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The Herald.

DEVOTED TO PRONUNCIATION AND AMENDED SPELLING.

4TH YEAR.

TORONTO, CANADA, Oct., 1888.

N^o. 38.

LAWS OF SOUND-CHANGE.

(By H. SWEET, M. A., at Filologic Sec.)

It is now generally admitted by filologists that sound changes, as a rule, were exceedingly gradual, and that the greatest revolutions in language were only the sums of long series of slight shiftings of the vocal organs. The orthographies of dead languages preserved no record of these minute variations, hence we had to seek explanations of them in the sounds of living languages. In filology, as in geology, the past was intelligible only by help of the present. Literary professors, who ignored phonetics, could offer no explanation of Eng. vowel-mutation or unmut, such as *wen*, *geese*, *mice*. At best they might surmise that final *i* in early forms of these words, *manni*, *gosi*, *musi*, modified and then disappeared. That was no satisfactory theory; for it did not explain how the modification came, or why it produced these particular results. The phonetic theory was much more complicated, and was deduced from recent investigations into the influence of vowels on consonants, and *vice versa*, as exemplified in living languages. A simple illustration was found in *cat* and *key*, where difference between sounds of initial consonants was due to succeeding vowels. If we interchanged consonants, the words sounded somewhat like [kʰo:] and [kʰiy, or kʰe]. The reason was that *aw* being found by a low position of back of tongue, drew *k* back towards the throat; while *ey* [iy, or i:], a high front vowel, drew the *k* forward. This influence had formerly given rise to pronunciations [kyaind, gya'd] for *kind*, *guard*. Similar phenomena existed on an immense scale in Russian, where almost every vowel perceptibly modified almost every preceding consonant. . . . Similar reversions had occurred in South Slavonic dialects. That the Germanic vowel mutation was also the result of consonantal influence was proved by Old Norse mutations before fronted *r* which replaced older *z*, as in *cra* from *auzo* 'ear'. The above examples were illustrative of assimilation, which sprang from desire to save space in articulation, and secure *caz* of transition. Thus *pu* became *pm*, or else *mn*. Saving of time was effected by dropping superfluous sounds, especially at the end of words, as when *sing-g*, with distinct final *g*, was reduced to *sing*. But cases of saving of effort were very rare or non-existent. The loss of trilled point *r*, or its replacement by trilled uvular *gh* and *x*, as in Paris and Berlin, were perhaps due to economy of effort. All ordinary sounds of language were about on a par as to difficulty of production. If children learn *p* and *m* more easily than *k* and *ng* it was not (on) account of any intrinsic difficulty in the latter [sound?], but because the action of the lips was visible and that of back of tongue hidden. The chief cause of sound-change appeared to be *defective imitation*, or the substitution of approximately similar sounds, as in [fru] for *through*. Mr Sweet would divide sounds into stable and unstable: the former class containing the labials, separated from all others by a distinct space; the latter class containing the tongue articulations, all of which interchanged and ran into each other. In addition to the above organic changes, there was an important and numerous class due to grammatical and lexical analogy, and to confusion of meaning, as in *sparrow-grass* for *asparagus*. Mr S. cited cases of co-existence of native and foreign sounds in the same dialect. The Ar-

menian implosives, or choke stops, in which closing and raising the glottis supplied the force checked in the mouth, were believed to have been borrowed from some non-Aryan language of the Caucasus. The general conclusion drawn was that history of words, and their changes, could not be studied in literature alone; all true investigations into the forms of language must be founded on scientific phonetics. In our present university system there was not so much as a practice to study phonetics, and the teaching of filology was therefore deprived of any solid basis.

Several members objected to the theory that sound-changes were rarely if ever due to economy of effort. Dr F. M. V. cited the abbreviation of 'old clothes' and Mr Brandt cited unstressed assimilation and the introduction of the neutral vowel as causes of weakening.

Mr S. replied that abbreviation was saving of time, and assimilation saving of space. Whereas no trace was found of a tendency to eliminate exceptionally difficult sounds. The stops, such as *t*, were often relaxed into open consonants, such as *p*; on the other hand, the convers change was just as common.

Mr J. Lecky said he had independently arrived at the same theory—that sound-changes are seldom attributable to saving effort. A fronted *m* was not necessarily harder than a simple labial; the simultaneous action of different parts of the mouth might be easier than their separate action; just as we find it easier to move all the fingers at once in grasping than to move each finger separately in playing music. Assimilation vastly multiplied the number of elementary sounds, and therefore could not be described as facilitating pronunciation. The neutral vowel was just as difficult as any other; for the English variety of it was rarely learnt by a foreigner; and even a native could not, without phonetic training, pronounce it isolated or accented. The introduction of the neutral vowel was not due to laziness, but to the desire to subordinate some syllables to others, so as to weld the sound group into unity, and make the haze rhythmical. In such a word as *territory*, if a real *o* were sounded, it would suggest a division into two separate words, as *terry* and *torry*. Mr L. did not regard untrilling *y* as economy, but *cauz*, in the smooth consonant, there was the new difficulty of sustaining the point of the tongue without support of the palate. This was a changed distribution of effort, not a saving. Explanation of sound changes might be found in the assertion of individuality. Each new generation, feeling itself different from the preceding, unconsciously develop a new pronunciation sufficiently distinct to be characteristic. Changes in pronunciation were thus analogous to changes in art or costume, which could not, as a rule, be attributed to economy of either effort, space, or time.

The above deserves careful study for two reasons: (1) its matter, (2) its spelling; it is the sample from *Proceedings of Filologic Sec. pronist* on p. 142. Sound-change, Sound-shifting, or what Germans call Lautverschiebung, denotes gradual change in pronunciation. The survival of what was current in different stages of shifting largely accounts for variety of pronunciation now prevalent, sounds shifting rapidly in some districts, slowly in others. The critical reader will remark *gemal*, *seprat*, *disfence*, *several* as two syllables, vowel as one. Extreme care has been taken to copy the spelling from the *Proceedings* without change even to what appear misprints. In words

in brackets [] alone has any change been made. Observe *woud, would, coud, trild, untrilling, separat, therefore, therfor, proovd, milt, eaz, easter*. Of doubl consonants, the rul- (with exceptions) appears to be, omit one in unaccented syllabls only.—[E.]

SCHOOL ORTHOGRAPHY.

By request, we giv sampl of such sp. as we wud prefer to use if teaching children to read. For that, ther is required something halfay between ordinary orthograpy and notation for orthoepy. Here it is:

The Ok and the Red.

An Ok hwich stud on the sid ov a bruk woz torn up hi the rüts in a storm, and az the wind tuk it down the stream, its bouz cot on sum Redz hwich grü on the bank. "Hou stranj it iz," sed the Ok, "that such a slit and fral thing az a Red shud fas the blast, hwil mi proud frunt, hwich til nou haz stud lik an Alp, iz torn down, rut and bransh!" A Red, hwich cot the sound ov thez wurdz, sed, in soft tonz, "If I ma be fre with yu, I think the coz ov it liz in yur prid ov hart. Yu ar stif and hard, and trust in yur on strength, hwil we yeld and hou tu the ruf blast."

For ð, th is used; th is for the corresponding voiceles consonant in *thin*, for which Saxon þ, heter Greek θ, might be used. Þ is capital for þ, Θ for θ. Where ng represents a singl sound, ligatured ng (ng) is used insted of ŋ. When n comes before a k-sound (c, k, g, x), it is sounded ŋ. The child shud be taut this til it givs it without efort. Otherwise, if preverd, ŋ may be used before c, k, g, x, as in *uncle, ankle, angle, sphinr*. The sampl is so like comon spelling that no transition stage is needed.

trial corner.]

A VERY GUD GERL.

Our mery litl doter
Woz climing out ov bed—
"Dont yu think that I'm a gud gerl?"
Our litl doter sed:
"For ol da long this luvly da,
And ol da long tumoro,
I havnt dun a singl thing
Tu giv my muther soro."
—St Nicolas.

Gd the doning, tung and pen!
Gd it, hops ov onest men!
Gd it, paper! ad it, tip!
Gd it, for the our is rip
And our earnest must not slakn intu pla:
Men ov that and men ov acsln, cler
the wa. —Anon.

KEY: a a a e i i o o o u u ü
as la at al al' al' al' al' al' I or ox no up put oo z

J, V AND G.—We wud hardly expect alfabetic improvement as late as 16th cent. Yet, about 1560, Pierre de la Ramee (Ramus) realized the confusion caused by using i as vowel and consonant in words like *jalousie, justice*, &c. Also the confusion of using u as vowel and consonant in words like *valour, vengeance, vertue*, &c. Consequently, Ramus substituted j for i, wherever i was to be pronounced like an aspirat [ʃ] as in *jalousie, justice*, &c. He also replaced u by v, wherever u was to be uterd like a labial, as in *valour, vengeance, vertu*, &c. J and v wer calld "Ramist consonants." Tho this distinction between i and j, u and v, was a decided improvement, Ramus did not liv to see it adopted; for the liberal savant was butcherd in Masser of S' Bartholomew, 1572. A publisher, Giles Beys, first used j and v in "Commentaire de Mignault sur les epîtres d'Horace," Paris, 1584. Next Louis Elzevir, a progresiv Dutch publisher, used Ramist consonants in his publications about 1650. It is to be hoped that in this 19th century wil arise a savant and publishers, who can appreciate the long-felt need of riting and printing Eng. as pronounced. The Greeks gradually aded letters to the ancient Cadmean 16 letter alfabet, and accents to the letters, as they felt the want therof: and about 240 B. C. the gramarian Carvilius aded G to Roman alfabet, probably to supply the want of a mild gutural. So the Jews introduced vowel points, the French accents, diëresis, cedilla, and the Germans umlaut. Hence alfabetic, digraphic and fonetic changes and additions to harmonize leter and sound ar no novelty, and English-speaking populations risk nothing and will not be calld radical in imitating their illustrius Hebrew, Greek, Roman, French and German predecesors.—Dr Weisse in *Eng. Lit. & Lang., N. Y., 1879, p. 359.*

COCO-NUT.—The Annals of Botany contains a short artiel by Prof. Balfour on the correct spelling of this word. Etymology and erly authority alike make "coco-nut" correct. "Cocoa-nut" is merely a relic of ignorance of those who supposed cocoa and chocolat obtaind from the coco-nut. This "ignorance, Madam, pure ignorance!" was unfortunately shared by Dr Johnson when he prepared his "Dictionary," and tho he afterward lernd otherwise, and in his 'Life of Drake' correctly rote coco, plural cocoes, this was after last edition of 'Dictionary' in his lifetime, so that he had no opportunity to correct his unfortunat and mislead' ing eror. Botanists, however, long continued to use correct form — some hav never ceast to do so. Prof. B. calls on them to unite to abolish the misleading 'cocoa-nut', and put end to mischivus confusion be-

tween *coco*, *cocoa*, and *coca*, three entirely distinct vegetable products. For *coco*, he is able to cite not only Johnson's own use as opposed to his dictionary, but the Laureat, who in 'Enoch Arden' rites:

The slender *coco*'s drooping crown of flowers.
Dr Murray also is quoted as riting, "I shall certainly use *coco* in the 'Dictionary' and treat *cocoa* as an incorrect by-form."

SHAKSPERE.—Shakspeare himself never claimed the plays. He did not put his name on the title-leaf of any of them; for the name on title-leaf is in every case "William Shakspeare," very often printed with a hyphen, thus, "Shake-speare," while three signatures to his will and two others to legal instruments, these being the only autographs we have, are in each case spelt *Shakspere*, which must have been pronounced *Shack-spere* [Shak'sper]. This seems to have been the accepted pronunciation in Stratford. In records of its Town Council the name of Shakspere's father occurs 196 times, and in not one instance is it spelt *Shakspeare*. It is given as *Schack-sper*, *Shackesper*, *Shakspere*, *Shaxpeare*, and *Shaxper*. In "the poet's" marriage bond it is "Shagspere".—IGNATIUS DONNELLY in *North American Review*.

TERCENTENARY, ETC.—I wud also refer to advantage of representing our language by sound; that is: truly, certainly and without doubt. You can scarcely hear an address in public in which there is not some variation between the speaker's pronunciation and another man's. Our president has accustomed himself to say *ter sen ten' ari*.—There is no harm in that, but it is an indictment against our alphabet and sp. His lordship has not noticed a law of orthoepy that runs thru language, namely, all long words ending in *ary*, *ery*, *ory*, are accented on fourth syllable from end. If his attention were called to that, he wud say *ter sent' a no ri*.—*Pitman*. It is doubtful whether Mr Pitman's advice will be generally followed; certainly his reasoning is not convincing. The majority of long words with terminations mentioned may be pronounced as Mr P. wud have them; but, as one takes tho't, a crowd of words present themselves to oppose his general statement. The following occur first to the mind: *anniversary*, *complimentary*, *satisfactory*, *dedicatory*, *congratulatory*, *ambulatory*, and they might be indefinitely increased.—H. DE LA HOOK in *London Times*. They are generally such as refuse accent on fourth syllable from end. The words that follow the general law are about 350, and those that are ranged under another law are about 50. The pronunciation *ter sen ten' a ri* wud carry with it centenary (*sen ten' a ri*), *sep ten' a ri*, etc. We shud thus almost lose the idea involv'd

in the root of the word. A few are accented on fifth syllable from the end, as *laboratory* (*lab' o' ri' o' to ri*).—I. PITMAN, *ibid*.

—English spelling simply disgraces civilization. We every now and then assume a theatrical attitude and explain to the world that we are a practical people; that we don't pretend to do any great feats in the airy realms of imagination; but if you want to realize what it is we are, set us a practical problem, etc. Here is a practical problem at the very hand of the Anglo-Saxon race, and has so lain for 1000 years. *Let them reform their spelling*. Within 300 years the gay Italian, the serious Spaniard, and the flegmatic Dutchman have taken stock of their instruments of speech, and have brought spelling into conformity, partly with fonetics, partly with common sense. In our day the plodding German has detected anomalies in spelling his language, and has culminated the only thunderbolt with which he is acquainted—a military ordinance—for their prompt and immediate elimination. But we? Well, we practical Britons go on year after year, and age after age, using the most absurd instrument of speech non to man; when asked to make some moderate changes for our own benefit and for the benefit, above all, of our children, we raise objections on the score of trouble.—St Helen's *Lantern*.

IOWA.—The State Teachers Assoc'n has adopted Amended Sp. in 13 words: *ar, bar, gard, shal, hed, definit, wil, gir, wisht, tho, catalog, thru*. The School Board of Grinnell over a year ago published a list of some 200 words with sp. amended mostly by omission to be used in schools under its supervision. The *Republican* (Cedar Rapids) says that if this reform is ever to be fairly and thoroughly tested it will have to be taken up by newspapers. It gives practical trial in its Tuesday issue, "hence the seemingly regardless spelling." It says: "Of course, the first thro't of our readers will be protest. . . . after they have got used to absence of final *e*, *ugh*, etc., can they bring themselves to say 'The changes are sensible and should be generally adopted?' That 's the question."—*Phonographic Magazine*.

SENSIBLE TEACHERS.—At Council of Eng. national union of elementary teachers, Mr. Greenwood moved "that in opinion of this executive, it is desirable that the decimal system of weights and measures be introduced into this country." The motion was agreed to without debate.—Paris "Teacher."

ART OR SIENCE ?

We find the "Code Ortografique," etc., by Albert Hertel (1867), prefaced by a letter of Girardin which furnishes reply.

Orthograpy is not a sience, says this eminent riter, for "To be esentially progresiv is what distinguishes Sience: it tends constantly to transform obstacks into means of advance, and problems into solutions."

Neither is it an art; since "What characterizes Art is personality, diversity," which is excluded from orthograpy.

Neither an art, nor a sience, it is something irregular, caotic, unsystematic, which consequently shud be reformd and made regular.

Here reformers divide. Shud we make an art of it, that is, leav it chiefly to inspir'n of each, or shud we make a sience of it—make precise and clear the rules on which it rests. Let us refer again to the article cited; it will enlighten us: "Art is what the artist makes it. Sience is independent. If speech were a sience it wud tend to become more and and more simpl, precise, and exact. Rules wud no longer giv way to excep'ns, but excep'ns wud giv way to rules."

Very wel! this is what we ask: that speling, insted of being a ridd, shud become a sience. Who will be on our side? Ar yu for Art, C(h)aos, or Sience?—E. FAIVRE in "Buletin Mansuel."

—In present orthog., irregular as it is, ther ar visibl certn laws which hav contributed to its formation. These laws, not individual judgment, shud be observd, wherever posibl, in making posibl changes. That which is familiar is, ceteris paribus, to be preferd to what is new. Where the comon Roman alfabet laks, we shud borro the required signs from existing caracters in modern alfabets based on the Roman. Invention is permisibl only in case of necessity. The Roman alfabet has become European, indeed universal, and is of the highest importance for sience as wel as comerce. It o't not to be alterd, as, e. g., in Pitman's system, to unrecognizability. It must be made, as far as posibl international, that is it must conform to "Roman values." Such conformity will make it easy for foreners to lern Eng., and wil serv thus in addition to promote its acceptance as the world-language.—FRICKE.

These pages hav a misionary object. Yur influence to extnd circul'n is solicited.

—Mr. M. M. Campbell, an octogenarian teacher, nearly blind, living in Boulder Colorado, has publishd three leaflets entitled "Open Letters" which ar worth sending for. They ar suitabl for awakening popular interest in need of an enlarged and improved alfabet. While urging the necessity of such, he does not giv his solution, but appears to favor State aid. He invites criticism. We quote: "The need of a comon language on erth is seen in the growng demands of comerce for a comon system of weights, coins and mesures. Sience and Art seek a comon nomenclature. Diplomacy and travel, telegrafy and mission work wud also be greatly aided by it, as wud evry other interest on erth."

. . . If government wil lead in this beneficent and much-needed reform, as it did a century ago with our confused Colonial curency, adopting for its own use some fixt system and giving to it the weight and authority of its own exampl, as it did in the mater of curency, then publishers and peopl wil unite in its use. And never wil posterity ceas to laud the administration that gave to them the great boon. Then our language (like our curency) wil be not local, variant and sectional, as it now is, but uniform and national and one day it wil become universal."

KEAP OUBT OVE DET.

A man in debt
No rest will gebt
Until he's in the tomb.
His cares will weigh
So heavy theigh
Will shroud his life with glomb.

He 'll practise guile;
And never smuile;
His head with pain will ache;
He 'll grieve and sigh,
And want to digh,
And thus his troubles shache.

But owing none
He 'll have more fone
Than any king that reigns;
He 'll feel benign,
His health is sign,
And he long life atteigns.

Without a doubt:
All can keap oubt
Of debt, if only they
Will never buy
To please the cuy
And cash down always pey.

—H

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