

THE
ORTHOGRAPHICAL
HOBGOBLIN.

BY PHILORTHOS.

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PUBLISHERS' NOTICE.

IN the editorial columns of the New York *Home Journal* of March 19, appeared an article under the caption of "Webster's Dictionary," animadverting upon Dr. Webster's system of Orthography. The New York *Century* of March 26th, remarks that this, with frequent articles of a like character, which of late years have appeared in the New York journals, "though anonymously published, are known to proceed from the pen of Mr. EDWARD S. GOULD," of New York. In the article in the *Home Journal*, Mr. Gould admits the superior excellence of Webster in the more important features of a Dictionary, viz., vocabulary and definitions, and then proceeds to state his difficulties in regard to Webster's system of orthography—that system, however, differing from the method preferred by Mr. Gould, as he says, only in regard to 72 primary words, or 140 in all, out of the more than 100,000 of the language. The following able, and, as we think, conclusive article, was written in reply, and offered for publication in the *Home Journal*. It was, however, declined by the editors, perhaps from its length, or from their having already published as much on the subject as they deemed of interest to their readers. As, however, it is believed extensive and gross misapprehension prevails among those who have given little attention to the subject, in regard to the true nature of the orthographical changes recommended and so generally secured by Dr. Webster—their reasonableness and utility—it is thought proper to lay this article before the public in this form. Its author, a scholar, whose pursuits have led him to become familiar with, and interested in, the subject, has no pecuniary interests whatever which identify him with any of Dr. Webster's works or their publishers. The article was wholly unsolicited and unprompted by any one having any such interest, and its preparation was without the knowledge of any such parties. We are sure its candor, the force of its reasoning, and the justness of its conclusions, will commend themselves to the reader.

While thus before the public, we desire to state three or four facts in regard to this matter of Dr. Webster's system of orthography, the truthfulness of which statements is either self-obvious, or susceptible of a ready verification:

1. Webster's system of orthography is, fairly, to be looked at as his Dictionaries now present it—not by instances once presented by him hypothetically, or, it may be, based upon valid reasons; yet placed before the public to test whether they would be adopted. Almost every lexicographer of eminence has thus advanced views not finally sanctioned by the public. Mr. Gould, inadvertently doubtless, cites instances as Webster's present orthography, which are not so. The true question by which to judge its merits, is, What is Webster's system as now presented in his works?

2. Five, at least, of every six, of the orthographical changes recommended by Webster, and as his works now present them, are now next to universally adopted in this country, by both friends and foes of his system. The omission of *k* in *physick*, *u* in *favour*, and all those large classes of words, are of this number. Is it said, Dr. Webster did not first suggest the omission of these superfluous letters? Nor did he first suggest hardly a single one of his other so-called innovations, but they had, as well as these, the sanction and approval of earlier and able lexicographers. But the *k* and *u* were in all but universal use until Webster, by their exclusion, secured this very great improvement. Todd's Johnson, edited by Worcester, published in Boston the very year before Webster's Quarto appeared, retains the *k* fully in *antarctick*, *arctick*, &c., *u* in *honour*, *neighbour*, &c. These are but instances, in which Webster's "innovations" have silently but almost universally prevailed.

3. Webster gives both forms (expressing his preference) in very many cases, where more than one is in use by good writers.

4. Not only the reasonableness and utility of the system, and the general progressive tendency of the language in that direction, but the test of *experience*, the general extent

to which it already prevails, in the school book, periodical, and other popular issues of the country, justify the full belief that his system, in all its general features, is to become universally prevalent. We append four or five letters from as many leading School Book publishing houses, as showing (yet but very partially) the extent to which the Websterian orthography prevails:

CINCINNATI, May 2, 1859.
In the ECLECTIC EDUCATIONAL SERIES, and in all other educational works published by us, the aggregate sales of which are probably about 2,000,000 volumes per annum, we uniformly adhere to Webster's Orthography as the standard, as do nearly all wisely progressive School Book publishers in the United States.

W. B. SMITH & CO.

NEW YORK, May 2, 1859.
We publish SANDERS' SERIES OF READERS and SPELLERS, and other educational works, recognizing Webster as their general standard of Orthography, the current sales of which are at the rate per annum of—

Sales for 1858 of Sanders' Series,	900 000
Other Common School Books,	200 000
Scientific books, including our Music books,	175 000

1,275,000

IVISON & PHINNEY.

NEW YORK, May 2, 1859.
We publish WEBSTER'S ELEMENTARY SPELLER, and other educational works, recognizing Webster's Dictionary as their general standard of Orthography, the current manufacture and sale of which are at the rate per annum of about

1,500,000

D. APPLETON & CO.

NEW YORK, May 2, 1859.
We publish PARKER AND WATSON'S SERIES OF READERS, and other educational works, recognizing Webster as their general standard of Orthography, the current sales of which are at the rate per annum of at least

500,000

A. S. BAERNES & BURR,

Publishers of the National Series of Standard School Books, 51 & 53 John st., N. Y.

NEW YORK, May 2, 1859.
We publish READING BOOKS, and other educational works, which adopt Webster as their general standard of Orthography, the sales of which are at the rate annually of

200,000

PRATT, OAKLEY & CO.

5,475,000

To this aggregate of over FIVE MILLIONS, we might add TOWN'S SERIES, TOWN and HOLBROOK'S (Boston), SARGENT'S READERS (Boston), WEBB'S (New York), GOODRICH'S (Louisville, Ky.), to say nothing of the issues of Messrs. MASON BROTHERS (the publishers of Webster's School Dictionaries), of Messrs. J. B. LIPPINCOTT & Co., of Philadelphia (publishers of Webster's Octavo and University Dictionaries, and the most extensive Book Jobbing house in the United States, if not in the world), of Messrs. HARPER & BROTHERS (late publishers of Webster's Octavo Dictionary), and others, and it would be entirely safe to say TEN MILLIONS of volumes of School Books are annually published in the United States, recognizing WEBSTER as their general standard of orthography, while not a single publishing house in the country, as far as we are aware, has ever publicly recognized any other Dictionary than Webster as its standard of orthography, with the single exception of the publishers of another Dictionary. An extensive School Book publishing house, whose names are not mentioned above, of the highest standing as to sound judgment and business capacity and integrity, write us, "We have adopted Webster's Orthography in our books, both because it is already the most extensively adopted, and because we thought it sure to be still more so."

Take another pregnant fact:—we have before us the names of well-known PERIODICALS, issued in this country, avowing WEBSTER in like manner as their guide, the authenticated annual issues of which are over THIRTY MILLIONS, and could we procure details from publishers of other periodicals, we believe it would aggregate double that number. Indeed, it is not too much to say, that the American press, as a whole, in the vastly preponderating extent of its issues, recognizes Webster as its general standard on this point. We do not say following him implicitly, in all cases and every particular, but as its general avowed guide. We are sure, too, that, instead of creating confusion, and discord, and diversity, that system has done, and is doing more to secure uniformity of usage, and a consistent system, than all other causes combined. We again commend the following pages to the candid perusal of the unprejudiced.

G. & C. MERRIAM.

SPRINGFIELD, May, 1859.

THE ORTHOGRAPHICAL HOBGOBLIN.

THE most approved mode of dealing with a ghost is to walk directly up and take the phantom by the beard, if it has one. The result is usually a guide-post, a windmill or other useful object. We propose to treat in this manner, and as briefly as we may, the orthographical hobgoblin conjured up by an enterprising publishing house for the purpose of frightening timid and conservative people, and selling their own publications. Having laid the specter, and exposed the windmill, we shall turn the latter over to our Quixotic friends to fight at their leisure.

Some philological Vandal—if we can believe the impassioned statements with which these parties flood the public prints—has, with barbaric intent, made an incursion into our fair heritage of English undefiled; all our pleasant orthographical anomalies are being laid waste; and Dr. Noah Webster is the Vandal alluded to. All foggydom is therefore summoned to the rescue. If these things are so, it is lamentable that five-sixths of all the school books published in this country, so far as they follow any standard, follow the Vandal; and that twenty of his dictionaries are sold to one of any other author. These are, moreover, very awkward facts for the belligerents, who hold that *usage* is the only criterion by which to test all matters relating to orthography.

Few persons—for few have investigated the subject—are aware how small a basis these oft-repeated charges against Webster's dictionary have to rest upon, and in how few words the orthography differs from Worcester's, whose publishers are the instigators of this controversy. Still less do they know the nature of these differences. If Webster is not the standard of orthography in America, there is no standard. Worcester's orthography is neither American nor English, but is a mongrel, vacillating compilation, without purpose or system other than assumed *usage*. Each succeeding edition improves, and conforms more and more to Webster. Worcester sets up no such claim as is assumed by his publishers; but he gives a list of 1575 "Words of Doubtful and Various Orthography," spelled in two, three, and four different ways, the number of forms amounting to nearly 4000. "The orthography of the left-hand column," he says, "is deemed to be well authorized and in most cases preferable; but with respect to the authority of that of the right-hand

column, there is a great diversity. In some cases, *it is nearly or quite as well authorized as that of the left hand,*" etc. With no better standard than mere usage, it is no wonder that his orthography has been vacillating and inconsistent. The changes he has made in words under the first four letters of the alphabet, in different editions, are more in number than the entire differences between his latest edition and Webster's Unabridged.

We had intended to exhibit a list showing precisely what these differences are; but in a long and disparaging article, entitled "Webster's Dictionary," in the Home Journal of March 19th (which has since been inserted in many other papers), we find what purports to be such a list prepared by the belligerents themselves. We could have wished that the list had been more accurate; but as it was deemed sufficiently correct for its author's purpose, we will give it a wider circulation and make it the basis of some remarks.

As a matter of course, all the writer's strictures upon Webster are expended upon its orthography. He admits that in the essential features of a dictionary, viz., definitions and vocabulary, "Webster's Dictionary has from the first stood pre-eminent. Its definitions had the then rare merit of conveying information in the most lucid terms—in terms that did not themselves need to be defined. And the vocabulary contained many thousands of words in common use not then to be found in any dictionary." With this show of disinterestedness, he is prepared for the onset. Having for years seen this contest waged with the weapons of personal abuse, that Dr. Webster was a "Yankee plodder," whose "career was a mistake," "who was every way unequal to his task," etc., it is cheering now to see a mode of attack that has the merit of freshness and originality. The writer's strategy is this: Webster's orthography is perplexing, tormenting, permanently mischievous. It impedes the sale of the work thousands of copies. If the publishers knew their interest, they would change the orthography and make it conform to the writer's idea of spelling, which is embodied in Worcester (which edition?). The changes could be made in a very short time (fifteen minutes would be amply sufficient, if the writer will name his edition), and then Webster's dictionary would sell! Judicious, admirable suggestion! To show that his proposition is practicable, he assures us that the difference between the orthography of the two dictionaries is very slight, much less than people suppose; which is precisely our view of the matter. He says:

"The peculiarity of Webster's orthography is so insignificant in actual dimensions, that it bears about the same proportion to the whole work as a mosquito bears to the bulk of a man he is tormenting. To exhibit the real magnitude of this *petite misere* before the eyes of our readers, so that they can weigh and measure it for themselves, we will now spread the entire monster in our columns—hands, feet, head, organs and dimensions; and we can imagine their exclamation:—'What! is that all? *That!* Has *that* made so much uproar in the literary world?"

" I.—MISCELLANEOUS.

<i>Correct orthography.</i>	<i>Webster's orthography.</i>
1. Axe.....	Ax.
2. Comptroller.....	Controller.
3. Contemporary.....	Cotemporary.
4. Defence.....	Defense.
5. Offence.....	Offense.
6. Pretence.....	Pretense.
7. Ambassador.....	Embassador.
8. Gauntlet.....	Gantlet.
9. Drought.....	Drouth.
10. Group.....	Groop.
11. Height.....	Hight.
12. Manceuvre.....	Maneuver.
13. Molasses.....	Melasses.
14. Mould, ing, ed, er, etc.....	Mold, etc.
15. Moulth, ing, ed.....	Molt, etc.
16. Plough, ing, ed.....	Plow, etc.
17. Practise, (<i>verb</i> .).....	Practice.
18. Staunch.....	Stanch.
19. Ton.....	Tun.
20. Wo.....	Woe.

" II.—WORDS PROPERLY SPELLED WITH TWO L'S, ETC., WHICH WEBSTER SPELLS WITH ONE.

Bevelling, etc.....	Beveling, etc.
Benefitting, etc.....	Benefiting, etc.
Biassing, etc.....	Biasing, etc.
Cancelling, etc.....	Canceling, etc.
Cavilling, etc.....	Caviling, etc.
Counselling, etc.....	Counseling.
Counsellor.....	Counselor.
Crystallize, etc.....	Crystalize, etc.
Drivelling, etc.....	Driveling, etc.
Duelling, etc.....	Dueling, etc.
Enamelling, etc.....	Enameling, etc.
Equalling, etc.....	Equaling, etc.
Gravelling, etc.....	Graveling, etc.
Jeweller, etc.....	Jeweler, etc.
Labelling, etc.....	Labeling, etc.
Libelling, etc.....	Libeling, etc.
Levelling, etc.....	Leveling, etc.
Marshalling, etc.....	Marshaling, etc.
Modelling, etc.....	Modeling, etc.
Panelling, etc.....	Paneling, etc.
Perilling, etc.....	Periling, etc.
Ravelling, etc.....	Raveling, etc.
Rivalling, etc.....	Rivaling, etc.
Revelling, etc.....	Reveling, etc.
Rivetting, etc.....	Riveting, etc.
Shovelling, etc.....	Shoveling, etc.
Travelling, etc.....	Traveling, etc.
Tinselled.....	Tinseled.
Worshipping, etc.....	Worshipping, etc.

" III.—WORDS PROPERLY SPELLED WITH ONE L, WHICH WEBSTER SPELLS WITH TWO.

Control.....	Controll.
Enrol.....	Enroll.
Enthral.....	Enthrall.
Fulfil.....	Fulfill.
Dulness.....	Dullness.
Fulness.....	Fullness.

Instil	Instill.
Distil	Distill.
Skilful	Skillful.
Wilful	Willful.

" IV.—WORDS PROPERLY TERMINATING IN RE, WHICH WEBSTER SPELLS ~~RE~~.

Calibre	Caliber.
Centre	Center.
Fibre	Fiber.
Accoutre	Accouter.
Lustre	Luster.
Meagre	Meager.
Metre	Meter.
Mitre	Miter.
Ochre	Ocher.
Sabre	Saber.
Sceptre	Scepter.
Sombre	Somber.
Theatre	Theater."

The reader may well exclaim "What! is that all? Has *that* made so much uproar in the literary world?" But the actual difference between the orthography of Webster and Worcester has been overstated in the preceding list. In the first class of twenty words (to which we have prefixed numerals) nine forms given as "correct orthography," are those under which the words are alphabetically arranged and defined in Webster's Unabridged. Two forms classed as Webster's are not his. To six of the words, Webster has given two forms of spelling, and this fact is suppressed by the compiler of the list. But let us examine the list in order.

1. *Axe*, Worcester; *ax*, Webster. In the oldest vocabulary we have at hand, Skinner, 1671, *ax* is the spelling of the word. The same has been for more than two hundred years, and is to-day, the form in our English Bible. (See, in an Oxford edition, Judges, ix. 48; Isaiah, x. 15.) Phillips's Dictionary 1706, and Fanning, 1761, have it *ax* or *axe*. Webster prefers *ax*, because that spelling is in analogy with other monosyllables of like ending, as *wax*, *lax*, *tax*, etc. A similar implement, *adze*, Worcester, *adz*, Webster, the compiler has overlooked. The oversight may possibly be accounted for in the fact that Worcester, in three of his editions, has spelled it *adze*, and in the remaining three, *adz*.

2. *Comptroller*, Worcester; *controller*, Webster. We are curious to know who was the inventor of the spelling *comptrol*. He doubtless had the "comptrol" of types, and did not know that the word came direct from the French *controler*, and had originally only its French meaning, "to examine accounts." In the old dictionaries *control* is so defined. Skinner, 1671, has *controller*, but no such form as *comptroller*. Coles, 1701, Phillips, 1706, Fanning, 1761, Bailey, 1772, Johnson, 1773, Perry, 1805, Richardson, 1838, Craig, 1854, and others, too numerous to mention, have *controller*, and Web-

ster is an innovator because he does not spell it *comptroller*! Johnson, under *comptroll*, says: "This word is written by some authors, *who do not attend to the etymology*, for *controll*, and some of its derivations are written in the same manner." Worcester has *comptroller* and "*controllership*, n.; the office of a *controller*!"

3. Contemporary, *Worcester*; coteremporary, *Webster*. Both forms have long been in use. Webster gives both, but prefers the latter, because it is shorter and more easily pronounced.

4, 5, 6. Defence, offence, pretence, *Worcester*; defense, offense, pretense, *Webster*. Why exclude *expence*, *suspence*, *licence*, *recompence* from the list? These words come to us through the French, from the Latin *defensio*, *offensio*, etc. Etymology therefore demands *s* instead of *c*. Analogy, convenience and common sense make the same demand. All agree to write *defensive*, *defensible*, *offensive*, *pretension*, with *s*; why, if we favor any analogy in our language, should we write *defence*, *defenceless*, *offence*, *offenceless*, etc., with *c*?

7. Ambassador, *Worcester*; ambassador, *Webster*. Webster prefers the latter, that the word may be uniform with *embassy*. Blackstone and other English authors have written it thus. Skinner gives only *ambassador*, Phillips and other lexicographers give both. Johnson gives both, and spells them *ambassadour* and *ambassador*.

8. Gauntlet, *Worcester*; gantlet, *Webster*. *Gauntlet* and *gantlet* are words of different origin and meaning. The former, used in the expression, "to throw the gauntlet," or the iron glove, meaning "to challenge," is from the French *gantelet*, which is from *gant* (glove). The latter, used in the expression "to run the gantlet"—a military punishment—Johnson derives from the Dutch *gant*, all, *loopen*, to run, and it was formerly written *gantlope*. Fielding, in the "History of a Foundling," book 7, chap. 11, says: "Some said he ought to be tied neck and heels, others that he deserved to run the gantlope." Skinner derives the first syllable from *gant* (the old form of writing Ghent), the city where the punishment was first practiced. Webster derives it from *gang*, a passage. Etymology would favor both these words being written *gantlet*. *Gauntlet* is the older word, and was formerly written without the *u*. (See Skinner, and King John, act v., scene ii., in Shakspeare's first edition, 1623, and in Ayscough's edition, 1791.) All respectable lexicographers have made the proper distinction between these two words, and to make the distinction obvious to the eye, have agreed to write the first with *u*, which otherwise would be improper. Our critic probably did not know they were different words, and his blunder was not strange, if he had no other authority than Worcester to consult.

9. Drought, *Worcester*; drouth, *Webster*. Webster gives both forms and expresses no preference for either. The first is after the Belgic dialect; the latter is the original word as written in the time of Bacon, and in use at the present day in Scotland and America.

10. Group, *Worcester*; groop, *Webster*. *Groop* the writer drew from his imagination and not from Webster's vocabulary, where it is not to be found.

11. Height, *Worcester*; hight, *Webster*. Webster gives both forms but prefers the latter, that the words of the same family may have a uniform orthography, thus, *high, hight, highly, highness*. Milton wrote the word without *e*.

12. Manœuvre, *Worcester*; maneuver, *Webster*. Webster gives both forms; but the word having been naturalized, he prefers it should appear in English rather than in French costume.

13. Molasses, *Worcester*; melasses, *Webster*. This statement is a misrepresentation. Webster spells the word *molasses*. But Edwards, in his History of the West Indies, and others, have very properly spelled it *melasses*. Etymology favors the latter spelling. In French it is *melasse*; Spanish, *melaza*; Italian, *melassa*; Portuguese, *melaço*; all through the Latin *mel*, from the Greek *meli* (honey). All dictionaries of any reputation or completeness notice this fact. Webster, under *melasses*, says "see *molasses*."

14. Mould, *Worcester*; mold, *Webster*. Webster gives both forms; but he prefers the latter, 1st, because etymology favors it, the word in the Anglo Saxon being *mold* or *molde*; 2d, because it is shorter and more clearly indicates the pronunciation; 3d, because the silent *u* has been already dropped from similar words, as *bold, cold, gold, old*, etc.; and 4th, because many of the best English writers, Spenser, South and others, have written it thus. If the restoration had not been made before Webster's time, it was proper that a lexicographer of his qualifications should make it.

15. Mould, *Worcester*; molt, *Webster*. Webster has both forms. The remarks on the previous word apply generally to this. The *u* formerly in *bolt, colt, dolt*, etc., has been dropped, and many distinguished writers before Webster's day dropped it from *mould*.

16. Plough, *Worcester*; plow, *Webster*. When all classes in America who have most occasion to use and to write the name of this useful implement, manufacturers, dealers and farmers, agree in spelling it *plow*; when the National Agricultural Society, the American Institute, every State agricultural

society (except one which has its head quarters in Boston), spell it *plow*; when our English Bible for more than two centuries has spelled, and to-day spells it *plow*, it seems like supererogation to defend Webster's orthography of this word. We only regret that both forms are inserted in the Unabridged. If we must have *plough*, let us have *nough*, *hough*, *cough*, for *now*, *how*, *cow*.

17. Practise, *Worcester*; practice, *Webster*. Worcester writes the noun *practice* and the verb *practise*. Both are from the same root (*prasso*, Greek), both have the same general meaning, and are pronounced alike. If we are to have *practise* (to act customarily), and *practice* (customary acts), let us have *notise* (to observe), and *notice* (observation). The absurdity of making such a distinction is too obvious to be commented upon. No possible advantage can be claimed for it, unless it be to puzzle the school boy and the foreigner, who, in learning to spell, are already sufficiently bewildered in the existing mazes of orthographical anomalies.

18. Staunch, *Worcester*; stanch, *Webster*. *Stanch* is good Websterian orthography. Etymology demands it. It is the spelling of the Bible (see Luke, viii. 44). *Stanch* alone, and not *staunch* at all, is the orthography in Skinner, Bailey, Ash, Phillips, Fanning, Johnson, Coles, Perry, Walker and Craig, and has been in times past the form Worcester preferred.

19. Ton, *Worcester*; tun, *Webster*. Webster gives both forms, each defined in its appropriate alphabetical arrangement, for both are in use. He prefers the latter for etymological reasons. The word comes from the Saxon *tunna* (a cask), from which the sense of weight is taken. Walker, Todd, Reid, Smart and Coles wrote *tun*.

20. Wo, *Worcester*; woe, *Webster*. Analogy requires that the word should take *e*, like *doe*, *hoe*, *foe*, *toe*, and all other similar nouns of one syllable. Other parts of speech, as *go*, *so*, *no*, and nouns of more than one syllable, as *motto*, *potato*, *tomato*, do not take the final *e*. *Woe* is the orthography of the Bible. (See Numb., xxi. 29; Isaiah, xxiv. 11; Matt., xxiii. 13.)

Of the twenty words cited in Class I. as embracing all the "miscellaneous" innovations of Webster, we find that none of them are innovations; that some were in common use one or more centuries before Webster was born, and all before his American Dictionary was published. We by no means admit that precedent is necessary in every instance to justify the orthography of a word. Etymology, analogy and convenience are frequently of themselves sufficient to authorize a change. When we set up precedent as the supreme arbitrator in all matters relating to government, social order, science, manners, and fashions, it will be time enough to acknowledge the supremacy

of this tribunal in whatever concerns the costume of our language. But we are endeavoring to bring our argument to the comprehension of those who can see nothing in orthography but precedent; and who rail at Webster as an innovator. The writer in the Home Journal betrays his audacity—his ignorance of the literature on this subject, we should prefer to say, if facts would justify the milder expression—when he states, the “points taken against Webster’s peculiarities have been well taken, and have *not* been answered;” and again, “no adequate excuse *can* be brought forward.” We leave the reader to judge for himself on these points, and proceed to the next division.

II. “Words properly spelled with two *ls*, etc., which Webster spells with one.”

Fortunately, this class can be treated in a mass. Deducting *crystallize*, from the Greek *krustallos*, which Webster for this reason spells with two *ls*, the list comprises twenty-eight words. It will be observed that all the primitives, *bevel*, *benefit*, etc., end with a single consonant, preceded by a single vowel, and are accented *not* on the last syllable. For his argument he has made the list too large. Half the list are now-a-days not written thus by any one. *Benefitting*, *biassing*, *marshalling*, *worshipping*, etc., are not commonly written by those who cling to *traveller* and some others. But we yield that point, and give him the whole number. These twenty-eight, we understand, are all that are “properly spelled with two *ls*, etc.” The following list of twenty-eight words, similar in all respects, are therefore “properly spelled” with one *l*, etc., viz., *appareling*, *barreling*, *boweling*, *caroling*, *chanceling*, *chiseling*, *cudgeling*, *disheveling*, *emboweling*, *empaneling*, *galloping*, *gamboling*, *groveling*, *handseling*, *hatcheling*, *imperiling*, *kenneling*, *marveling*, *parceling*, *penciling*, *paralleling*, *pistoling*, *pomeling*, *quarreling*, *bigoted*, *galloping*, *gossiping*, *gibbeting*. The list might be extended to several hundred words. Who in this short life is to remember the twenty-eight exceptions and “spell properly?” The more sensible inquiry is, why have any exceptions? Can any reason be given for making these exceptions, other than precedent? Not the slightest. A principle is needed which every primary school boy can understand and apply, and which will banish all doubt and uncertainty arising from this vexatious anomaly. Webster has such a rule, indicated by analogy and good usage, and follows it strictly, which is this: Primitives ending with a single consonant, preceded by a single vowel, and accented on the last syllable, double the final consonant, as *con-trol'*, *controller*, *re-fer'*, *referring*; when *not* accented on the last syllable, they do *not* double the final consonant, as *bev'-el*, *beveling*, *wor'-ship*, *worshipping*. Lowth, Ash, Perry and Walker advocated this rule, and good writers followed it before Webster’s day; and now we are told Webster is an innovator! Walker said, “Why we should write *libelling*, *levelling*, *revelling*, and yet *offering*, *suffer-*

ing, reasoning, I am totally at a loss to determine." Worcester states the rule correctly, and says, "This form (*beveling, benefiting*, etc.) only wants the sanction of prevailing usage to render it the preferable orthography." This form has had that sanction since the above sentence was written; it is therefore, at present, the "preferable orthography." If we have *duellist* let us have *novellist*.

III. "Words properly spelled with one *l*, which Webster spells with two."

The first three examples are misrepresentations. Webster and Worcester spell them alike, viz.: *control, enroll, inthrall* (with a cross-reference from *enthrall*). The remaining examples are correctly given, and as one principle is involved, can be treated *en masse*. It is the analogy of the language that primitives ending with a double consonant retain both, when in composition the accent falls upon that syllable, as *illness, stillness, chillness, smallness, tallness, shrillness, stillness, gruffness, stiffness, crossness*, etc. Worcester inserts the double consonant in all the foregoing words, but omits it from *dullness, fullness, fulfill, instill, distill, skillful, willful*. *Inthrall* under this principle requires the double *l*. Worcester writes the word *inthrallment*, which leads to the error in pronunciation of giving the short instead of the broad sound to *a* in the accented syllable. Walker says there is no reason why we should not write *dullness, fullness, skillful, willful*, as well as *illness, stiffness gruffness, crossness*, "unless we are determined to have no rule in our orthography, good or bad." *Fulfill* is a redundant compound of *full* and *fill*. If the accent belonged on the first syllable the spelling would be *fullfill*. *Full* has become a regular English formative, and, by common consent, at the end of compounds, is contracted to *ful*, as *like* is contracted to *ly*. We write *healthful, smoothly*, not *healthfull, smoothlike*. *Instill* and *distill* are written with the double consonant, for several reasons: 1st. Etymology demands it—they come from the same Latin root, *stillo* (to drop); 2d. The final syllable of each is accented; 3d. If contracted, the accent would be ambiguous.

IV. "Words properly terminating in *re*, which Webster spells *er*."

Why has the critic limited us to only thirteen words out of several hundreds which have come to us from the French with the termination *re*? Does he mean to throw all their companions overboard with the hope of saving this baker's dozen? Why are *nitre, saltpetre, spectre, sepulchre* (all spelled thus in Worcester's last edition) now to be ruthlessly sacrificed? It might have been surmised that a writer who conjured up specters to frighten innocent people would have pressed these ghostly words into service. Few and select as are his present available forces, we regret to inform him that mutiny is already rife in his camp. *Calibre*, the captain of his squad, has already gone over to the enemy (see Worcester revised, 1851-'59), and the rest of the column is wavering. Worcester has inconsistencies like these: *metre* (mean-

ure) and its derivatives, *hexameter* (measure of six feet), *thermometer* (measure of heat), *diameter* (measure through). He has *me-tre*, which the pupil would naturally pronounce *me-tree*; and to guard against this false pronunciation he is obliged to insert *me-ter* in parentheses, which is the genuine orthography of the original Saxon word. No analogy of the language is better established than that in foreign words ending in *bre, gre, tre, etc.*, coming into our language where they are pronounced *ber, ger, ter, etc.*, the last two letters are transposed. Hundreds of words have conformed to this analogy, while about twenty have, some for a longer and others for a shorter time, stood out against it. In the 16th and 17th centuries *theater, specter, niter, etc.*, were the common spelling. Sir Isaac Newton, Camden, Milton, Pope, Bolingbroke, Selden, Whittaker and others wrote thus. On the restoration of Charles II., the influence of the French court and manners restored partially French terminations to English words. From that time to the present usage in England has been unsettled with regard to a few words of this class the tendency being to come back to the true English form. The best mathematicians of Greenwich to-day write *center* as did Sir Isaac Newton. Webster's Unabridged gives both forms to about fifteen words, always preferring that which conforms to the analogy and genius of our language. We hope that in future editions the French form will be omitted, except in three words, *acre, massacre* and *lucre*, from the liability of *c* before *e* to be pronounced like *s*.

We have now considered in detail the four classes of alleged innovations in Websterian orthography. The hobgoblin, we trust, has been divested of its fearful aspect, and we submit the result—a sound, conservative observance of the analogy and best usages of the language.

“There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave,
To tell us this.”

PHILORTHOS.

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