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The Committee on Publication reported that it had examined the communication of George Simpson on the "Fossils of the Helderberg Series," and that it recommended its publication in the Transactions of the Society, which was so ordered.

The Committee chosen January 6, 1888,\* to assist the Commission appointed by the State of Pennsylvania in the examination of the defects of English orthography, presented the following report, of which, on motion, the Secretaries were directed to have a sufficient number printed separately for general distribution, and the Committee was continued.

*Report of the Committee Appointed (January 6, 1888) by the American Philosophical Society to Assist the Commission on Amended Orthography, Created by Virtue of a Resolution of the Legislature of Pennsylvania.*

*(Read before the American Philosophical Society, April 5, 1889.)*

The literature of the subject of "Spelling Reform" is already extensive, and, for its purposes, sufficiently exhaustive. The most eminent filologists in England and America have contributed to it, and the published testimony in favor of reform is from filologists, linguists, scientists, statesmen, educators, editors and literary workers in general.

In view of this, your Committee recognizes that there are practically no new facts to be brought out to strengthen the argument on either side. What it aims to do, then, is to present, in a logical and conclusive manner, the known facts in the case, together with a consensus of opinions drawn from high sources, in so far as they illustrate the points at issue.

In this way, your Committee designs to review the whole problem, so that the objective point, the recommendation of the State Commission that certain simplified spellings be employed in the public documents, can be intelligently considered.

1. WHAT IS SPELLING?—According to Worcester, it is the art of "forming words by arranging their proper letters in due order." But this definition is as loose, and therefore unscientific, on the one hand, as it is popularly true and sufficient on the other. The main issue is bound up in the adjective "proper;" a secondary issue is in the word "letters."

To dispose of the latter, it need only be remembered, that "letters" are but the mechanical devices or symbols by which words are represented to the eye. Any one who can analyze a word into its fonetic elements can

\* Proceedings, Vol. xxv, pp. 1 and 18.



spell that word by a synthetic recombining of those elements. And this, in the truest sense, is spelling; for the spoken language is *the language*, while the written language is merely its mechanical representation to the eye.

It is not therefore, primarily, "arranging their *proper letters*" that constitutes the true spelling of words, but the proper arranging of their component sounds. Just so far, then, as the successive letters of the written word represent—and exclusively represent—those successive component sounds of the spoken word, just so far will they be the "proper letters" and the written spelling a proper spelling. That is, in true spelling every symbol should have but one sound, and every sound but one symbol.

2. WHAT IS ENGLISH SPELLING?—By the foregoing amplified definition, it is evident that the great bulk of our English spelling can be so called only by courtesy—only by a deference to a usage that has itself originally deferred to the ignorant printers and proof-readers of by-gone centuries. Orthograpy, in its root sense, can hardly be considered an element of Victorian English.

Indeed, as Lord Lytton well says, "A more lying, round-about, puzzle-headed delusion than that by which we confuse the clear instincts of truth in our accursed system of spelling was never concocted by the father of falsehood. How can a system of education flourish that begins by so monstrous a falsehood, which the sense of hearing suffices to contradict?"

"The greatest genius among grammarians," says Dr. March, "Jacob Grimm, but a few years ago, congratulated the other Europeans that the English had not made the discovery that a whimsical, antiquated orthograpy stood in the way of the universal acceptance of the language."

And why is it a "whimsical, antiquated orthograpy?"

Because, being unphonetic, it is unetymological. "It is the *sound* of the spoken word," says Skeat, "which has to be accounted for, and all symbols which disguise this sound are faulty and worthless. If our old writers had not used a fonetic system, we should have no true data to go by."

"We still retain much," says the same author, "of the Elizabethan spelling, which, even at that period, was retrospective, with a Victorian pronunciation. \* \* \*

The changes in spelling since 1600 are comparatively trifling, and are chiefly due to the printers who aimed at producing a complete uniformity of spelling, which was practically accomplished shortly before 1700. The changes in pronunciation are great, especially in vowel sounds. \* \* \* The shortest description of modern spelling is to say, that, speaking generally, it represents a Victorian pronunciation of popular words by means of symbols imperfectly adapted to an Elizabethan pronunciation; the symbols themselves being mainly due to the Anglo-French scribes, of the Plantagenet period, whose system was meant to be fonetic. It also aims at suggesting to the eye the original forms of learned words. It is thus governed by two conflicting principles, neither of which, even in its own domain, is consistently carried out."



And again, says Dr. March, "Caxton brought over a force of Dutch printers, who set up manuscripts as best they could, with many an objurgation. People ceased, at last, to feel any necessity for keeping sounds and signs together. The written words have come to be associated with the spoken words as wholes without reference to the sounds which the separate letters would indicate. Changes in the sounds go on without record in the writing. Ingenious etymologists slip in new silent letters as records of history drawn from their imagination. Old monsters propagate themselves in the congenial environment, and altogether we have attained the worst spelling on the planet. And we have been proud of it, and we are fond of it."

The actual condition of things, then, as Meiklejohn (late Asst. Commissioner of the Endowed School Commission for Scotland) puts it, is: Out of the 26 letters, only 8 are true, fixt and permanent qualities—that is, are true both to eye and ear. There are 38 distinct sounds (Sayce recognizes 40, others 32) in our spoken language; and there are about 400 distinct symbols (simple and compound) to represent these 38 sounds. In other words, there are 400 servants to do the work of 38. Of the 26 letters, 15 have acquired a habit of hiding themselves. They are written and printed, but the ear has no account of them; such are *w* in *wrong* and *gh* in *right*. The vowel sounds are printed in different ways; a long *o*, for example, has 13 printed symbols to represent it. And Isaac Pitman shows that in our magnificent tongue, with its wretched orthograpy, the long vowel *a* (in *father*) is represented in 5 different ways; the *a* (in *gate*) in 17 ways; the *ē* has 21 different spellings; the *oa* (in *broad*) is represented by 9 different combinations of letters; the vowel *ō* has 19 modes of representation, and the vowel "oo" (in *smooth*) has 21\*. Mr. Ellis gives a list of 97 signs and combinations to express vowel sounds, and having, in all, 319 meanings, or a little more than an average of three meanings to each sign or combination; and, further, he shows that 34 consonant signs have 79 uses.

As a consequence of all this (and more, if we were to stop to discuss it), an enthusiastic fonetist has calculated that the word *scissors* can be correctly spelt in 596,580 different ways, when it ought to be possible to spell it in but *one*, and that one obvious to a child or a foreigner who has never seen it in print nor heard it spelt. In brief, we have, says Prof. Whitney, "a greater discordance between the written and the spoken speech among us than in any other community of equal enlightenment. This is the whole truth; and any attempt to make it appear otherwise savors only of the wisdom of the noted fox who lost his brush in a trap, and wanted to persuade himself and the world that the curtailment was a benefit and a decoration. Every departure from the rule that writing is the handmaid of speech is a dereliction of principle, and an abandonment of advantages which seemed to have been long ago assured to us, by the protracted

\* Authorities differ somewhat in these figures. Dr. Thomas Hill places the number of symbols for long *a* (in *gate*) as high as thirty.



labors of many generations of the most gifted races known to history. \* \* \* That the written word in any case deviates from the spoken is a fault which may, indeed, admit of palliation, even amounting to excuse, but which it is an offense against all true science and sound sense to extol as a merit."

Such being the state to which our written speech has come, the natural question to ask is :

3. IS REFORM DESIRABLE?—Such a question is answered in its own asking. Reform or improvement is always desirable in anything. Whether it is possible or feasible is another question. But let us see, briefly, why an improved or reformed spelling would be desirable, by looking at some of the benefits that would accrue from it.

(a) *It would tend toward a greater uniformity in pronunciation.*—Upon this point Whitney says : "So loose and indefinit is now the tie between writing and utterance, that existing differences of utterance hide themselves under cover of an orthograpy which fits them all equally, while others spring up unchecked. No small part of the conservative force expends itself upon the visible form alone ; whereas, if the visible and audible form were more strictly accordant, it would have its effect upon the latter also."

(b) *It would greatly economize time, space, labor, and money.*

"The amount of saving would depend," says Dr. J. H. Gladstone, "very much upon the system adopted. The mere removal of duplicated consonants would save 1.6 per cent, and of the mute *e*'s an additional 4 per cent. In the New Testament, printed in fonetic type in 1849, by Alexander J. Ellis, 100 letters and spaces are represented by 83. As far as printing and paper are concerned, therefore, a six-shilling book would be reduced to five shillings." This is a saving of 17 per cent.

But the question of economy is more far-reaching than we might at first suppose. In the President's address before the American Philological Association, in 1874, he said : "The time lost by it is a large part of the whole school-time of the mass of men. Count the hours that each man wastes in learning to read at school, the hours which he wastes through life from the hindrance to easy reading, the hours wasted at school in learning to spell, the hours spent through life in keeping up and perfecting this knowledge of spelling, in consulting dictionaries—a work that never ends—the hours that he spends in writing silent letters. \* \* \* The cost of printing the silent letters of the English language is to be counted by millions of dollars for each generation. And yet literary amateurs fall in love with these squintings and lispings. They try to defend them by pleading their advantage in the study of etymology. But a changeless orthograpy destroys the material for etymological study, and written records are valuable to the filologist just in proportion as they are accurate records of speech as spoken from year to year." This brings us to the next point.



(c) *If some etymologies would be obscured, more would be evidenced and clarified, none could be lost.*

What is known as the "etymological argument" against spelling reform has been so often and so fully met by the scholars best qualified to speak that it would seem unnecessary to do more than allude to it here. And yet it is sure to be the first objection raised by the person of education, and even of scholarly habit, who has not made specific study of the subject. It is, indeed, at once the most plausible and the most baseless of all objections. Even if all trace of roots were lost from present forms, there would still be no danger of any such sacrifice of linguistic facts. But if none could be lost, so comparatively few would be obscured, while many false etymologies would be disowned, many true ones restored and made plain. This is an established fact among filologists, as will appear from the following, from Max Müller: "An objection often made to spelling reform is that it would utterly destroy the historical or etymological character of the English language. Suppose it did; what then? Language is not made for scholars and etymologists; and if the whole race of English etymologists were really swept away by the introduction of spelling reform, I hope they would be the first to rejoice in sacrificing themselves in so good a cause. But is it really the case that the historical continuity of the English language would be broken by the adoption of fonetic spelling, and that the profession of the etymologist would be gone forever? I say No, most emphatically, to both propositions. Because the Italians write *filosofo*, are they less aware than the English, who write *philosopher*, that they have before them the Latin *philosophus* and the Greek *filosofos*? If we write *f* in *fancy*, why not in *phantom*? If in *frenzy* and *frantic*, why not in *phrenology*? A language which tolerates *vial* for *phial* need not shiver at '*filosofer*.' What people call the etymological consciousness of the speaker is strictly a matter of oratorical sentiment only. If anybody will tell me at what date etymological spelling is to begin, whether at 1500 A. D., or at 1000 A. D., or at 500 A. D., I am willing to discuss the question. Till then, I beg to say, that etymological spelling would play greater havoc in English than fonetic spelling, even if we are to draw a line not more than five hundred years ago. If we write *puny*, *puisne*, we might as well write *post-natus*. We might spell *coy*, *quietus*; *pert*, *apertus*; *priest*, *presbyter*; *master*, *magister*; *sexton*, *saeristan*, etc." And from Prof. A. H. Sayce: "We are told that to reform our alphabet would destroy the etymologies of our words. Ignorance is the cause of so rash a statement. The science of etymology deals with sounds, not with letters, and no true etymology is possible when we do not know the exact way in which words are pronounced. The whole science of comparative filology is based on the assumption that the ancient Hindus, Greeks, Romans and Goths spelt pretty nearly as they pronounced. English spelling has become a mere series of arbitrary combinations, an embodiment of the wild guesses and etymologies of a pre scientific age, and the hap-hazard caprice of ignorant printers. It is good for little else



but to disguise our language, to hinder education and to suggest false etymologies." And from Henry Sweet: "The notion that the present spelling has an etymological value was quite popular twenty-five years ago. But this view is now entirely abandoned by filologists; only a few half-trained dabblers in the science uphold it."

Testimony of this kind is worth more than a logical array of facts to the average mind, because it adds to the cold fact, the fervor of the personal conviction of those whose convictions are themselves the result of the logic of facts. And just here we cannot do better than quote from Skeat's "The Principles of English Etymology."

"The old spelling was, in the main, very strictly etymological, because it was so *unconsciously*.\* In striving to be fonetic, our ancestors kept up the history of words, and recorded, more or less exactly, the changes that took place in them from time to time. But in the sixteenth century an entirely new idea was for the first time started, and probably took its rise from the revival of learning, which introduced the study of Greek, and brought classical words, and with them a classical mode of spelling, to the front; a movement which was assisted by the fact that the spelling was all the while becoming less fonetic. This new idea involved the attempt to be *consciously* etymological; *i. e.*, to reduce the spelling of English words, as far as possible, to an exact conformity *in outward appearance* with the Latin and Greek words, from which they were borrowed. But it was only possible to do this with a *portion* of the language. It was easy to do this where words were actually borrowed from those languages, as, for example, in the case of such a verb as *to tolerate*, which was now spelt with one *l*, in order to conform it in outward appearance to the Latin *tolerare*. But the words of native English or Scandinavian origin were less tractable; for which reason our writers, wisely enough, let them alone. There remained words of French origin, and these suffered considerably at the hands of the pedants, who were anything but scholars as regarded Old French. For example, the Latin *debita* had become the Old French and Middle English *dette*, by assimilation of the *b* to *t* in the contracted form *deb'ta*, precisely as it became *detta* in Italian. The modern French and the Italian have the forms *dette* and *detta* still. But in the sixteenth century the disease of the so-called 'etymological' spelling had attackt the French language as well as the English, and there was a craze for rendering such etymology *evident to the eye*. Consequently, the Old French *dette* was recast in the form *debte*, and the Middle English *dette* was respelt *debte* or *debt* in the same way. Hence, we actually find in Cotgrave's French dictionary the entry: '*Debte*, a debt.' Another word similarly treated was the Old French and Middle English *doute*; and, accordingly, Cotgrave gives '*Doubte*, a doubt.' The modern French has gone back to the original Old French spellings *dette* and *doute*;

\* "Conscious attempts at etymology sometimes produced rather queer results. Thus the M. E. *femele* was turned into *female*, obviously because men fancied it must have some connection with *male*."



but we, in our ignorance, have retained the *b* in *doubt*, in spite of the fact that we do not dare to sound it. The rackers of our orthography, no doubt, trusted, and with some reason, to the popular ignorance of the older and truer spelling, and the event has justified their expectation; for we have continued to insert the *b* in *doubt* and *debt* (properly *dout* and *det*) to the present day, and there is, doubtless, a large majority among us who believe such spellings to be correct. So easy is it for writers to be misled by paying too great a regard to Latin spelling, and so few there are who are likely to take the trouble of ascertaining all the historical facts.

“Most curious of all is the fate of the word *fault*. In Old French and Middle English it is always *faute*; but the sixteenth century turned it into French *faulte*, English *fault*, by the insertion of *l*. For all that, the *l* often remained mute, so that even as late as the time of Pope it was still mute for him, as is shown by his riming it with *ought* (‘*Eloisa to Abelard*,’ 185; ‘*Essay on Man*,’ i, 69), with *thought* (‘*Essay on Criticism*,’ 422; ‘*Moral Essays*,’ Ep. ii, 73), and with *taught* (‘*Moral Essays*,’ Ep. ii, 212). But the persistent presentation of the letter *l* to the eye has prevailed at last, and we now invariably sound it in English, whilst in French it has become *faute* once more. The object, no doubt, was to inform us that the French *faute* is ultimately derived from Latin *fallere*; but this does not seem so far beyond the scope of human intelligence that so much pains need have been taken to record the discovery. Another curious falsification is that of the Middle English *vitailles*, Old French *vitailles*, from Latin *victualia*. The not very difficult discovery of the etymology of this word was hailed with such delight that it was at once transformed into French *victailles* and English *victuals*. (See Cotgrave.) For all that, the Middle English *vitailles* was duly shortened, in the pronunciation, to *vittles*, precisely as Middle English *batailles* was shortened to *battles*; and *vittles* it still remains for all practical purposes. Swift, in his ‘*Polite Conversation*,’ has dared to spell it so; and our comic writers are glad to do the same.

“The form of the word *advance* records a ludicrous error in etymology. The older form was *avance*, in which the prefix *a-* is derived from the French *a* which arose from the Latin *ab*. Unfortunately it was supposed to represent the French *a* which arose from the Latin *ad*, and this Latin *ad* was actually introduced into the written form, after which the *d* came to be sounded. If, then, the prefix *ad-* in *ad-vance* can be said to represent anything, it must be taken to represent a Latin prefix *abd-*! It would be an endless task to make a list of all the similar vagaries of the Tudor remodelers of our spelling, who were doubtless proud of their work and convinced that they were displaying great erudition. Yet their method was extremely incomplete, as it was wholly inconsistent with itself. After reducing the word *tollerate* to *tolerate*, they ought to have altered *folle* to *folie*, as the latter is the French form; but this they never did. They should likewise have altered *matter* to *mater*, since there is only one *t* in the Latin *materia*; but this they never did. *They had got hold of a*



*false principle, and did not attempt to carry it out consistently.* So much the better, or our spelling would have been even worse than it is now, which is saying a great deal.

"I believe that the stupidity of the pedantic method which I have just described is very little understood; and that, on the contrary, most Englishmen, owing to an excessive study of the classics as compared with English (the history of which is neglected to an almost incredible and wholly shameless extent), actually sympathize with the pedants. But the error of their attempt will be apparent to any who will take the pains to think the matter over with a little care. Their object was, irrespectively of the sound, to render the etymology obvious, not to the *ear*, but to the *eye*; and hence the modern system of judging of the spelling of words by the *eye only*. There is now only one rule, a rule which is often carefully but foolishly concealed from learners, viz., to go entirely by the *look* of a word, and to spell it as we have *seen* it spelt in books. If we do this we hug ourselves in the belief that we are spelling 'correctly,' a belief which even good scholars entertain.

"Certainly the pedants put several words right, as they thought; but their knowledge was slight. They let the pure English and Scandinavian words alone; and, as we have seen, they mended (as they thought) the spellings of French words, not by comparison with Old French, which might have been justified, but by comparison with Latin and Greek only; and they were frequently misled by the fancy that Latin was derived in its entirety from the Greek. Thus they fancied that the Latin *silva* was derived from the Greek ὕλη, and accordingly altered its spelling to *sylva*. Hence, even in English, we have to commend and immortalize this blunder by writing *sylvan*. They seem to have had a notion that the Latin *stilus* was derived, of all things, from the Greek στῦλος (a pillar), which would be extremely inconvenient, we must suppose, as a writing implement; the fact being that *stilus* and στῦλος have no etymological connection. This blunder we commemorate by writing *style*.

"We write *science* because of its connection with the Latin *scientia*; and for this reason some writers of the seventeenth century, struck with the beauty to the eye of the silent *c* after *s*, admiringly copied in such words as *scite*, *scituation* and *scent*. The etymology of the two former was, however, so obvious that the habit fell into disuse; but the etymology of *scent* was less obvious, and so we write *scent* still! What, again, can be more absurd than the final *ue* in the word *tongue*, as if it must needs be conformed to the French *langue*? But when once introduced, it of course remained, because none but scholars of Anglo-Saxon could know its etymology. It is impossible to enumerate all the numerous anomalies which the disastrous attempt to make etymology *visible* has introduced. Yet this is the valueless system which is so much lauded by those who have made no adequate study of the true history of our language."

A long list might be added. For instance, the old *iland* had an *s* inserted because of its supposed derivation from *insula*. Old English *rime*



borrowed an *h* from a supposed Greek original, like *rhythm*, and gave us *rhyme*. The *l* has been inserted in *coude*, to make it like *should* and *would* for which there is a reasonable use of the *l*. Milton's *sovrän* (Latin *superanus*) was supposed to have to do with *reigning*, and was so transformed to indicate it, by writing *sovereign*.

Says March : " *Accurse*, earlier *acurse*, from Anglo-Saxon *â*- intensive, and *curse*, simulates by its unfonetic double consonant a Latin origin and the prefix *ad*-; many words are like it : *affair*, French *a-faire*, i. e., *ado*; *afford*, *a-forth*; *affright*, from *a-fyrhtan*; *affray*, past participle correctly *afraid*; *annoy*, earlier *anoi*, Old French *anoi*, from Latin *in odio*, and so on through the prefixes; *allegro* is transformed from Latin *alacrum*; *hurricane*, French *ouragan*, Spanish *huracan*, a word from one of the languages of the aborigines of America, doubles its *r* to persuade etymologists that it *hurries* the *canes*. The double consonants, never correct for pronunciation, are a nest of etymological blunders, and the digraf vowels are as bad. Somewhat different from these sheer blunders are those words in which their unfonetic spelling points to some remote derivation, but yet disguises the history of the words. To follow up the double consonants, a very large part of the apparent compounds of Latin prefixes suggest a mistake. The words are not really Latin compounds, but French. Many with *ad*-, for example, were made in French with the French *a*, and in French and Early English are so spelt. The double consonant is a modern insertion, which falsifies the sound and the history to give the remote school-Latin. Such are *accompany*, Old French *acompaaignier*, compounded of *a* and *compaignier*, to which there is no school-Latin word corresponding; Early English *acoint*, Latin *cognitus*, disguised now in the form *acquaint*; *acomplise*; *acomplish*; *address*, earlier *adress*, French *adresser*; *afirm*; *afix*; *afront*; *agrieve*; *alegeance*; *alie*, Old French *alier*, *alley*; *apease*, French *a pais*; *apraise*, *a preis*; *arears*; *asuage*; *aturneye*, *attorney*, etc. These examples, taken from the beginning of the alphabet, may well make the stickler for historical spelling look twice at a double consonant whenever he sees it.

"There are many words which have letters in them which contribute nothing towards ancient history, and falsify the present. Words ending in silent *e* after a short syllable are examples. This *e* tells no history, it is prevailingly an orthografic expedient to denote that the vowel before it is long; it lengthens *fat* into *fate*, *bit* into *bite*, *fin* into *fine*, *not* into *note*, and the like. Whenever it follows a short vowel, therefore, it is false as well as wasteful: *genuin* is standard English pronunciation, *genuine* is a vulgar corruption; *hav* spells the word intended, *have* should rime with *gave*, *slave*, *knave*, *rave*, etc. We ought to write *imbecil*, *medicin*, *treatis*, *favorit*, *hypocrit*, *infinnit*, *definit*, *indicativ*, *subjunctiv*, and the like. Several hundred words belong to this class, in great part learned terms from Greek or Latin, and common to many languages. To scholars they look more natural and scholarly, as the Germans and most of the Europeans write them, without the final *e*. This is one of the amendments which



gives best promise of general adoption. The Spelling Reform Association publish as one of their rules for immediate use, 'Omit silent *e* after a short vowel,' and five of the eleven new spellings recommended by the Philological Association are examples of it—*definit*, *giv*, *hav*, *infin*, *liv*. \* \* \* *Feign*, Old English *fein*, *fain*, from Old French *faindre*, has assumed the *g* of Latin *fin*go. \* \* \* *Fonetik* is the very Greek *φωνητικ-ός*, the natural old form of it in Roman letters; *φῶρ* is *fur*; *φάρι*, *fari*; *Fabi*us, *Φάβιος*, and the like. But when the Greeklings at Rome began to affect a pure Athenian accent, and retained in words newly taken from Greek the old sound for *φ*, which had been that of *p* followed by *h*, they wrote *ph* in such words to represent their way of sounding it. The fashion past away at Rome. The Italians, like the Spaniards, have returned to *f*."

"The first question is," says Prof. Max Müller, "in what sense can the present spelling of English be called historical? We have only to go back a very short way in order to see the modern upstart character of what is called historical spelling. We now write *pleasure*, *measure*, and *feather*, but not very long ago, in Spenser's time, these words were spelt *plesure*, *mesure*, *fether*. Tyndale wrote *frute*; the *i* in *fruit* is a mere restoration of the French spelling. \* \* \* The *b* [of *debt*] was likewise reintroduced in *doubt*, but the *p* was not restored in *count* (French *compter*, Latin *computare*), where *p* had at least the same right as *b* in *doubt*. Thus, *receipt* resumes the Latin *p*, but *deceit* does without it. To *deign* keeps the *g*, to *disdain* does without it. \* \* \* If we wisht to write historically, we ought to write *salm* instead of *psalm*, for the initial *p* being lost in pronunciation was dropt in writing at a very early time (A. S. *sealm*), and was reintroduced simply to please some ecclesiastical etymologists; also *newew* (French *neveu*) instead of *nephew*, which is both unetymological and unhistorical. \* \* \* There are, in fact, many spellings which would be at the same time more historical and more fonetic. Why write *little*, when no one pronounces *little*, and when the old spelling was *lytel*? Why *girdle*, when the old spelling was *girdel*? The same rule applies to nearly all words ending in *le*, such as *sickle*, *ladle*, *apple*, etc., where the etymology is completely obscured by the present orthography. Why *ascent*, but *dissent*, when even Milton still wrote *sent*? \* \* \* Why *accede*, *precede*, *secede*, but *exceed*, *proceed*, *succeed*? Why, indeed, except to waste the precious time of children?"

And Dr. James A. H. Murray, the editor of the mammoth new historical Dictionary, says: "Let us recommend the restoration of the historical *t* after breath consonants, which printers during the past century have industriously perverted to *ed*, writing *fetcht*, *blusht*, *pickt*, *drest*, *winkt*, like Shakespeare, and Herbert, and Milton, and Addison, and as we actually do in *lost*, *past*, *left*, *felt*, *meant*, *burnt*, *blest*, *taught*. *Laughed* for *laught* is not a whit less monstrous than *taughed*, *soughed*, would be for *taught*, *sought*; nor is *worked* for *workt* less odious than *wroughed* would be for *wrought*. \* \* \* The termination of the agent *our* should



be uniformly leveled to *or* (which is Old French), as already done in so many words, like *author*, *doctor*, *senator*, *orator* (all of which are adoptions from French, *not* from *Latin*)."

(d.) *The present so-called spelling is the chief hindrance to education, and a chief cause of illiteracy, ignorance and degradation.*—In his "Introduction to the Science of Language," Prof. Sayce speaks of the "vicious moral training afforded by a system that makes irrational authority the rule of correctness, and a letter represent every other sound than that which it professes." He further remarks that the "dissociation between sound and symbol to which the child has been accustomed from his earliest years, makes the English and the French notoriously the worst linguists in Europe. The inadequacy of English spelling is exceeded only by that of the Gaelic, and in the comparative condition of the Irish and Scotch Gaels on the one side, and the Welsh Cymry on the other, we may read a lesson of the practical effects of disregarding the warnings of science. Welsh is fonetically spelt, the result being that the Welsh, as a rule, are well educated and industrious, and that their language is maintained in full vigor, so that a Welsh child has his wits sharpened and his mind opened by being able to speak two languages, English and Welsh. In Ireland and Scotland, on the contrary, the old language is fast perishing; and the people can neither read nor write, unless it be in English."

The most complete and convincing exhibit upon the educational question is that which has been made by Dr. J. H. Gladstone, F.R.S., member of the School Board for London, and sometime President of the English Spelling Reform Association. Dr. Gladstone's statements are drawn from a thorough investigation of the National, British and Wesleyan schools as well as board schools, and from village schools, town schools and schools of the metropolis. He says: "From these data it is easy to calculate that an average English child, spending eight years in school, and making the not unusual amount of 400 attendances per annum, will have spent on an average 2320 hours in spelling, reading and dictation. \* \* \* The spelling of the Italian language is, as far as I am aware, the most perfect of any in Europe, with the exception, perhaps, of the Spanish. It is, in fact, almost strictly fonetic; that is, each sound is expressed by its own letter, and each letter has but one sound. \* \* \* I have gathered information from different parts of Italy, and fortunately the detailed programs of the instruction in elementary schools are published. From them it appears that children begin school at six or seven years of age, and that while in the first class, which usually occupies two years, they learn to read with a correct pronunciation, and do exercises in transcription and dictation. On passing to the second class they acquire the art of reading fluently and with intelligence, and dictation lessons cease at the end of the first four months. As the summer vacation lasts for two months, and all festivals, both civil and religious, are holidays, the number of attendances can scarcely be greater than 360. As religious instruction and exercises, arithmetic and writing occupy a large proportion of the



five hours *per diem*, ten hours a week may be taken as an outside estimate for learning to read and spell in the first class ; while in the second, reading may occupy five hours, and dictation two and a half hours weekly, but the latter only during the first half of the school year. This will give 945 hours, instead of 2320, and indicates that an Italian child of about nine years of age will read and spell at least as correctly as most English children when they leave school at thirteen, tho the Italian child was two years later in beginning his lessons.

“The spelling of the German language is incomparably better than our own, yet many mute letters are employed, and several sounds are capable of being represented in more ways than one. I have obtained information from educational authorities in various parts of Prussia, Saxony, Wirtemberg, Baden and Hamburg, and that with regard to all classes of society. The German child seems usually to begin his schooling everywhere at six years of age ; and the general testimony is that he learns in two years, if not in a shorter time, to read distinctly and correctly books which are not above his comprehension.”

After giving some details, he continues : “It appears, therefore, that the irregularities of German spelling, trifling as they are when compared with ours, greatly prolong the time required ; yet a German child of ten is about on a par, as to spelling and reading, with our fifth standard children, and is thus saved about two years’ time, tho he commenced to learn later.

“The Dutch, Danish and Swedish languages are spelt better than our own, tho their orthograpy is by no means perfect. The information which I have received from these countries does not give definit numerical data, but it shows that reading, at least, is acquired more quickly than with us. As to Sweden, I am assured, on the authority of Mr. Ekman, the school board inspector of the Upsala district, that ‘the children in the Swedish board schools as a rule are able to read fluently and to write correctly at the age of nine to ten years.’

“When, however, we turn to France, we find a language which is spelt much more systematically than our own, but has peculiarities which render its orthograpy almost as difficult. Consequently a very large amount of time has to be expended, as with us, in dictation and transcription. \* \* \* In reply to inquiries as to the comparative time a child ignorant of letters, but understanding English and Italian equally well, would take to learn how to read and write each language correctly, the principal estimated that the English language would require about twice the time of the Italian.

“From inquiries which I have made respecting the Anglo-German schools in London, the general result seems to be that the children acquire as great a proficiency in reading and writing German in eighteen months as they do English in two years. These schools are six in number, and some are in very poor, and some in respectable neighborhoods. My own visits, however, to some of these schools convinced me that not-



withstanding the great attention paid to the English language, the scholars never become nearly as proficient in spelling it as they do in spelling the German. \* \* \*

"If English orthograpy represented English pronunciation as closely as the Italian does, at least half the time and expense of teaching to read and spell would be saved. This may be taken as 1200 hours in a life-time, and as more than half a million of money (\$2,500,000) per annum for England and Wales alone."

Various experiments have been made by educators in teaching English spelling by a fonetic alfabet. The results show that children taught in this way acquire the ordinary spelling much more easily afterward. The latest expression upon this point is from the pen of Dr. Thomas Hill, in *The Forum* for April, 1889. He says: "Experience has demonstrated that there is no means so efficient as the use of simple reading-books printed in a truly fonetic manner, so that each sound has but one representative, and each combination of letters but one sound. The accent must also be markt, and in some cases the emphasis. When the pupil can read fluently fonetic English, he requires but a few weeks to learn to read the ordinary spelling."

"Three fundamentally different ways have been proposed of giving to elementary books a fonetic dress. First, by diacritic signs, such as are used in pronouncing dictionaries; secondly, by using an enlarged alfabet; thirdly, by a serious and well-considered imitation of those American humorists who apply the twenty-six Roman letters to a fonetically uniform use. The first method is not only expensive and troublesome to print, but trying to the reader's eyes, and not always applicable without respelling. The second is the mode of the Cincinnati alfabet, and is proposed in a new and improved form in Mr. Bell's *World-English*. The Cincinnati alfabet was tried long enough and extensively enough to give a practical, experimental demonstration of its immense value. We tested it thoroughly for six or seven years in the town of Waltham, Massachusetts, which then had about 800 children in the public schools. The effect on the school life of the town was very markt. The saving of time in teaching the children to read and spell enabled us to introduce exercises for the eye and the hand, thus cultivating habits of observation, skill in drawing and writing, and geometrical ability. The fonetic print corrected the brogue of the Irish children and the Yankee dialect of the American in a surprising manner. An improvement in the moral and intellectual tone of the schools was also noticeable, arising certainly in part from giving the children interesting reading, in place of stupid 'a, b, ab,' 'b, a, ba,' and instead of such absurd falsehoods as that of saying 'sea,' 'you,' 'pea,' spells 'cup.'

"Fears were exprest lest this method should injure the pupils' spelling. In order to test that question, I took pains to procure, several times, lists of words which had actually been used in Boston, Roxbury, and other places, with the percentage of failures on each list. Springing these lists,



without warning, upon classes of the same grade in Waltham, we always found our percentage of errors very much smaller than in other towns, sometimes I think only one-third as large. We also questioned each pupil in our high-school as to the amount of time which he or she had devoted in his or her whole school life to fonotypy and fonografy. Comparing these times with the percentage of errors in spelling, by the same scholars, we found that those who had read the most fonotype made the fewest mistakes."

One point more. Out of 1972 failures in the English Civil Service examinations, 1866 failed in spelling. The Right Honorable Robert Lowe, formerly Minister of Education in England, challenged the House of Commons that not half a dozen members could spell, off-hand, the word "unparalleled." The Earl of Malmesbury, having examined the State papers in the foreign office, says that no Prime Minister from Lord Bute to Lord Palmerston could pass an examination in spelling.

The foregoing exhibits seem to leave little room for doubt as to the *desirability* of reform. There is, however, one other factor in the discussion of such a theme. Let us call it the personal factor. How do such statements affect the opinion or judgment of men as individuals? Who cares or who has ever cared for, or believed in, the desirability, to say nothing of the possibility, of an amended orthografy?

A few years ago 130 British school boards presented a memorial to the Education Department praying for a Royal Commission in the matter; the British Social Science Association past resolutions favoring reform; the Philological Society of England and the American Philological Association, the Spelling Reform Associations, general and local, have been active in the cause. In 1875, Teachers' Associations of Pennsylvania and New Jersey took favorable action. In July, 1877, the State Teachers' Association of New York appointed a committee to ask the Legislature of that State to create a commission to inquire into the reform, and report how far it may be desirable to adopt amended spelling in the public documents and direct its use in the public schools. The Ohio State Teachers' Association also took action in favor of the reform. In 1878, a memorial was prepared to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States. This was signed by the president and ex-presidents of the Philological Association, and by filologists and professors in about fifty of our leading universities and colleges. The Department of Public Instruction of the city of Chicago took up the matter, and its Board of Education unanimously adopted a resolution: "That the secretary of this board correspond with the principal school boards and educational associations of the country, with a view to coöperation in the reform of English spelling." Other State teachers' associations and local societies have been similarly emphatic in their expressions. Indeed, any list headed by such names as Müller, Sayce, Skeat, Earle, Murray, Morris, Sweet, Whitney, March, Child, Trumbull, Haldeman, Lounsbury; and by statesmen, scientists, poets, educators, such as Gladstone, Sumner, Mill, Lytton, Tennyson, Trevelyan,



Thirlwall, Bain, Darwin, Lubbock, Harris, Barnard, constitutes "an authority" in English, quite as respectable as The Academy, in French. There is no lack of learned support; all real *authority* is for the reform. It is the right thing to do, but—

4. IS REFORM FEASIBLE?—First, we must remember that *The written language is not the language*, but merely a device for recording the language, quite within the scope of the reformers as well as the first framers.

Secondly, let us see *What has been done in other languages*. To quote again from the valuable report of Dr. Gladstone:

"In the Italian and Spanish languages the spelling has already been brought into almost perfect conformity with the pronunciation. In these, therefore, there is nothing to justify any agitation for further reform.

"Although little fault can be found with the German spelling as compared with the English and French, the educationists of that country and the governments of the different States have long been desirous of simplifying it. In 1854, meetings were held both at Hanover and Leipzig, which resulted in certain modifications of the spelling being rendered obligatory in the Hanoverian higher schools. This was followed in 1860 by Wirtemberg, which adopted a reformed orthography for its elementary as well as its upper schools; and by Austria in 1861, and by Bavaria in 1886. But the changes adopted by these several States are not the same; and so imminent did the danger appear of having a different mode of writing and printing in different parts of Germany, that a conference of delegates from the several governments was held at Dresden in October, 1872. This led to the Prussian Minister of Education, Dr. Falk, proposing that a competent scholar, Prof. von Raumer, should draw up a scheme; and this met with the approval of all the governments. The scheme thus prepared was privately printed and sent to the respective governments, and then submitted to a ministerial commission, consisting of Von Raumer and eleven other educationists, together with a printer and a publisher. The commission met in January, 1876, and approved of the scheme with certain modifications; and a report of the whole proceedings has been drawn up and printed." The reformed spelling is now required to be taught in all the schools, and the military cadets are required to use it in their official correspondence.

"Up to the beginning of the present century, the spelling of the Dutch language was very unsettled. In 1804, the movement for reform assumed a definite shape through the essay of Prof. von Siegenbeek; and the greatly improved spelling that bears his name was the only official and authorized one till 1873. Then some important changes were proposed by De Vries and Te Winkel, and these are now adopted by the different departments of government. I believe, however, that there are other systems which receive official sanction, and we can only hope that the result will be 'the survival of the fittest.'



"Similar movements for reform are taking place in the Scandinavian kingdoms. The Swedish spelling appears to be about equal in quality to the German, but for the last 100 years, or thereabouts, attempts have been made by competent persons to establish a purely fonetic system, and the Swedish Academy has adopted some of their proposals and embodied them in a model spelling book; but the government has taken no part in the matter, and there is consequently much diversity in practice. In Denmark, the movement originated with Prof. Rask and some other learned men and schoolmasters, and it has resulted in a government decree, confirming certain regulations with respect to double consonants, the silent *e* and *d*, the abolition of *q*, and some other points. These 'official' changes are not obligatory; but they are winning their way both in public and private schools. In July, 1869, a meeting of scholars from Sweden, Norway and Denmark took place in Stockholm, with the object of establishing a fonetic mode of spelling which should be common to the Scandinavian languages."

And there have been and are other similar movements, among the Slavic nations as well as the Romance-speaking peoples, including the French and the Portuguese.

Thirdly, *What has been done already in our own language?* Has any one dared to lay hands on our fetich and lop off a superfluity or restore a lost feature?

The Anglo-Saxon spelling was fairly fonetic, the chief defects being the double use of *f*, the double use of *s* and the ambiguous use of two characters for the two sounds of *th*. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries "the English language was practically respelt according to the Anglo-French method, by scribes who were familiar with Anglo-French;" thus, *qu* was substituted for *cw*, *c* for *s* (before *e* and *i*).

It was at this period that Orm, a canon of the order of St. Augustine, wrote "The Ormulum" (1215), which was a set of religious services in meter, spelt according to his own scheme. One peculiarity of Orm's method was the doubling of the consonant after the short vowel. Orm, or Orminn, may be called our first spelling reformer, and we have to thank him for preserving to us the pronunciation of his day. In 1554, John Hart, of Chester, England, wrote on "The Opening of the unreasonable writing of our inglish tounge: wherin is shewed what necessarili is to be left, and what folowed for the perfect writing thereof." This the author followed up by a publisht work in 1569, called "An Orthographie, conteyning the due order and reason, howe to write or painte thimage of mannes voice, most like to the life or nature." The object of this "is to use as many letters in our writing as we doe voyces or breathes in our speaking, and no more; and never to abuse one for another, and to write as we speake." In 1568, Sir Thomas Smith, Secretary of State in 1548, and successor of Burleigh, suggested an alfabet of 34 characters. This was followed, in 1580, by William Bullokar's book in black-letter, proposing an alfabet of 37 characters. Then, too, we must mention Sir John



Cheke, Chaucer and Milton. In 1619, Dr. Gill, head-master of St. Paul's school, published his "*Logonomia Anglica*," advocating an alphabet of 40 letters. In 1633, the Rev. Charles Butler printed an English grammar phonetically. In 1668, Bishop Wilkins published his great work, the "*Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language*," in which he gave the Lord's Prayer and the Creed in a phonetic alphabet of 37 letters. In 1711, says Sayce, "the question of reforming English spelling was once more raised, this time, however, in a practical direction. Dean Swift appealed to the Prime Minister to appoint a commission for the ascertaining, correcting and improving of the English tongue. His appeal, however, was without effect; and the next to apply himself to the subject was Benjamin Franklin, who, in 1768, put forth "*A Scheme for a New Alphabet and Reformed Mode of Spelling, with Remarks and Examples concerning the same, and an Enquiry into its Uses*."

It would seem that in this Hall, if anywhere, a reform advocated by Franklin is entitled, even at this late day, to a fair hearing and an intelligent understanding. Franklin's scheme, tho in some respects crude, has nevertheless the true ring, and is in many details accurate and scientific. It embraces eight vowels and eighteen consonants. There are special signs for *a* in *ball*, *u* in *gum*, *sh*, *th*, *dh*, *ng*. He considers that the alphabet should be arranged in a more natural manner, beginning with the simple sounds formed by the breath and with no help, or very little, of tongue, teeth, and lips, but produced chiefly in the windpipe. He omits as unnecessary *c*, *q*, *x*, *u*, *y* and *j*; this latter he replaces by a special character which is to follow and modify other consonants; preceded by *d* it produces *j* in *James*; by *t*, *ch* in *chevy*; by *z*, the French *j* in *jamais*. *g* has only its hard sound. There are no superfluous letters, no silent letters. The long vowel is expressed by doubling the short one. There are no diacritical marks. In general principles the scheme is sound. Had Franklin lived in the filological light of the present decade, he would have been a power in the good movement. He went, indeed, so far as to begin the compilation of a dictionary and the casting of the necessary new types. The latter were offered to Webster and declined by him on the ground of the inexpediency of employing new characters. This was in 1768. Eight years later he wrote to a lady: "You need not be concerned in writing to me about your bad spelling; for in my opinion, as our alphabet now stands, the bad spelling, or what is called so, is generally the best, as conforming to the sounds of the letters and of the words."

The next great American reformer was Webster. It would be out of place here to discuss Websterianisms. Suffice it to say that Webster had a lasting influence upon our spelling. Had he been more of a scholar his influence would have been vastly greater than it was. The trouble was that he tried to occupy both ends of the see-saw at once. On one end he sat as etymologist, on the other as analogist. He had "just enough of that half-learning," says Lounsbury, "which enables a man, when he



arrives at correct conclusions, to give wrong reasons for them. Speaking of Webster's orthographic changes, the same writer well says: "At best they merely touch the surface, and then only in a few places. But one effect they have produced. They have in some measure prevented us, and do still prevent us, from falling into the dead level of an unreasoning uniformity. By bringing before us two methods of spelling, they keep open the question of the legitimacy of each, and expose to every unprejudiced investigator the utter shallowness of the argument that opposes change. Slight as these alterations were, however, they met with the bitterest hostility on their introduction."

After Webster come Mitford, Archdeacon Hare, Landor, Pitman, Ellis, and Thomas, and then the mighty host who are leading the present Spelling Reform movement, which includes nearly every eminent English and American scholar. Indeed every one who consciously prefers to spell *parlor, color, music, public, develop, deposit, traveler, jeweler, wagon, woolen, quartet, controller, ake, ax, fantom, program*, proves that spelling reform is popular, and that the people prefer sense to nonsense, brevity to length, economy to waste, truth to falsehood.

The many devices introduced into the written speech during the past six centuries, demonstrate that there is no cast-iron law of language to prevent other devices from being introduced and accepted again.

Because the French scribes of the twelfth century understood that *c* before *e* and *i*, was soft, they substituted *k* for it when the sound was hard. About 1280 the rune "wen" was replaced by *uu*, and afterward by *w*. Accentual marks suddenly disappeared in the thirteenth century. Toward the fourteenth the rune "thorn" was giving way to the use of *th* and *hw* to *wh*—the latter, doubtless, due to the decay of the guttural *h* leaving the sound of *w* more prominent. Indeed, down to the middle of the fourteenth century, *h* had the force of German *ch*. As that decayed in sound, it was reinforced to the eye by a *c* as in *licht, necht*, or by a *g* as in *though*. The symbol *oa* disappeared in the fourteenth, but was revived in the sixteenth century. Another expedient of the fourteenth was to double the final *s* to show that it was not sonant—M. E. *glas, blis, dros*, became *glass, bliss, dross*. Another device for the same purpose was to substitute *ce* as in *mice, twice*, originally *mys, twyës*. Since Shakespeare, useless doubled consonants have given place to a single consonant in words like *pitty, linnen, marriner, widdow, pallace*. *Waggon* is now in transition to *wagon*. Duplicate final consonants with final *e* have given place to the single consonant, as *shippe, sonne, farre*. Useless final *e* has been dropt, as in *cheere, drinke, looke*, etc. Three new letters, *j, w, v*, have been introduced.

"About 1630, in opposition to the usage of all past ages," says Dr. Murray, "*u* was made a vowel and *v* a consonant, so that 'Reuiue vs, saue vs from euil,' became 'Revive us, save us from evil.'" Up to that time *u* final was a vowel, but *u* before a vowel was a consonant; when the consonant was written *v* the following *e* was no longer needed to distinguish it. Had the reform gone a little farther and dropt the *e* after the conso-



nant *v* we should have been spared many useless appendages to words like *have*, *live*, etc.

In the fourteenth century the system of doubling the vowels was resorted to, to indicate length. Since then *ck* has been substituted for *cc* or *kk*, and within memory the *k* has been dropt in words like *music*, *public*, etc.

Toward the end of the sixteenth century *i* was largely substituted for *y*, so common in Caxton. "In fact," says Skeat, "English abounds with such fonetic devices; no one objects to them so long as they are allowed to remain sporadic, irregular, and inconsistent."

Says Dr. Murray, "The whole history of written language is the record of such gradual and partial reformation. We know, for instance, what was done about 1500 by the systematic application of *ea* and *ee* to distinguish two sounds formerly both exprest by long *e*, and the analogous adoption of *oa* and *oo* for the two sounds of long *o*. And the slightest glance at the orthograpy of Shakespeare, Bunyan, or a Bible of the seventeenth century, will show even the most ignorant, what an immense amount of spelling reform has been done since then. Thus, to take at random a single instance, Psalm 106 (forty-eight verses), as printed in 1611, differs in 116 spellings from that printed in 1879, and the first chapter of Genesis, as now printed, differs in 135 spellings from the same version as printed in 1611. One hundred and thirty-five differences in thirty-one verses! tho the same version word for word. Yet there are people—some certainly fools only, but some I fear knaves—who, when spelling reform is mentioned, shriek, 'You are going to alter our language!' \* \* \* the fools not knowing, and the knaves pretending not to know, that the spelling in which they read these works [Milton, Shakspeare, and the Bible] is already a greatly reformed spelling."

Finally, "In 1883," says the report of the State Commission, "a scheme of partial reform was jointly approved by the Philological Society of England and the American Philological Association, and recommended for immediate use. Those changes were made in the interest of etymological and historical truth, and are confined to words which are not much disguised for general readers. \* \* \* Many propositions have been made for adopting part of these changes." \* \* \*

Among these is the progressive scheme used by "The Spelling Reform Leag," as follows:

1. Use the simplified forms allowed by standard dictionaries, as *program*, *favor*, etc.
2. Use the Two Words: *tho*, *thru*.
3. Use the Ten Words: *tho*, *thru*, *wisht*, *catalog*, *definit*, *hav*, *giv*, *liv*, *gard*, *ar*.
4. Use the Two Rules: 1. Use *f* for *ph* sounded as *f*, as in *alfabet*, *fantom*, *filosofy*, etc. 2. Use *t* for *d* or *ed* final sounded as *t*, as in *fiat*, *tipt*, *stopt*, *clast*, *crost*, *distrest*, etc.



5. Use the Five Rules: 1 and 2 as in 4. 3. Drop *a* from digraf *ea* sounded as short *e*, as in *hed*, *helth*, *sted*, etc. 4. Drop silent *e* final in a short syllable, as in *hav*, *giv*, *liv*, *forbad*, *reptil*, *hostil*, *engin*, *infini*, *opposit*, *activ*, etc. 5. When a word ends with a double letter, omit the last, as in *eb*, *ad*, *staf*, *stif*, *stuf*, *eg*, *shal*, *wil*, *tel*, *wel*, *dul*, *lul*, etc.
6. Use the Twenty-four Joint Rules of the American and English Philological Associations.
7. Use all changes recommended by the Philological Associations.

At a meeting of the Philological Society, April 20, 1883, it was voted unanimously to omit certain of the corrections formerly recommended, so as to bring about an agreement between the two societies. The following scheme of partial reform is now jointly approved by the Philological Society of England and the American Philological Association, and is recommended for immediate use:

1. e.—Drop silent *e* when fonetically useless, as in *live*, *vineyard*, *believe*, *bronze*, *single*, *engine*, *granite*, *eaten*, *rained*, etc.
2. ea.—Drop *a* from *ea* having the sound of *e*, as in *feather*, *leather*, *jealous*, etc.  
Drop *e* from *ea* having the sound of *a*, as in *heart*, *hearken*, etc.
3. eau.—For *beauty* use the old *beuty*.
4. eo.—Drop *o* from *eo* having the sound of *e*, as in *jeopardy*, *leopard*.  
For *yeoman* write *yoman*.
5. i.—Drop *i* of *parliament*.
6. o.—For *o* having the sound of *u* in *but*, write *u* in *above* (*abuv*), *dozen*, *some* (*sum*), *tongue* (*tung*), and the like.  
For *women* restore *wimen*.
7. ou.—Drop *o* from *ou* having the sound of *u*, as in *journal*, *nourish*, *trouble*, *rough* (*ruf*), *tough* (*tuf*), and the like.
8. u.—Drop silent *u* after *g* before *a*, and in native English words, as *guarantee*, *guard*, *guess*, *guest*, *guild*, *guilt*, etc.
9. ue.—Drop final *ue* in *apologue*, *catalogue*, etc.; *demagogue*, *pedagogue*, etc.; *league*, *colleague*, *harangue*, *tongue* (*tung*), etc.
10. y.—Spell *rhyme* *rime*.
11. Double consonants may be simplified:  
Final *b*, *d*, *g*, *n*, *r*, *t*, *f*, *l*, *z*, as in *ebb*, *add*, *egg*, *inn*, *purr*, *butt*, *bailiff*, *dull*, *buzz*, etc. (not *all*, *hall*).  
Medial before another consonant, as *battle*, *ripple*, *written* (*writn*), etc.  
Initial unaccented prefixes, and other unaccented syllables, as in *abbreviate*, *accuse*, *affair*, etc., *curvetting*, *traveller*, etc.
12. b.—Drop silent *b* in *bomb*, *crumb*, *debt*, *doubt*, *dumb*, *lamb*, *limb*, *numb*, *plumb*, *subtle*, *succumb*, *thumb*.
13. c.—Change *c* back to *s* in *cinder*, *expence*, *fierce*, *hence*, *once*, *pence*, *scarce*, *since*, *source*, *thence*, *tierce*, *whence*.



14. ch.—Drop the *h* of *ch* in *chamomile*, *choler*, *cholera*, *melancholy*, *school*, *stomach*.  
Change to *k* in *ache* (ake), *anchor* (anker).
15. d.—Change *d* and *ed* final to *t* when so pronounced, as in *crossed* (crost), *looked* (lookt), etc., unless the *e* affects the preceding sound, as in *chafed*, *chanced*.
16. g.—Drop *g* in *feign*, *foreign*, *sovereign*.
17. gh.—Drop *h* in *aghast*, *burgh*, *ghost*.  
Drop *gh* in *haughty*, *though* (tho), *through* (thru).  
Change *gh* to *f* where it has that sound, as in *cough*, *enough*, *laughter*, *tough*, etc.
18. l.—Drop *l* in *could*.
19. p.—Drop *p* in *receipt*.
20. s.—Drop *s* in *aisle*, *demesne*, *island*.  
Change *s* to *z* in distinctive words, as in *abuse* verb, *house* verb, *rise* verb, etc.
21. sc.—Drop *c*, in *scent*, *scythe* (sithe).
22. tch.—Drop *t*, as in *catch*, *pitch*, *witch*, etc.
23. w.—Drop *w* in *whole*.
24. ph.—Write *f* for *ph*, as in *philosophy*, *sphere*, etc.

"These recommendations are known as the 'Joint Rules for Amended Spelling,' or as the 'Twenty-four Rules.' They cover the main points as to which there is substantially no further question between the two societies or among reformers in sympathy with them. \* \* \*

"The rules thus derived necessarily differ in importance and in the extent of their application. Some are very comprehensive, some affect only limited classes of words, and some are mere lists of words to be amended. They are arranged in the alphabetical order of the letters omitted or changed. The rules proper may be reduced to 10.

"It should be noted that the rules do not apply to proper names, or to titles or official designations like 'Philological Association,' or 'Phonetic Journal,' while they may, nevertheless, apply to the individual words which enter into such designations, as *filological*, *fonetic*, *jurnal*.

"There are sufficient reasons against meddling with proper names and titles. They may well be left to adjust themselves to a fonetic standard when such a standard is established for common words.

"The rules for amended spelling form a sequence, in which each degree includes all preceding degrees. The Five Rules include the Eleven Words, and are themselves included in the Twenty-four Rules. The sequence is more gradually developed in the seven steps of the League pledge, according to which one may start, or stop, at any point, from a simple preference for the simplified forms already admitted by the standard dictionaries, to the adoption of all changes recommended by the Philological Associations. The several stages are all consistent with each other, and enable any one who has the spirit of progress in him to exhibit that spirit



in practical action, not only free from the risks of individual preferences or caprice, but with the knowledge that he is acting on the advice and in accordance with the practice of scholars of the highest eminence in English filology."

The report of the State Commission continues: "Without venturing to recommend any of these, or any orthographic novelties, the Commission would call attention to the fact that many words are spelt in two ways in our dictionaries, and that it is therefore necessary for a choice to be made between the different spellings. We find 'honor' and 'honour,' 'traveler' and 'traveler,' 'comptroller' and 'controller,' and hundreds of such pairs. In these words one way of spelling is better than the other on grounds of reason, simpler, more economical, more truthful to sound etymology and scientific law.

"The Commission respectfully submits that the regulation of the orthography of the public documents is of sufficient importance to call for legislative action, and that the public printer be instructed, whenever variant spellings of a word are found in the current dictionaries, to use in the public documents the simpler form which accords with the amended spelling recommended by the joint action of the American Philological Association and English Philological Society."

It is this recommendation of the State Commission that is the objective point of our discussion. Your Committee is unable to see how there can be any difference of opinion upon the following points of the argument:

1. That the English language is grossly misspelt, and is therefore an obstruction to the etymologist; a needless consumer of time, money and energy; a falsifier of history; a perverter of the logical and of the moral faculty; a hindrance to education; a chief cause of illiteracy and a clog upon the wheels of general progress.
2. That either a complete or a partial reform is desirable.
3. That as partial reforms have been successfully wrought in the past and present centuries in English, and complete reforms in other languages, it is feasible to hasten and direct the still further improvement of our so-called orthography.

Your Committee heartily believes, with Prof. W. D. Whitney, that "it is altogether natural and praiseworthy that we should be strongly attached to a time-honored institution, in the possession of which we have grown up, and which we have learned to look upon as a part of the subsisting fabric of our speech; it is natural that we should love even its abuses, and should feel the present inconvenience to ourselves of abandoning it much more keenly than any prospective advantage which may result to us or our successors from such action; that we should therefore look with jealousy upon any one who attempts to change it, questioning narrowly his right to set himself up as its reformer, and the merits of the reform he proposes. But this natural and laudable feeling becomes a mere blind



prejudice, and justly open to ridicule, when it puts on airs, proclaims itself the defender of a great principle, regards inherited modes of spelling as sacred, and frowns upon the fonetist as one who would fain mar the essential beauty and value of the language."

But your Committee is also of the opinion that a complete or strictly fonetic reform, however valuable it be as an ideal, is as yet impracticable. A limited reform in the right direction, however, is not only practicable, but it has already found a foothold. Just how far this could safely be attempted in the State documents the Committee is not required to say. But it is certain that the recommendation of the Commission is as safely conservative as any recommendation in the direction of true progress could be, and that its adoption would be a wise and easy step toward uniformity and the simplification of English orthography.

Your Committee therefore offers the following :

*Resolved*, That the regulation of the orthography of the public documents of this State is of sufficient importance to call for legislative action ; and that this Society approves the recommendation of the State Commission that the public printer be instructed, whenever variant spellings of a word are found in the current dictionaries, to use in the public documents the simpler form which accords with the amended spelling recommended by the joint action of the American Philological Association and the English Philological Society.

In view of the fact that the Legislature will probably not take final action upon the recommendation of the State Commission at the present session, and as the Commission still desires the assistance of this Society, we would respectfully suggest that your Committee be continued with permission to report whenever it may seem desirable.

PATTERSON DUBOIS,  
HENRY PHILLIPS, JR.,  
JAMES MACALISTER.

The resolutions offered by the Committee were adopted.

The Committee on the *Codex Poinsett* presented a report, stating that the publication of the same was desirable, and laid before the Society estimates for the cost of its reproduction.

The Society ordered that the Codex should be published in its Transactions and further continued the same Committee, with request to prepare appropriate letter press to accompany the plates and to superintend the passage of the paper through the press.

Mr. Phillips stated that the *Physa Heterostropha*, of which he had spoken to the Society on April 20, 1888, had reap-



peared in the same place about three weeks since and promised to be very abundant this season.

Oral communications were made as follows :

By Prof. Henry F. Osborn :

1. Upon the Displacement of the Foot-bones in the Mammalia.

2. Upon the Perissodactyla of the Uinta.

By Prof. W. B. Scott :

1. Upon the Relations of the Uinta to the Bridger and White River Fauna.

2. Upon the Artiodactyla of the Uinta.

The question of printing the old minutes of the Board of Officers and Council was deferred until the next stated meeting of the Society.

Pending nominations 1183-1187 were read.

And the Society was adjourned by the President.

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*Folk-Medicine of the Pennsylvania Germans.*

*By W. J. Hoffman, M.D., Washington, D. C.*

*(Read before the American Philosophical Society, May 3, 1889.)*

Reverting to the period in the history of Pennsylvania, when the homesteads of the colonists were remote from one another, it may readily be conceived that ordinary social intercourse was impracticable. One of the first duties was considered to be the erection of a house of worship so located as to be accessible to the greatest number of people within a given area. Thus it generally happened that the gatherings before Sunday service were of social importance and were looked forward to with great interest as a means of exchanging the news and incidents of the preceding week. This practice still obtains in the rural districts.

Except in the villages, and larger towns, professional medical services were scarcely to be had, and hence in other than simple cases it was the pastor who was called upon to administer to the bodily as well as to the spiritual welfare of the members of his flock. Common complaints were treated by the application or administration of household remedies, the collection and preparation of which formed no insignificant part of the wife's duties. For this purpose various plants, roots, barks and blossoms





1889. "Report of the Committee Appointed (January 6, 1888) by the American Philosophical Society to Assist the Commission on Amended Orthograpy, Created by Virtue of a Resolution of the Legislature of Pennsylvania." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society held at Philadelphia for promoting useful knowledge* 26(129), 306–329.

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