

START THE CAMPAIGN FOR SIMPLE SPELLING

Managers Issue a Circular Showing Method to be Adopted.

ANOMALIES ARE REGULATED

The List of 300 Words Spelled by the
New System Is Received
with Favor.

By lopping off superfluous letters from 300 words, the Simplified Spelling Board has fired the first gun in its campaign. With every list of 300 pruned words sent out goes a postal card containing this pledge:

"I will use in my correspondence, as far as may be practicable, the simpler spelling recommended by the Simplified Spelling Board in its circular of March 21, 1906."

The man who signs the postal card and returns it to 1 Madison Avenue has his name placed on the files, and thereafter he will receive all publications as they appear. Already, says the Secretary of the board, many favorable responses have been received.

Among the forms recommended are tho, altho, thru, thruout, ax, kist, (for kissed,) stept, stopty, wo, thoro, clipt, fixt, nipt, propt, pur, (for purr,) and husht. Words in which -t is substituted for -ed form the greater part of the vanguard. Taken as a whole, the changes are not violent, and any one who fears to have his etymological sensibilities shocked will meet an agreeable surprise. Classical authorities are cited to show that many of the so-called new forms are not really new, but were gradually changed by the adoption of imperfect standards. If Milton wrote "confest" and if Shakespeare, Bunyan, and Burns wrote "crost," why, asks the Simplified Spelling Board, in effect, should present-day citizens raise the cry that history and etymology are being outraged?

As the leaflet accompanying the list of 300 words points out, many of them are already in common use; some of these are honor for honour, jail for gaol, flavor for flavour, center for centre, draft for draught, skilful for skillful, sextet for sextette, and wagon or waggon.

The arguments advanced by the Simplified Spelling Board do not leave, apparently, a leg for its critics to stand on. A circular, entitled "A First Step," says:

Some of those who would like to see our spelling made simpler fear that this will obscure the derivation of words; but all etymologists deny the statement and repudiate the argument. Etymology is history, and is now secure in innumerable books. Some object to any change, not realizing that change—much of it in the nature of simplification—has been almost continuous in the history of English spelling. We do not print Shakespeare's or Bacon's words as they were written; and surely no great catastrophe to English literature or to the literary character of the language will happen if our successors find—as they certainly will—as great or greater differences between their spelling and that of the present day.

In familiar correspondence many simplified forms are now used which shock no one's nerves, and in the most emotional poetry such forms as dropt, stept, prest (Tennyson) are printed without attracting attention. It is probable that if all English words were printed to-morrow in the simpler forms which they will unquestionably bear a hundred years hence, it would take a very little while for us all to become accustomed to them.

Millions of dollars are wasted every year, says the Simplified Spelling Board, through the typewriting and printing of useless letters. And the gradual simplification is expected to save money and time as well as aid the spread of English as a universal language.

"The recommendations of the board will be announced from time to time as its plans mature," says the circular. "In this preliminary circular it desires merely to ask those who sympathize with its aims to take an initial step. There is inclosed a list of 300 of the commonest words, (not the complete list, which amounts to thousands,) of which different spellings are authorized by the leading dictionaries or by the usage of eminent men of letters, the simple forms being printed in the first column and the more complex forms in the second."

Then in black-faced type comes the list of the members of the board. The first ten names are Brander Matthews, E. Benjamin Andrews, O. C. Blackmer, David J. Brewer, Nicholas Murray Butler, Andrew Carnegie, Samuel L. Clemens, ("Mark Twain,") Melvil Dewey, Isaac K. Funk, and Lyman J. Gage. Altogether there are twenty-eight on the board.

The pamphlet containing the list of 300 words has an introduction which explains the plan on which they were chosen. The introductory paragraphs say in part:

The anomalies and perversities of English spelling are obvious enough, and call loudly for regulation. But the very fact that some spellings are anomalous implies that the other spellings are more or less regular, and this is true. The majority of English words are spelled according to ascertainable analogies, and thus fairly regular. Words like eminent, prominent, evident, protestant, memorial, terrestrial, practical, astronomical, ability, peculiar, tedious, and previous, &c., are approximately phonetic as to the short vowels which are concerned in these words.

They would not present many difficulties if the learner were not confused by a host of other words with other analogies. Any one can see that blinn, bunn, butt, are out of accord with the rule established by the innumerable words like pin, pun, cut, and that centre, metre, fibre, are out of accord with the rule established by center, number, timber. So likewise dript, diept, snapt, drest, prest, though not actually less common than dripped, dropped, dressed, pressed, are more in accord with the prevailing analogy of p or s before a t sound, which appear in apt, host, boast, best, nest, rust, &c.

Publishers are blamed for the adoption of less simple forms than those found in the original editions of Milton, Dryden, Burns, Scott, Byron, and other writers.

"The habit of present publishers," says the circular, "of permitting their proofreaders to 'adopt' some imperfect standard like the older dictionaries as an inflexible rule, and to alter the text of the standard authors when a new edition is made to suit his 'pref-

erence' serves to conceal from the reader the real spelling of the author himself.

"Happily, however, there are many hundreds of words in which this process of stereotyping irregular or anomalous forms has not prevailed, and in which a choice still lies open between a simple or normal form, and a less simple or anomalous form. It has been thought wise to print a partial list of the words now spelled in two or more ways, with a view to informing the public of the facts, and of ascertaining how far intelligent readers will concur in the effort to establish the simpler forms."

Below are given some of the words sent out by the Simplified Spelling Board. Many are omitted because it requires only one or two of a certain class to indicate the general plan. The forms in the first column are to be used instead of those in the second:

abridgment	abridgement
accouter	accoutre
accurst	accursed
address	addressed
adz	adze
anesthetic	anaesthetic, anæsthetic
antipyrin	antipyrine
apprize	apprise
arbor	arbour
artizan	artisan
assize	assise
bark	barque
brazen	brasn
bun	bunn
caliber	calibre
carest	caressed
catalog	catalogue
center	centre
clapt	clapped
claspt	clasped
coquet	coquette
crost	crossed
crusht	crushed
cue	queue
curst	cursed
cutlas	cutlass
dasht	dashed
defense	defence
demagog	demagogue
dipt	dipped
discust	discussed
dram	drachm
drest	dressed
eolian	æolian
exprest	expressed
gagc	gauge
gild	guild
gipsy	gypsy
gript	gripped
kist	kissed
lookt	looked
mama	mamma
mist	missed
past	passed
possest	possessed
profest	professed
rapt	rapped
rime	rhyme
saber	sabre
silvan	sylvan
sulfate	sulphate
sumac	sumach
surprize	surprise
tapt	tapped
vext	vexed
wisht	wished
wrapt	wrapped