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# The Herald.

DEVOTED TO PRONUNCIATION AND AMENDED SPELLING.

4<sup>TH</sup> YEAR.

TORONTO, CANADA, NOV., 1888.

N<sup>O</sup>. 39.

## REVIZING WORDS.

"We must ofn deal with words as the Queen does with gold and silver coin. When this has been curent long, and by much use and ofn pasing from man to man, with perhaps ocasional clippings in disonest hands, has quite lost the clear brightnes, the wel-defined sharpnes of outline, and a good part of weight and intrinsic value which it had when first issued, it is the soverer's prerogativ to recall it, and issue it anew with her image stampd on it afresh, bright and sharp, weighty and ful as at first. Now to a proces such as this the tru mint-masters of language wil ofn submit words."

So rote Trench in last chapter of "Study of Words." Our words incorporate such bad etymology, bad fonology, letters silent, letters useles and worse than useles (positivly misleading), that it is quite time many of them wer melted down and recast in beter forms. Scores of our words ar perfectly fonetic: "send," "hint," "winter," etc. These shud be retaind, and the others made to aproximatly represent the sound. Many individual words ar now gradually coming into line. Let this be encouraged. A good simpl rule (like "Change ph to f when sound-ed so") wil bring regiments of words a litl more into line in hole or in part. Other simpl and easily aplied rules wil march in other regiments until sensibly-spelt words can be counted by thousands where now we hav scores, and the labor of acquiring the language and using it much shortnd and simplified. We favor having "the wel of English undefiled," we do. We hear a good deal about this "undefiled English." Our language, as to its orthograpy, is so badly defiled by bad etymology, etc., the "wel" has water positivly undrinkabl and putrid, made so chiefly by the excreta of conceited pedagogs, mechanical and unscolarly printers from Caxton down, helpt on by blind chance and happy-go-lucky acretions, moss, rust,

and filth. It's about time we had "English undefiled."

STANDARD VOWELS.—The World's Fair is to be held in Paris next year. It has been suggested that a general meeting of the International Asocia'n shud then be held, probably in Aug. The time wil come when such meeting wil be indispensable. Ther is quite as much need for it as for geografic and other congreses. Diferent nations using Roman alfabet shud be represented and expens shud be borne by cuntris interested. A question alredy presing for solution is, What vowels shal be considered standard? Around those deemd standard, varietis may cluster. Standard speech-sounds, especially vowels, deserv definition both popularly and with rigid scientific exactnes shud that be found posibl, tho the problem is hardly advanced enuf in solution for that yet. Until we ar defined what we ar considering we ar but misunderstanding each other. The Electric Congres at Paris in 1881 defined the unit (one Ampere) of electric-curent strength. That was more sutl than a vowel. Exact definition is necessary and wil be had in time.

—The "Amer. Annals of the Def," Washington, D.C., givs expression to views quite "too radical" for our former oponent, the "Observer." In the latest number, that for Oct., we read: "While we shud be glad for filologic, filanthropic and moral reasons to see 'World-English' adopted as the language of the world, we wish, especially for our def pupils, that it might suplant the present anomalus and caotic mode of speling English. What a boon to our teachers of articulation and to their bewilderd pupils wud it be if evry sound had its own unvarying sign, and evry sign its own unvarying sound, afording an immediat guide to its correct utterance! We do not expect to see that in our day but rejoice in evry efort . . . that tends to hasten its consumation."

## PRONUNCIATION.

(Continued from page 145.)

As ther is much misunderstanding and want of understanding of some elementary facts of Pronunciation, it will be useful to giv them plainly. To do this, let us study some classic, as Gray's

## ELEGY

RITN IN A CUNTRY CHURCHYARD.

The curlew tolls the knell of parting day,

*The* is ðe, ði, ðe, colloquialy ðo; ðe is comon if emfatic, ði is usual if next word begins with a vowel; ðe, if with a consonant. How shal this variation in orthoepy be indicated? Let *e* denote *e*, *i*, or *e*. We then hav ðe denoting this variant pronunciation, with 'the' stil the orthografic form.

*Curfew* is ker'fū, where *er* stands for *er* or *ur*, both *e* and *u* being modified by the *r*. As this is always folod by *r* in the same syllab, it does not conflict with use of *e* for *e*, *i*, *e*. A variation ocurs in *fer*, comonly givn as fyū. Webster, however, says that tho *y* be herd begining a syllab, as in *value* (val'yū), yet that faint *i* (') is preferd in mid-syllab, giving fiū, fū, and fyū, all being denoted by fū, where *i* denotes *i* or *y*. The *curfew*, French *couvre-feu* from *couvrir* to cover and *feu* fire, was rung at 8 p. m. and introduced after the Norman Conquest. *Couvre-feu* is now pronounced cūvr fe:—800 years ago it was fairly fonetic. While in French the first vowel has shifted to ū, with us it has become *u* or modified *e*. So *burglar* (burglōr or berglōr) has come from Norman-French *bourglair*. These, then, furnish actual examples of Sound-shifting, see p. 149, more thoroly workt out by Germans under title *Lautverschiebung* (Laut' for shē'buŋk). In *feu* also, drifting or shifting has been in diferent or oposit directions. So late as the Tudor period such words as *feu*, *neu*, wer sounded feu, neu. They hav now become fū, nū, as more fuly givn on p. 141. Of these fiū and fū etc. apear relics of erlier shiftings, doomed to yield to fyū etc.

*Tolls* is tolz as more generally pronounst. In south-eastern England it is to'lz. In other words, the vowel is folod by a faint *u* ('). In Cokny speech it is toulz, where the vowel has shifted from close *o* to close *a* (o), a change oposed by *Punch* as quoted on p. 86. Ther is an Irish dialect in which *o* is *ou*; thus *bold* becomes hould, and *soul* soul. Pat givs *ou* distinctly, whereas the Cokny makes it the trochee *o*. Again the former uses it in certn words only, the later evry time the vowel ocurs. As this is not recognized as proper by any dictionary, it is ruled out. While the dictionaris giv 'tolz', Murray's wil giv 'to'lz'.

*Knell* is nel. Its vowel is one of the few that has not shifted during several centuries. So late as the Tudor period the *k* was pronounced, as it was too in such words as *knec*. In German, a sister-language, it has, not yet at least, disapeard: their word for *boy* (*knabe*) is kna'bu.

*Of* is either *ov* or *or*, the later about always in singing. This variation is signified by *ov*. Here the dictionaris do not giv light. Tru, they giv it as 'short o', (ō), but whether close *a* (o) or open *o* (ə) is ment by that is not clear. "The former, *ov*, appears to prevail in Ame. ca, which, in this respect, is more conservativ than British practice, for, as Prof. Garnet has told us on page 146, "the older pronunciation has been preservd more purely on this side of the water." The truth is that south-eastern Eng. is drifting away from the establish general pronunciation in even England itself, a fact which observers on the continent of Europ do not heed enuf. As they come so much in contact with London they quietly asume this recent divergence as standard.

*Parting* is part'iy; if *r* be dropt, it becomes pa't'iy, in which *a* is prolongd or els tends to finish with the obscure vowel ə, pa's'iy.

*Day* is da. In London and its neighborhood da' or de' is herd. This is why the Paris *Teacher*, Paris lying close to S.E. England, uses ei for close *e*, our *a*. Thus in one line we find two standard vowels, *o* and *a* dithongized by Londoners into *o'* and *a'*. We shal find two more presently, making four in all. Of these, Murray recognizes *o'* and *a'* only.

(To be continued.)

KEY: a a a e e i i o o u u ū  
as in art at ale ell cel ill l or ox no up put oor

IN PRONUNCIATION ONLY.

: = lip-protrusion; ' = nasalization  
' or ' = accent.Varietis of { a er e i o u w  
Orthoepy. } a, a, e, u, e, i, e, i, y, o, ə, u, ū, a, a, e, o

EO AND OE. What is the value of *eo* in: "George Leonard McLeod, one of the peopl calld yeomanry in feudal times, bestowed hounteous and gorgeous enconiums on one John Bunyan, a righteous theologian who wrote theology in a dungeon." If my orthoepy is not at fault, we hav 12 values of *eo*. Again, what is the value of *oe* in: "Whoever does in a poem rime fellow with canoe is a wrong doer and a foetid foe to mercy." Hav we 9 values of *oe* in the above? Wil some mathematician calculate waste of time and energy required to teach and lern such absurd spelings?—JERIG ARRH [J. R.] in *Jur. Amer. Orthoepy*.

**THE PRINTER'S LAMENT.**—What the compositor asks (but at present cannot obtain) is, not that *n* and *u* be made alike, but that each have its distinctive shape; not that *l* be made similar to *l*, but that it be crossed, or else formed after the fashion much in vogue, namely, a stroke more or less sloping, with loop in center on side farthest from letter following it; and lastly, that *i* be dotted, an omission which meets with great favor among authors, tho' very tantalizing to the compositor, since in bad manuscript undotted *i* may be taken for *c*, *e*, *r*, or even be supposed to form part of what in reality is *m*. But if *is* were dotted and *ts* crossed, few complaints would emanate from printing offices, or, indeed, ever be heard, so great an aid is due placing these letter-belongings in task of deciphering.—*Scientific American*. Why not use a type-riter, that never forgets to dot *is*, always crosses *ts*, and whose *us* never resemble its *us*. *Phonographic Magazine*.

—It is difficult to explain how we came to spell as we do. The words *see* and *sea* are spelled differently while pronounced alike; reason: in course of time we had changed our pronunciation. The proposed spelling reform would be very good, tho' I am not a fanatic about it, because perfectly aware of the enormous difficulty attending such a change. A favorite argument in favor of modern spelling was that it is etymologic, but there are a number of words by no means etymologic. A large amount is phonetic. It ought to be phonetic as it once was. Pronunciation changes every day, and it was curious to notice that these changes begin with the lower orders and work into pronunciation of those who might be considered careful speakers. At Cambridge now nobody says "What is the time?" but "What is the toime?" There would be a tendency among the upper classes during next fifty years to pronounce so. The tendency of written language is to lag behind spoken language, and when printing arose in 15th cent. it had most extraordinary effect, because it induced the idea of having fixed method of spelling and letting pronunciation shift for itself. Most remarkable changes had been produced in pronunciation. They had taken place in time simply for convenience.—*Prof. Skeat*.

—We use *æ*, rather than *e*, for the "obscure vowel" chiefly because others use *æ*, because already in the printer's case, and because it can be easily joined to other letters without lifting the pen.

—Subscript *u* in areas marked by a cross.

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—The *Norwich Bulletin*, having received a gift of doughnuts, thanks the "doughnor."

**ENGLISH DIALECTS.**—How far, even in small, educated and locomotive Eng., we are yet removed from uniformity of speech may be learned by very slight attention to sounds heard in different districts, each of which has its own burr or brogue, less marked perhaps than in Higden's and Caxton's time, but still unmistakable. . . . Caxton (Prologue to *Eneydos*) complains that "comyn Englysshe that is spoken in one shyre varyeth from a nother," and goes on to relate how when "certayn merchantes. . . taryd atte forland. . . and axed for mete and speccially. . . axyd after eggys. . . the good wyf answerde that she coude speke no frenshe. . . and thenne at last a nother sayd that he wolde haue eyren, then the good wyf sayd that she vnderstod hym." —*ELLIS on Pronunciation, chap. I.*

**GENERAL IGNORANCE OF SPEECH-SOUNDS**—Our spelling must be the faithful picture of our speaking. This has been attained almost to perfection by such languages as Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian and others. It is with an uncontrollable feeling of sadness and shame that one turns to English spelling, the greatest monument of stupidity that the history of language shows. The notion that words are not letters, but sounds, has been forgotten to such an extent by English speaking people; the confusion between the relations of sounds and their representatives in writing has been carried to such a point, that it would be ridiculous, were it not so harmful. We find poets who rhyme *by* with *beauty*, *was* and *pass*, *known* and *won*, *was* and *alas!* and other words which have nothing in common except part of their spelling. This fact, apparently so unimportant, betrays the deepest ignorance of the nature of language possible to conceive.—*F. GARLAND, Ph. D., in Philosophy of Words.*

—There is a doubtful pronunciation, one cursory and colloquial, the other regular and solemn. The cursory is always vague and uncertain, being made different in different mouths by negligence, unskillfulness, or affectation. Solemn pronunciation by no means immutable and permanent, is yet always less remote from orthography, and less liable to capricious innovation. Most writers of grammar have generally formed their tables according to cursory speech of those with whom they happened to converse, and concluding that the whole nation combines to vitiate language in one manner, have often established the lowest jargon as model speech.—*Dr. JOHNSON in Grammar.*

—Why *ced* in *preceding*, and *ceed* in *proceeding*?

## HOW IT CAME ABOUT.

As the story has inevitably been a long one, and abounds with minute details (many of which I have been compelled, by a sense of proportion to omit), I now briefly recapitulate the chief points of it, so that the reader may the more easily grasp some of the main principls.

(1) The Celtic alfabet was borrod from the Roman; and the Anglo-Saxon from the Celtic, but with a few additions.

(2) The A. S. pronounciation agreed with that of the continent, and of the Romans, in many important particulars, specially in the sounds of a, e, i, o, u. Speling was ment to be purely fonetic, and was fairly correct. Accents wer employd to denote vowel-length.

(3) In 12th and 13th centuris, some sounds alterd, but speling was stil to a great extent fonetic, as it was ment to be. At the same time, Anglo-French words wer introduced in ever increasing numbers, and Anglo-Saxon symbols wer gradually replaced by French ones. The language was, in fact, respelt by Anglo-French scribes, who employd a modified form of the Roman alfabet. The accents employd to mark long vowels disapear, and the vowels *a*, *e* and *o* ar sometimes dubld.

(4) In 14th cent. further changes wer introduced, and fonetic acuracy of representation was stil further impaired.

(5) About A. D. 1400, the sound of final -e, already lost in the North, was lost in the Midland dialect also. When it remains (as in *bone*), it no longer forms a distinct sylabl, but is employd to denote the length of the preceding vowel. Final -en comonly became final -e and folod its fortunes. Final *ed* and *es* lingerd as idistinct sylabls. Consonants wer dubld after a short vowel in many words, especially if the old singl consonant was folod by *e*, as in "bitter" for "biter"; but the rule was capriciously applied.

(6) The invention of printing began to petrify the forms of words, and retarded useful changes. Use of final *e* in the rong place as in "ranne" for "ran," became extremely comon; and use of *y* for *i* was carid to exces.

(7) After A. D. 1500, a new system of so-called "etymologic" speling arose, which was only applied to a portion of the language. French words wer ofn ignorantly alterd, in order to render their Latin origin more obvius to the eye. The open and close sounds of long *o* were distin-

guisht by riting *oa* (or *oe*, if final) and *oo*; the open and close sounds of long *e* wer distinguisht by riting *ea* and *ee*. New final combinatio<sup>n</sup>s ar found, of which *bs*, *cs*, *ds*, *fs*, *gs*, *ms*, and *bt* ar the most remarkabl.

(8) English speling, after 1500, was governd by two conflicting principls, viz.: the fonetic, which chiefly concernd popular words (i. e. the oldest and comonest words in popular use), and the so-called "etymologic," which chiefly concernd lerned words (i. e. words derived from Greek and Latin). The former apeals to the ear, the later to the eye. Neither of these principls was consistently carid out, and the ignorant meddlsomenes of the later introduced many fals forms.

(9) Changes in speling since 1600 ar comparativly trifling, chiefly due to printers, who aimd at producing complete uniformity of speling, which was practically acomplisht shortly before 1700. The modern use of *i* and *u* as vowels, and that of *j* and *v* as consonants, ar real improvements.

(10) The changes in pronounciation since 1600 ar great, especially in the vowel sounds, as is shown by Mr. Ellis and Mr. Sweet. Practically we retain a Tudor system of symbols, with a Victorian pronounciation, for which it is il fited.

(11) The net result is, that in order to understand modern English speling, evry word must be examind separatly, and its hole history traced. We must no all its changes, both in form and sound, before we can fully explain it. The comonest mistake is that of suposing Latin and Greek words to hav been introduced into the language directly, in cases where history tels us that they realy came to us thru Old French, and shud be alowd, even on "etymologic" grounds, to retain their Old French Speling.

(12) The shortest description of modern speling is to say that, speaking generally, it represents a Victorian pronounciation of "popular" words by means of symbols imperfectly adapted to an Elizabethan pronounciation: the symbols themselvs being mainly due to Anglo-French scribes of the Plantagenet period, whose system was ment to be fonetic. It also aims at sugesting to the eye the original forms of "lerned" words. It is thus governd by two conflicting principls, neither of which, even in its own domain, is consistently carid out.—SKEAT in "Principals of Etymology."