

Communications.

For the Potter Journal. Letters on Phonetics. No. 5. Objections.

Any new theory which is advanced, and improvements suggested, have always met with more or less objections, and many of the objections have as often been more fanciful than real.

The first objection which is generally raised by the learned ones, is the etymological objection. Ben Franklin has answered this objection fully and so clearly that we will copy his own remarks: "Etymologies" says he "are at present very uncertain; but such as they are the old books would still preserve them, and etymologists would there find them. Words, in the course of time, change their meanings as well as their spellings and pronunciations, and we do not look to etymology for their present meanings. If I should call a man a knave and a villain, he would hardly be satisfied with my telling him that one of the words originally signified only a lad or servant, and the other a plowman, or the inhabitant of a village."

If etymology is so important and the present spelling so necessary for studying it, why is it that the more Latin and Greek scholar is unable, from the orthography of the words in the Lord's Prayer, to tell the history, derivation and meaning of more than two or three, as trespasses, temptations, deliver, glory, and even here will be most probably in error, as he may be inclined to give to the Latin what belongs to the French.

Does not this show that the spelling alone does not give the required information, but only the spelling with much other learning?

The study of etymology is a deep study, and requires laborious and patient investigation to become masters of it—and one of the greatest etymologists now living, said a short time since that he should study it but little in the future, as his study could be spent better, and his energies directed to a more important channel.

But we will allow, for the sake of the argument, that phonetic spelling does totally destroy etymology. How many of the human family would be deprived of the (questionable) blessing? It is a lamentable fact that a very large number of persons of these United States cannot read.

And a very large number also are very poor readers. The loss of etymology to these two classes would be nothing, but the acquisition of phonetics would be an inestimable gain.

Then, a large proportion of those who justly claim to be learned or liberally educated, know nothing comparatively of this etymology,—at least they make but little use of their knowledge—for, when called upon to give the etymology or derivation of a word, they cannot do it without referring to a Dictionary, which any one can do who can read.

We see the number who would be affected by a loss of etymology would be very small indeed. Then here comes the important question. Is it right, in order to accommodate a very few, to incommode and keep in ignorance the masses? The philanthropist would say no!—but adopt the motto, "The greatest good for the greatest number." No one, from the spelling alone, can trace the slightest resemblance between an English, French, Latin, Greek, Sanscrit, Zend, or Hebrew word. The difference of alphabet effectually conceals this connection. Etymology deals with words themselves and not their accidental orthographies.

It is only the half-learned, then, or the half-learned on this point, who fear any injury to etymology, from the adoption of phonetic spelling, which on the contrary will be found one of the most favorable circumstances which could ensue, to the study of true comparative philology. So we see the etymological objection is no objection at all. PHONO.

For the Potter Journal. Sound.

We are too apt to take such things for granted, as have an ancestral sanction. Though utterly inefficient to the needs of to-day, yet they are reverently adopted as laws of light and life to us as progressivists. We kneel before the mossy idol of antiquity shrined among heroic memories of the past, while the chantings of veneration render us oblivious to the realities of the fresh, and ever living present. We heap on that venerated altar, the bright opportunities of present and future good. Fallen monuments, scattered splendors, obsolete customs,—what are they but so many evidences of the evanescent character of all human greatness, when not founded upon enduring principles? It is not pretended that the subject which gave rise to the foregoing remarks, is of paramount importance in itself, yet an investigation of its premises may serve a high purpose. It is an opinion somewhat prevalent even among intelligent people, that sound may be evolved independently of the hearing. This we consider an error, resulting from an imperfect conception of the nature of that phenomenon. Every movement, every circumstance, from the revolutions of a planet round its centre, to the winking of an eye, is and must be conformable to laws or fixed conditions. Nothing can be perfect without the sum of its essential parts. Though the elements of every possibility may lie somewhere in the storehouse of nature, yet nothing definite is produced until they are brought into certain relations with each other. For there is no such thing as a separate entity.—Nothing is independent. The relations

of the universe are infinite, yet, complicated as they are and closely interwoven with each other, the obliteration of a single atom would mar the harmony of heaven. Remove the conditions which support a fact and you destroy it as such a fact; and the term by which it was designated as a whole, is not applicable to its separate parts. Although cold water and steam may each be resolved into the other, yet cold water is not steam, and vice versa. It would be a palpable absurdity to call the materials of which a house is composed a house, while yet untouched by the hand of art. The same is true of all natural phenomena. The defenders of the independent-sound idea represent a single one or two of the elements of sound by the same term which can only be properly applied to a combination of all its elements. A sound cannot be evolved without the aid of an organ of hearing; for the two are as nearly synonymous as may be. To their existence the presence of a mental faculty and its physical organ is indispensable. Earth, air and water are all mediums capable of transmitting vibrations or motion, but they are simply vibrations and cannot constitute sound until they fall upon the brain. Even at a glance it is evident that at least three conditions are necessary to build its phenomenon. Namely, an agent, a medium, and a recipient. In the case of a clock striking, the hammer and wires are the agent, intervening atmosphere the medium, and an auditory serve the recipient. The removal of either of those conditions would be destructive of sound. Neither of them can produce it alone; neither is it self-creating or self-sustaining; but dependent for its manifestation on a unity of forces. Motion is the *primum mobile* of sound, yet the latter is not the inevitable result of the former; thus plainly evincing that it is dependent on the nature of its recipient whether a similar action will produce a similar result. In vain do they say the clock makes just as much noise when we are absent, as when we are in its presence. The only difference is we cannot hear it, (thus virtually acknowledging the necessity of their presence to its formation).—It makes no noise, simply because of the absence of one of the constituent parts of sound. Their mistake in this matter, consists in viewing ourselves as separate from the universal plan, and in adopting the language of convenience for that of philosophy. The phenomena of sound, in common with all others, is not, (as some suppose) an inherency of the substances producing it, but the result of joint action on the part of natural forces. These phenomena,—what are they but the peculiar relation we have assumed, toward the rest of the universe? So close is the Divine economy, that the very medium through which we know the outer world, becomes merged into the outer world itself. Hence the absurdity of blotting out a share of Nature's perfections, (separating ourselves from sound), and then looking for the same results as before. In this case, as in others, for the sake of convenience, we often refer to a part by the same term which philosophy assigns to the whole. Were every auditory nerve in the universe, deadened on the instant, the thunder of Niagara would be as the stillness of death. Happy are we in the possession of faculties which are as fingers to touch the keys of the organ of Nature. Without them, Earth were a blank, with them, images and sounds of life are constantly being reproduced by their mutual action upon each other. H. P. S.

When is a Man a Man?

Resolved, That the man who drinks intoxicating liquor is not a man.

The issue is joined,—“A Friend of Man” having spoken at length upon the Negative. He has spun out his logical arguments farther than I anticipated, underscoring nearly half his words, to give them force. He says on the start, “When is a Man, a Man?” I’ll tell him. Before he disgraces the dignity of his MANHOOD. Before he tarnishes his name by drunkenness, or any other crime; before he resolves that he will drink. He says “he must be a man, or he could not resolve.” Sir, is he a man who resolves to commit a murder, although he does not succeed? Is he not a murderer? and, is a murderer a man? Does the essence of a man who was made after the image of God dwell in the breast of a murderer? So of a felon, a libertine, a traitor. Is not his reason prostrated before he makes those resolves? I should think from the drift of my opponent's article, that guilt can never be attached where there is no overt act. Our Saviour says: “He that looketh” &c., “hath committed adultery already in his heart.” It is the faithful discharge of the functions, that make the man, the father, the mother, the minister, the president, &c. Without this, it is only a name, a nominal name, without the substance. A man can be a man, no longer than he performs the duties that devolve upon him. How long can a minister be called a minister? Just so long as he utolds the mysteries of God's word, to preach Christ, to save souls from death and to keep himself unsullied from the world. Again he says, “that drunkards are men, because they can be reclaimed.” He unfortunately left out the adverb, partially. Can a once fallen man be restored to the entire confidence of the people.—The poets may sing: “Man tarnishes his name, And brightens it again.”

But never, never, can he restore it to B. The expression referred to was ours not the “Friend of Man's.” We adopted it for a heading, as we do for this article. [E.]

its former lustre. This “reclaiming it again” is dangerous doctrine, and shows the low state of society in which he who advocates it lives. In the more polished and refined, where virtue's banners are always unfurled, it does not, cannot exist. It is the same as THE SALE OF INDULGENCES.

Again, he says, “he is a man, because he eats and drinks.” I always supposed that animals both eat and drink, and that a man either with or without reason does the same. Again, “He is a subject of law, the same after drinking as before.” I find my article will be lengthy if I follow him through. But I have answered his question by telling him what he must, and what he must not do to be a man, and that the same principle applies to every name and title on earth. And now to notice his closing remark. He rebukes me for my vindictive style of writing; says I must not “nick-name.” Well, I suppose he is easily hit, but I do not dwell in a glass house, and if he had read the preceding *N. Democrat*, he would have excused me for that awful “nick-name.” Still, I must admit that “Pope Cotter” has nothing to do with the resolution, neither has a Cotton Pope, or a Cotton Printer, or a Printer stuffed with Cotton, or, still more appropriate, a Printer that prints for the Cotton market.

The “American Presbyterian” Encouraged.

MR. EDITOR.—Having some time ago prepared an article, designed to correct some misstatements, which were published in the “American Presbyterian” (of Philadelphia,) in an article headed “Divorces in Northern Pennsylvania” &c., and sent to the editors for publication; it has not, so far as I can learn, been deemed worthy of notice. To satisfy myself of this I wrote to them the following note enclosing a post stamp, dated Jan. 25th, 1859.

EDITORS OF AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN. Gents: I sent to you for publication an article designed to correct some misstatements which were published in your paper of June 17th, 1858, relative to Divorces in Northern Pennsylvania, &c. I am not aware that it has been published, as I have not received a copy of your paper containing it. If you have not published it, will you please inform me why? Please answer, and oblige, yours truly, DAVID B. BROWN.

To this note I have received no answer, and am left still in the dark as to its destiny, only that I suppose it was deemed by them not worthy of notice. But, as the *American Presbyterian* is not the only source of communication with the world, nor its editors the only men to say what falsehoods shall pass for truth without being contradicted, I am happy that in our own immediate place there are those not afraid to tell the real truth; a place, too, included in the sweeping assertions of the article alluded to. If we have been denied the privilege of contradicting the falsehoods abroad; it is more than compensated by the enhanced value of contradicting them on the spot where they are said to exist. For this purpose then I send you a copy of the article which (it seems) could find no place in the *American Presbyterian*.

DIVORCES IN NORTHERN PENNSYLVANIA.

Messrs. EDITORS: In your paper of June 17th 1858 there is an article under the above caption which in justice to the people ought to be placed in a true light. It is there stated that “For a number of years past the courts in the border counties has been crowded with divorce cases from New York;” and that “Every court in these counties has from two to a dozen such cases to dispose of each term.” These are sweeping statements, and, if true, would show a deplorable state of society. But the truth, bad as that is, shows things in a more favorable light. In Potter County (where the author of your article resides) there have been since Oct. Term 1847 (a period of eleven years) twenty-four divorces granted by the court as shown by their records. Now we have no disposition to say that any one of them is the truth to take place; but how wide is the number range between eighty-eight and five hundred and twenty-eight! The McKean County court records show that there have been eleven divorces granted in ten years. Then, in regard to that county, the statements in your paper can in no wise apply. With respect to Tioga and Warren counties, I have not received the number of cases from their records; but I have conversed with a number of gentlemen who attend their courts regularly, and have for a great number of years, and who know what they say; and their testimony is, that there are not one-half of the cases of divorce in these counties as there are in Potter County. In regard to the charge of cohabitation made against the people, I can say that during a residence among them of thirteen years, I can testify that the assertion is false. That one or two cases of unlawful marriages might be found in the county is very possible; but that it is characteristic of the people, (as the article would have us believe) is not true. The whole article is a wanton attempt to injure the people of these counties in the estimation of those abroad. But the most remarkable feature of the whole thing is, that the author of the article gained all his knowledge of the people in the incredible short stay amongst us of nine months! Altho' he said so much, he seems to indicate that he would have said more “if I had time.” We feel sorry that he did not devote what time he had to a more useful purpose. Our own view of this is, that had he valued time and truth as he ought to, he never would have written either the article alluded to nor the account of the state

of religion contained in the same paper. It says “Ten or twelve conversions have taken place, mostly in our congregation—nine united with the church, &c.” The truth is not one conversion has taken place during the time specified so say (some of) the members; (if we are to believe them.) Nine united with the church, five by letter and four on profession of their faith; but not one of these four pretend to have been converted in connection with the church; so each of them positively declare; and this fact was not hid from your correspondent, when he sent you the account. All who read the account receive the impression that those nine were from among the number converted, which is not true. Should we venture an opinion about the people, we would say that they are friends of Temperance, and opposed to Slavery with all their might. Yours, &c., DAVID B. BROWN. COUDERSPORT, Nov. 15th, 1858.

Another Refutation of the Thanksgiving “Yarn.”

MR. EDITOR.—Being a member of the Teachers' Association and a teacher, I feel an interest in whatever tends to the weal or woe of teachers or the cause of education.

Having noticed a piece in the JOURNAL from the Northern Democrat, signed a Teacher, calculated to cast an odium upon the members of the Association, and the Superintendent in particular; and perceiving that gross injustice has been done by it I feel it a duty which I owe to humanity, to state what I know about the invitation which Mr. Blake sent to the Association, requesting the members of that body to attend a Thanksgiving sermon at the Presbyterian Church, on Thanksgiving day. I was present, and heard the invitation given out without a dissenting voice; neither did Mr. Hendrick or any one else say or do anything to prevent any one from going.

Now, if Mr. Hendrick has done anything worthy of death, why does not the author of that piece have him brought before Pilate, tried and condemned by at least two witnesses, and executed—which is the awful and honorable way of doing business—and not be circulating scandalous reports about him where he is not known; which is mean and contemptible.

My reasons for not attending church is this: I consider the influence of the Rev. Mr. Blake to have been on the side of slavery, which is the sum of all evil and the curse of our nation, and should, with its adherents, be discountenanced by all lovers of justice and humanity, and much more so by disciples of Christ.

A FRIEND OF RIGHT.

The Potter Journal.

COUDERSPORT, PA. Thursday Morning, Feb. 24, 1859. T. S. CHASE, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

Gen. Sam Houston, in a recent speech in the U. S. Senate, in reply to Mr. Iverson, said “there were more free-soilers made by the repeal of the Missouri compromise than had ever existed before on the face of the earth.” That's so—and the South propagated to a good advantage that time—even better than in their annual installment of “mixed products”—say 50,000 or 100,000 mulattos.

Lewis Mann, Esq., our able and efficient Representative at Harrisburg, was on a visit home the first of this week—having taken advantage of an adjournment of the Legislature in respect to Washington's Birthday, to pay his family and constituents a short visit. He looks well. He returned on Thursday morning, in order to be at his post in season,—determined to be faithful to the State and his constituents,—an exception to Representatives generally.

GEN. SAM HOUSTON most emphatically asserts that he has no Presidential aspirations, as follows, in reply to a charge by Mr. Iverson, of Georgia:

“I can assure the honorable gentleman that it is the last thing in this world that I would accept, if it were tendered to me; and for his satisfaction, and that he may not hereafter anticipate any rivalry on my part, in any aspirations that he may have, I withdraw myself from all competition by the assurance, that if every political party of this Union were to tender to me this day the nomination for President, I would respectfully decline. I have higher, nobler, tenderer duties to perform. I have to create a resting-place for those who are dear to me as the people of this Union, and who form part of them.” The General's post-office address when this Congress adjourns, will be Cedar Point, Texas, where he proposes to engage in the noble occupation of founding a grateful home for his family, and a pillow of peace and contentment for the closing of a long life, which has mostly been spent in the public service.

In the legislative proceedings of the 11th inst., we find the following under the head of “bills read in place.”

MR. MANN, one to repeal an act supplementary to an act to regulate the sale of intoxicating liquors, so far as said law applies to the county of Potter.

Also, one to provide for the collection of additional taxes in Bingham township, Potter county.

Under the head of “reports of committees” we find the following:

MR. CHASE, (Judiciary,) with amendment, an act giving justices of the peace power with a jury of six to hear and finally determine charges for crimes of a certain character.

At every session some effort is made in the direction indicated by the bill above alluded to, and each recurring session seems to increase the distance of so desirable an accomplishment. The project is certainly commended by common sense, and would be a great saving of county expenses in the course of a year, especially where the tastes and habits of people are in the direction of petty personal altercations—and family quarrels—to which faults, fortunately, the people of Potter county are not addicted. We are in favor of the passage of a complete bill of the kind reported by Mr. Chase above, and we are not without hope that it will be accomplished this winter.

“Alarming Proclivity” of Pennsylvania Legislation Manifested.

Progression has never, until very recently at least, been a fault of the good people of this commonwealth, either in social, moral or political action,—indeed, their conservatism has ever approximated to foginess rather than progression or reformism. At last, however, we are enabled to hold up our hands in holy horror and blanch our faces with well-placed terror, at the alarming proclivity of certain members of the Legislature toward progression—and in the face, too, of the loud-brailed threats of national disruption to which our ears are being daily accustomed, from the mouths of the advocates of the great national conservator of northern democracy, yeelped Slavery.—This progressive tendency of certain incautious and ungrateful Representatives in our Assembly is becoming so alarming that we fear the disruption of our nation, by the sudden forcing out of the great Key-stone thereby. Last fall the People indicated a similar tendency, and their representatives are becoming so audacious as to imitate the outrageous example set by their servants—the People—and only upon this hypothesis can we account for the appearance of the following in the legislative proceedings of the 14th inst., under the head of “bills read in place.”

MR. IRISH, one for the better security of personal liberty, to prohibit the use of the jails and prisons of this Commonwealth in the re-capture of fugitive slaves, and to prevent persons holding office under the authority of the same from engaging or assisting therein.

Now, we do not believe that there is a single Democrat in Washington, or Harrisburg or elsewhere, reflecting the political complexion of Pennsylvania's favorite son, who will not see “disunion,” blight and blood in the discussion of the question thus sprung upon the legislature by this Irish-man from Alleghany county; and we call upon the President to send five or six thousand U. S. soldiers to Harrisburg at once to prevent the prospective rebellion which the discussion of this bill is likely to produce on the floor of the House. We call upon Congress, also, to authorize a loan of \$30,000,000 to defray the “incidental” expenses incurred by the President in putting down the rebellion. (We do this, because we have no doubt but the President will find it necessary to purchase an island or two in the Susquehanna river, adjacent to the “agitated territory,” to which his army can valiantly retire in the event of a prospective battle, and recuperate their valor.) We trust, however, that we have not incurred a sufficient amount of his indignation, by the suggestion, to warrant him in sending a “naval expedition” up the Susquehanna and its branches, to keep us in subjection.) Congress should at once take the matter into consideration, as it owes its first duties to the personal wishes of the President, and then if it has any spare time, it can be devoted to the interests of the people—provided, always, that those interests do not conflict with the private wishes of his Excellency.

The Presidential “organs” throughout the country, are requested to devote their entire columns to denunciation of this man Irish during the next six months, for his presumption. We are authorized to announce that the *Daily Union* will be under the necessity of regularly issuing an eight page supplement to accommodate the President's special messages in regard to this matter, which supplement will be under his individual editorial supervision.

Further, deponent saith not now; but we will keep watch of the matter, hoping, secretly and in fear, that the bill may pass and be signed by the Governor.

Temperance in Harrisburg.

A large and enthusiastic Temperance meeting was held at Harrisburg on the 13th of January, which was addressed by Peter Sinclair, of Scotland.

The account of the meeting, as given in a communication to the Harrisburg Telegraph, is so interesting, that we make the following extract, and point to it as a cheering indication:

“After Mr. Sinclair sat down the audience evidently seemed to feel that something should be done, and the President remarked that he was ready to receive any motion that might now be offered.

“R. F. Keltner moved that a committee of five be appointed by the Chair, to propose a plan for the immediate organization of a Total Abstinence Society; and that when we adjourn, we adjourn to meet at the call of the said committee.

“At the suggestion of the Chair, this motion was modified and then adopted, making the committee to consist of the Superintendents of the various Sunday Schools of Harrisburg, who now have a project on foot for the organization of total abstinence societies in their various schools.

“On motion of A. K. Fahnestock, Esq., paper and ink were immediately provided, and the Chairman having written a pledge at the head of a sheet of cap paper, an invitation was extended to the audience to come forward and “sign the Pledge.”—After a moment's pause the roll was broken; one of the young men present, Mr. Edward T. Tunis, nobly stepped forward, and amidst the cheers of the audience, was the first to put his signature to the pledge. His worthy example was soon followed by others, and before the meeting adjourned eighty-two signatures were obtained. During the signing of the pledge our veteran Chairman remarked that “he thought a little singing on this occasion might be good,” and proceeded to give out the lines of one of our old Temperance songs. This met a hearty response in the breasts of a number present, who twenty years ago were wont to pass many a happy season in the Court House, leading in song the delightful crowds who then filled our temperance meetings.”

Homestead Exemption.

The Senators from the Free States who voted (in effect) to kill the H. m. bill, by laying it aside to take up an Appropriation bill, were

Messrs. Allen of R. I. Fitch of Ind. Bigler of Pa. Gwin of Cal. Lane of Oregon.

Of these, Messrs. Allen (already superseded by a Republican), Fitch (squatter) and Bigler are known to have been decidedly repudiated in the late elections in their several States. Messrs. Gwin and Lane represent States where the Public Lands are freely appropriated to private use without paying therefor to the Treasury. In Oregon, the early settlers received 640 and 320 acres each merely for being settlers, without paying a thing therefor. It seems hard, indeed, that the representatives of two States so favored should be voting against the settlers of all other new States. But we must take things as we find them.

Supposing the vote on this occasion to represent fairly the several States represented therein—which is certainly liberal to the enemies of the measure—and the Electoral weight of the two sides compares as follows:

Table with 3 columns: For the Bill, Elec. Vote, Against it. Elec. Vote. Lists states and their electoral votes.

Total 149 New-Jersey, absent or silent.

—The accident of Mr. Cameron's absence, and the vote of Missouri's Senators against Missouri's interests and known wishes, alone prevent an overwhelming preponderance in this vote on the side of Free Homes. The vote of Mr. Fitch against the bill was not such as the Free Senators from Indiana would have given—not such as Indiana herself can give. A glance at the table above will suffice to show that the popular preponderance in favor of the Free Homestead principle is overwhelming. And now beg the Democratic politicians to ponder well this question—Can you afford to throw this question over into the next Presidential Election? You must see that the Free Home principle is destined to prevail—then why not give way at once and have the matter settled and out of the way?—N. Y. Tribune.

AYER'S AMERICAN ALMANAC for 1859 is now ready for delivery gratis at the Agents' who are happy to supply all the call for them. Every family should have and keep this book. It is worth having. Comprising much general information of great value; it gives the best instructions for the cure of prevalent complaints, and we can get anywhere. Its anecdotes alone are worth a bushel of wheat, and its medical advice is sometimes worth to the sick, the weight of gold. Made up purposely for this latitude and therefore correct. Call and get Ayer's Almanac, and when got, keep it.