods; to make education possible and delightful; to develop mental activity and invention. All this it will do at a popular price.

THE ATHENEUM is not for any class except the progressive people—and these are to be found in every grade and occupation in life.

No pent-up school-room shall confine our powers—
The whole unbounded universe is ours.

There is no one who will not be benefited by reading THE ATHENEUM. It will bring to brain-workers lightness and inspiration; it will carry to the mechanic and toiler encouragement and enthusiasm. Progressive people everywhere will welcome it as a long-needed help in removing hindrances and hastening a better day.

THE ATHENEUM will be sent, post free, to any address in Canada, United States or England for a whole year for only 25 cents. Any one sending four names, with a dollar, will receive a free copy for a year. Friends who have not time to canvas will oblige the publisher by sending the names and addresses of their friends who might become subscribers, and free sample copies will be forwarded.

WANTED—AN EDUCATIONAL COMMISSION.

Not long ago the Ontario Government appointed an Agricultural Commission, instructed to collect information from farmers and fruit growers, with a view to the improvement of the agricultural and horticultural interests of the Province. The Commissioners spent a large amount of time and money “interviewing” prominent and progressive culturists in various parts of the Province, and the information thus gleaned was summarized and systematized, and published in a series of “blue books.”

Unlike the customary blue book, however, this one was as popular as a novel, and there is a constant demand for copies. Wide-awake farmers want the information, and they can get in these books what cannot be had elsewhere. The book represents the ripest experience of the most ingenious and successful farmers and fruiters. Encouraged by their success as publishers of practical literature, the Government have recently issued a book on Forestry, written by Mr. R. W. Phipps. This book is written in a style so charming that the demand for it is very lively—so much so that an extra large edition has been printed.

The ATHENEUM calls for the appointment of an Educational Commission, who shall have power over persons and papers, and *carte blanche* to go where they like and interview whom they please, with the object of learning the precise facts as to our educational system, its working and results. Our educational interests are quite as important to our national life as are our agricultural interests. A much larger proportion of our people would be interested in the results of an Educational Commission than are interested in agriculture. There is not a family that is not directly affected by changes in school books and methods. There are thousands of parents and scholars who are now declaring against the "cramming" system, as they have been for years past. Is there any reason for the outcry? Everyone knows there is too much. Is there any remedy? Everyone who considers the matter will see that an Educational Commission could find the cause and suggest the remedy.

The Commission should not be composed of professional educationists, though that class should be represented. A school inspector, a clergyman, a business man, a mechanic, and a quick-witted and intelligent woman—these should form the Commission—with the business man as chairman. Let them interview school inspectors, head masters, subordinate teachers, high and common school scholars of all grades, and find whether there are too many studies on the list, and ascertain which could be best omitted. Let them call kindergarten teachers and scholars and learn their methods, and compare their progress with pupils taught by the ordinary methods. Let commercial colleges be visited with a view of finding out who attend them, and how it is that young men fresh from school have to "finish off" in these institutions in the simple English studies which the schools presume to teach

—writing, book-keeping, and arithmetic. Let young clerks and mechanics and saleswomen and sewing girls who have recently left school be examined, in order that it may be learned how much of what they know was taut then at school, and whether they learned at school how to teach themselves; also whether or not they consider that, having passed thru the school curriculum, they have nothing more to learn. Let street arabs, and boot-blacks, and newsboys and girls be called, and a comparison made between them and the school scholars in the matter of practical education, with the view of learning how it is the schools teach so little and the streets so much, and also with a view to considering whether it might not be advantageous if, more frequently than at present, the schools were turned into the street, or the practical street methods were introduced into the schools.

Let an Educational Commission, composed as we have outlined, and empowered as we have suggested, turn its attention in the direction hinted at, and there would be a marked educational improvement within five years from the date of publication of their report.

What say our readers to this Educational Commission?

NOTES ON THE SPELLING REFORM.

The educationists of this enlightened Province, as of the whole Continent, need no instruction as to the absurdities of ordinary English spelling. They are fully alive to these; more than that, they would be the most practical spelling reformers in the most suitable place—the school room. What hinders their action? We reply, the school regulations which make compulsory the spelling of words according to an arbitrary standard that cannot be supported by rime or reason, by sense or sound, by etymology or euphony. What is the remedy for this condition of affairs?—a condition causing discouragement to pupils and teachers? We reply again, the school regulations must be changed.

Is the time ripe for such change, and is it practicable? We think so, decidedly. When teachers, inspectors and examiners are convinced that a change is both desirable and necessary; when the present method has been faithfully tried, and has proven a miserable failure; when the

phonic system has shown the feasibility of a change, by the great success of its pupils; when both England and America are marching forward together in the direction of a radical change; when the Canadians, heretofore slow in taking up this question, are now in line with the leaders of the movement on both Continents; when our school system is undergoing, at the hands of the Governmental authorities, a process of simplification with the view of rendering our national education more practical; when these facts exist, and those events have happened, and are happening, we think the time is ripe for the change of our spelling system.

Is such a change practicable? This question can be answered by pointing to the change made in our National currency. Canadians now no longer count pounds, shillings, pence, groats, farthings; in our grandfathers' time they counted nothing else. It was a radical revolution; but it was accomplished without rebellion or bloodshed. It was in some respects a more serious change than that now contemplated. It affected every one. The old had to learn another system of calculation, or run the risk of being cheated. The young required to master both systems—because both old and new systems ran consecutively for a time, as both systems of spelling would. The change in calculating currency came about by National proclamation; the change in spelling will come about by the local Governmental authorities "authorizing" the new method.

It may be objected that the spelling reformers are not themselves agreed as to which system is preferable; and the objector may endeavor to secure a postponement by requiring such agreement preliminary to the change of the school curriculum. The answer to this is brief: Let the various systems be submitted to the Central Committee, or Council of Public Instruction, as the various school books are submitted. Let the learned gentlemen of the committee impartially investigate the merits of each, and then decide to "authorize" the best.

The spelling reform movement should be national in its character; and it should begin in the schools, so that it may have

as fair a chance as the present method has had. There need be nothing compulsory about the matter. Let the local teacher or school board introduce or not, as he or they please, the "authorized" system—or any or either of them, if more than one. Let the scholars study either the old system or the new, as they or their parents prefer. Let the new system stand on its own merits. Let it be used in all documents—examination papers, etc.—by those pupils who learn it; and let those who prefer the old way go on blundering.

How many scholars can spell perfectly according to present orthographic rules (!)? How many teachers? If the proportion of scholars be as one to fifty—a liberal percentage—why should the forty-nine lose marks and merits by failure to do what cannot be done except by those who possess extraordinary powers of memory? The purpose of examinations is not—or should not be—to exhibit precocity and develop prodigies; the purpose of examinations is—or should be—to test the progress of the pupils, keeping in mind their opportunities, capacity, heredity, sex, and all other points of differentiation between one and another which may affect the judgment of the examiner. Is a spelling-bee a fair test of education or capacity? If so, why are the schools not doing their work? If not—and every one will admit it is not—why virtually make it so by requiring scholars to spell arbitrarily or suffer in consequence?

Let progressive teachers, enlightened parents, and suffering scholars, petition the Educational authorities of the Province to relax the stringent rule which now makes Johnsonian spelling compulsory in class and in examinations. If the Minister of Education grant the prayer of the petition, the key of the position is gained; if he does not, the question will then come up for argument, and the spelling reformers are sure to win. We incline to the opinion that the petition would be signed and supported by leading educationists throughout Ontario; and further, that the Minister of Education would go a considerable length in the direction of the proposed reform. As for parents and scholars, they would not shrink from setting their signatures to such a petition from a groundless fear entertained by some that the etymology of the language would suffer by the granting of the prayer.

(Written for THE ATHENEUM.)

PHONOGRAPHY IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

BY REV. E. BARKER, TORONTO.

"But some say it is very difficult to learn, and above the capacities of school children."

It may be difficult to some adults under the disadvantageous circumstances in which they were placed, picking it up by snatches of time from their regular employments, perhaps with no teacher and a poor guide-book; or pressed through in a class in half a dozen lessons of an hour each. They would find it difficult to learn long-hand or any other study under those circumstances. If all the education now imparted in our schools were postponed to the period of life in which phonography is now usually learned, there would not be much of it learned at all; it would all be too difficult. But why should it be thought beyond the ability of children? The characters are much more simple than these of longhand: the only difference is the phonetic system of pronunciation, which is simply something *additional* to the formation of the characters, but not something more *difficult*. In fact the phonetic is the *natural* pronunciation, and therefore more easily acquired by far than an unnatural one. If children can learn to spell and pronounce our bungling, irregular system, they can surely learn the simpler one, based on the laws of nature.

"But has it ever been tried?"

Over and over again, and with the success that anyone might predict. What could hinder success? As in everything else, those who learn in youth are the most efficient writers. The early formed habit becomes second nature to them.

"Admitting this, then, would it be right to introduce into a public system of education that which only a few—only a single profession—would need in after life?"

This is assuming that none but reporters need shorthand. Why should not everybody use it as they now use longhand? If all were taught it in childhood, all would use it for ordinary writing purposes; it might be that longhand would be wholly superseded *in time*, and why not?

"That would involve the use of the phonetic principle altogether in writing, and it would never do to write phonetically but print orthographically!"

Our orthography, so-called, must change some time, if we are ever to escape the barbarism of antiquity—or rather that of the present day in trying to adapt a

foreign alphabet to our language. But it is not our wish to abandon script orthography in general until we adopt a new alphabet adapted to our English language. We would continue the ordinary longhand while requisite, but at the same time use phonography wherever it would not collide with the ordinary letter-press, and that would be mainly in setting type in orthography from script. Even here, a collision would also be avoided if our type-setters would also learn phonography, as they would were it taught in the schools. In many printing offices now, type is set from phonographic copy.

But why should not all ordinary correspondence, sermon-writing for private use, note-taking, and nearly all the writing that is now done, be executed in the much briefer shorthand only? Why be content with the tedious old methods of committing our thoughts to paper, when no one would be satisfied now with the former slow methods of travelling or sending messages?

"Phonography is not so legible," you say, "as longhand."

It is not so legible perhaps when we are not so familiar with it as with longhand. But it is just as legible with the same familiarity—probably more so, as the characters are more compact and distinct in Phonography when fully written. This objection would not be thought of if shorthand were learned in the same way as longhand now is.

Even admitting, however, that phonography would not be used as generally as longhand, would it not be as much used as book-keeping, and many other branches of common school education that do not come into universal employment?

"If all were to learn phonography, all would be reporters, and the reporting profession would be interfered with, if not broken up entirely."

That does not follow by any means. Because all learn longhand, all are not good or swift writers. And it requires much more than the ability to write swiftly to make a reporter. The objection would be about as good as to say that the editorial profession is interfered with by everybody's being taught to write ordinary hand, or the preaching and lecturing professions by universal instruction in grammar. Supposing, however, that everybody could report, would the *world at large* be the better or worse for it? The days of professional monopolies have passed away long ago.

Seeing how phonography, through its great utility, has forced its own way into business enterprise as well as into newspaper offices, into public and private secretariats, into our courts, law-offices, and studios;—seeing how many who make a special use of it and are so enamoured with its beauty that they learn it for mere recreation as they learn to row or skate:—seeing, too, how difficult it is for adults to apply themselves to study it, or to find opportunity for it, it is simply marvellous that our school authorities are not opening their arms to welcome it into the public schools; or, in the case of their being contented to jog along in the old ox-carts, it is marvellous that the parties already so benefited by the partial employment of phonography, and the school-teachers ever so ready to advocate intellectual progress—that they are not up in arms demanding an improvement so great, and so easily obtained.

(Written for THE ATHENEUM.)

SIMPL SPELING—EXAMPL AND PRESEPT.

BY A. HAMILTON, M.A., M.D., PORT HOPE.

With meni it iz not plan how tha ar tu begin tu practis a simplifd spelng. It shud tak the foloing stajez:

1. Omit unnesesari leterz.

2. Uze the old leterz consistentli, that iz, with comparativ yuniformiti.

3. Uze wun or more new leterz.

Thoz hu wil go a moderat distans onli wil stop at the furst or second staj: Everi wun convinst in eni degree ov the nesesity ov such simplifcashion shud mak sum chanjez, if it be onli in so far as tu omit the sjlent e'z from 'have' and 'are.' That iz at wuns giving an exampl and a plej ov progres. Utherz ma adopt the foloing wurdz: Hav, giv, liv, shal, wil, ar, tho, thru, enuf. Tu this list the ofn recurring prepoz: shunz 'tu' and 'ov' can be aded.

New leterz or most needed for the vowelz. Ov new leterz the foloing ar commanjabl and ar emloid herein, viz,

- 'a' for 'long a,' az al for ale.
- 'a' " 'brod a,' " arm " arm.
- 'u' " 'short u,' " up " up.
- 'i' " 'long i,' " il " aisle.
- 'o' " 'broad o,' " et. " ought.

Exempl is beter than presept. Wun hu wil *du* iz wurth a ful duzen ov thoz hu wil sa. It iz bj exampl that improvment can best be promulgated: It iz inexpensiv and most efectiv in directing the atenshun

ov the individual tu the muvement. The testimoni ov the venerabl Izac Pitman iz tu this efect. Prof. Lounsbury sez: "Tu acustum men tu seeing new spelngz iz wurth more than ol the arguments that can be devjzd." For sum tjm past the present rjter haz dun njnente-twentieths ov hiz corespondens in an orthografi ov hwich this iz a sampl without complaint on the part ov the meni hu wer tharbj bret to notis the muvement. Gud wurdz ar gud, gud deedz ar beter. Tu meni it iz not allowabl tu chanj thar spelng in eni grad degree. Such shud advans a litl wa bj exampl, and help on bj presept for the rest. Wurf iz more nesesari than runi, and it iz believd iz much mor efectiv.

'Comparativ yuniformiti' in (2) haz a dubl meaning. It meanz that we shud uze the old leterz so az tu hav the sam wun stand az ofn a z posibl for the sam sound. (i) az regardz English, (ii) az regardz uther languagez. We hav comparativ anatomi az wel az human anatomi; we hav fonoloji comparativ with uther languagez az wel az in our own. The valuez giv'u the old leterz shud be thoz curen in living languagez, espeshali thoz spoken bj meni milyunz. Such old and new leterz wil then hav a cosmopolitan value just az the njn dijits signifj the sam the wurld over. Thus, comparison ov languagez sho the fundamental sound ov *u* tu be that hurd in full. Hens such formz az 'cud,' 'wud,' 'shud,' 'gud,' 'buk,' becum proper in plas ov 'could,' 'would,' 'should,' 'good,' 'book.' The vowel in *up* iz peculiar to our own tung, and hens shud hav a new leter. In this exampl 'u' iz so uzed. Comparison with uther tungz iz nesesari onli until a complete alfabet be chozen; after that it iz tu be uzed rjt along just az we now uze our alfabet.

(Written for THE ATHENEUM.)

PHONETIC TEXT BOOKS.

BY T. P. HALL, B.A., FELLOW OF TORONTO UNIVERSITY.

In the interest of the rising generation it is very desirable that the new letters necessary to complete our alphabet should be introduced into the schools at once. To secure uniformity this work must be undertaken by the Government. Why should not Ontario lead in this reform? If our Education Department were to select the best of the several phonetic alphabets now in use, and authorize a set of phonetic readers for the public schools, the teachers, who are now compelled to drill boys and

girls in the vexatious anomalies of the present spelling, would be relieved of most of their drudgery, and would gladly do their part in making the rational spelling universal. Indeed, very little would then remain to be done. All that is now needed is that phonetic spelling be placed on the same footing as the present want of system—that it shall be as great an honor in the eyes of the authorities to spell phonetically and correctly as it is to spell the way Johnson or Worcester did—and the common sense of the people will soon decide which is best.

What about those who have left school? Must they go back to learn to read? By no means. Phonetic print is *easy* to read. So easy that a boy of fourteen who saw a page for the first time could read it readily in fifteen minutes.

If the Education Department will make a beginning the newspapers will not be slow to follow; but until then, or at least until the teachers' hands are freed, I suppose we must continue to tread the blundering roundabout path marked out by our ancestors. Let us at least ask the Department for a spelling book that is up to the times.

OPENING OF THE SHORTHAND ATHENEUM.

CONTRIBUTED BY A GUEST.

Through the courtesy of Mr. Thos. Bengough, the writer had the happiness of being present at the "dedication" of this new Institution, or rather, of an old Institution enlarged, removed to new premises, and designated by a new name. The gathering, which took the form somewhat of a *conversazione*, was held on Saturday evening, 23rd June last. The suite of rooms constituting the Atheneum is at 29 King Street West, on the south side, a few doors west of Jordan Street; or, as Mr. B. humorously puts it, in order to aid the memory in distinguishing it from the old premises—"on the other side of Jordan." On this occasion an electric light flashed not only on the crystal front of the rooms and on the gilded sign-board, but also for a long distance up and down King Street. On entering the large front room, which is on the second flat, we were almost overwhelmed with the witchery of the scene. The brilliant electric light, shining through the glass front, and casting its silvery sheen over the statuary, house-plants, and pottery with which the room was decorated, with the parlor furniture strewn among these decorations, and the gay throng of ladies and gentlemen moving about at ease; it needed no lively imagination to make one feel that he was enjoying a moonlight ramble in some horticultural paradise. Three fine

transparencies on the large panes, symbolizing respectively music, literature and shorthand, added to the beauty of the scene; while the shadows of the gilded letters on the glass were cast almost as distinctly on the walls and ceiling as if they had been painted in black, the word "Bengough" being on one side, "Shorthand" on the ceiling, and "Atheneum" on the other side, all in much enlarged characters, particularly those overhead, which were nearly four feet in length. When the whole company of shorthanders had gathered, numbering some seventy-five (which number would have been largely increased but for special causes), we were summoned by our host to another large room in the rear, and invited to help the lady friends and ourselves to refreshments of cake, strawberries and cream, with healthful temperance drinks, served out by active waiters. Returning again to our former quarters, at the call of our host Ex-Alderman Taylor took the chair, and opened the "feast of reason" by a graceful speech, complimenting Mr. Bengough on the fine entertainment, and on the commodious premises which spoke so well for the success of his enterprise in the shorthand work. The "winged art" was now becoming such a necessity in all our business affairs that success was guaranteed to an Atheneum the foundation of which was now so well laid. He only wondered that the leader of Phonetics did not spell his name phonetically, so that we might know whether it was *Bengo, Bengow, Bengof, Benguf* or *Bengup* (laughter).

Mr. J. W. Bengough, Editor of "Grip," was then called upon, who, after a brief allusion to the circumstances of the meeting, recited a humorous discourse on "Old Mother Hubbard," which showed that his power of caricature with the tongue was not less than with the pencil.

Mr. E. E. Horton, reporter of the Superior Court, followed with a reference to the handsome surroundings, the equipments of the Atheneum surpassing those of any Institution of a similar kind that he had seen on the other side of the lines. He spoke of the necessity for thoroughness in the preparation for reporting work, and urged phonographers to study closely for their profession. "No one," he said, "is too old to learn."

Mr. Richard Lewis, President of the Canadian Spelling Reform Association, took occasion to impress upon the phonographers the necessity for a reform in our spelling on account of the bearing it would have on the work of education, on our literature, and on intellectual progress generally.

Mr. J. J. Connolly was glad that a broader name had been adopted for this institution on entering its new premises, and he trusted we would see a development this coming winter which would justify the name. An "Atheneum" formerly meant a place where the Athenians met to learn "some new thing"; and he thought this institution might very proper-

ly be used for the purpose of teaching and discussing the different sciences which are connected more or less directly with Phonography, especially in qualifying a person for the reportorial profession. He hoped to see such a club organized as had been outlined some time ago in the "Writer"

Prof. Clare gave a sketch of his connection with Phonography, and said that he found many persons like himself who studied it with no intention of making it a profession, but simply for the purpose of its assistance in other studies. Though he used it for reporting purposes when upon the staff of the *Guelph Mercury* some years ago, yet he now found it very useful in many other ways. His description of the way in which he had been led into the study of phonography at first, viz., by helping a fellow clerk decipher a love-letter, evoked no little merriment. He found it as legible as longhand, his old notes of many years ago being as easily read now as then.

Rev. E. Barker spoke of the service shorthand had been to him in his profession. He had to thank W. H. Orr, Esq., editor of the little *Pioneer*, nearly thirty years ago, for his being set on the track. He had plodded through the study himself, first learning Benn Pitman, then Graham, and finally settling down on Isaac Pitman, which he prized more highly every day.

After Miss G. A. Fraser (assistant teacher at the Atheneum) had favored the audience with a fine solo, the host of the evening responded happily to the many compliments he had received from the several speakers, and explained that his name was spelled properly, but the only difficulty was to pronounce it as the natives of Scotland pronounce the word *lough*. If people could not pronounce it correctly, he preferred being called *Bengof* to *Bengo*. He spoke of the arrangements which were contemplated for the approaching International Congress, and of the probable effect their meeting in this city would have upon our shorthand and phonetic organizations; after which, one of the happiest meetings it has been our privilege to attend broke up at a somewhat late hour, the guests evidently feeling that Phonography now stood upon a firmer basis in Ontario than ever before, and that Bengough's Atheneum was henceforth to be headquarters.

INCIDENTS OF THE REFORM.

Mr. J. J. Pritchard is teaching reading and pronunciation by means of the phonographic symbols, in the Central Prison, Toronto. He has met with great success in this original line.

Our office door had painted on its pane the words: "PRIVATE OFFICE." One day we scraped off the last letter in the first word. The sign faces everyone who enters the Atheneum, as the office is directly in rear of the counter. The result is that innumerable en-

quiries have been made as to the meaning of the word "Privat," and as to the consistency of allowing the second word to remain intact when it should be spelled "Ofis." The reply invariably is that the same reasoning which suggested the erasure in the first word caused the second to remain intact. That reasoning was, that the peculiarity of the one, and the inconsistency of the other, would raise the whole question of spelling, and set visitors a-thinking. What does the reader think on the subject?

Spelling reformers are well known when they once take a stand. In a town not many miles east of Toronto one of them entered the store of a Dutchman, who, broaching the subject, went on somewhat as follows:—"How vas it your boys so much time spend to learn to spel? In Germany the boys and girls spend not time to learn; they spel in simple fashion; but here, they spel, unt spel, unt spel; then they get dictation, unt again it is spel! spel! spel; unt they pass into the High School unt again they spel! spel! spel! Why, they spend all their lives in spelling, unt then they can't spel! The Dutchman's estimate is very near the mark.



THE SPELLING REFORM.

Joy of a Phonetic Reformer on observing the progress of the glorious movement in St. John's Ward!—*Grip*.

For some years the following sentence has stood as the shortest into which all the alphabet could be compressed:—"J. Gray: Pack with my box five dozen quails." A Utica gentleman recently improved on the above sentence as follows:—"Quick, glad zephyrs, wait my javelin box." G. W. Pierce, a Boston lawyer, has now forced the twenty-six letters of the alphabet into a sentence containing only thirty-one letters, "Z. Badger: thy vixen jumps quick at fowl."

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