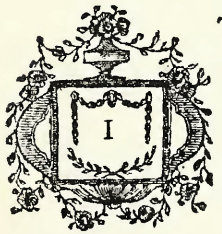


A N

E S S

On the NECESSITY, ADVANTAG
CABILITY *of* REFORMING
SPELLING, *and of* RENE
THOGRAPHY *of* WORDS COR
the PRONUNCIATION.



IT has been obſ
on the Engliſh
orthography o
is very irregula
often repreſenti
and the ſame ſ
ed by differen
irregularity, t
may be aſſigned :

1. THE changes to which the
language is liable, from the progreſs
ilization.

2. THE mixture of different languages, occaſioned by revolutions in England, or by a predilection of the learned, for words of foreign growth and ancient origin.

To

To the firſt cauſe, may be
tween the ſpelling and pronu
The northern nations of Eur
in gutturals. This is eviden
pirates and guttural letters,
orthography of words deriv
and from the modern pronu
branches of the Teutonic, th
man. Thus *k* before *n* was
knave, *know* ; the *gh* in *might*,
er ſimilar words ; the *g* in *rei*

BUT as ſavages proceed in
loſe the guttural ſounds, in
the uſe of labials, and the r
eaſe of ſpeaking facilitates th
nunciation of words is ſoften
tional refinement of manners
the difference between the a
guages of France, Spain and
ence between the ſoft pronun
guages of thoſe countries, an
tural pronunciation of the no
rope.

IN this progreſs, the Engli
moſt of the guttural letters.
the *g* in *reign*, and in many c
mute in practice ; and the *gh*
of *f*, as in *laugh*, or is ſilent, as

To this practice of ſoftening
wholly ſuppreſſing thoſe which
may be added a popular tend
of common uſe. Thus *South*
pronunciation, is become *Suth*
ceſter, are become *Wooſter* and *Leſter* ; *buſineſs*, *bizneſs* ; *colonel*, *curnel* ; *cannot*, *will not*, *cant*, *wont*.* In this manner

* *WONT* is ſtrictly a contraction of *woll not*, as the word was anciently pronounced.

manner the final *e* is not heard in n
in which it formerly made a syl
clothes, *cares*, and moſt others of t
formerly pronounced in two ſyllabl

Of the other cauſe of irregulari
our language, I have treated ſufficie
ſertation. It is here neceſſary or
when words have been introduced
guage into the Engliſh, they hav
the orthography of the original, ho
expreſs the Engliſh pronunciation.
rine, *chaiſe*, retain their French dreſ
the true pronunciation in Engliſh,
fateeg, *mareen*, *ſhaze*. Thus thro
hibit the etymology of words, the
phyſic, *character*, *chorus*, and other Gr
ſerve the repreſentatives of the ori
theſe words are pronounced, and
been ſpelt, *Fillip*, *fyzzic* or *fizzic*, *k*

But ſuch is the ſtate of our langu
ciation of the words which are ſtric
gradually changing for ages, and
ſcience in Europe, the language ha
ceſſion of words from other langua
retain an orthography very ill ſuited
pronunciation.

The queſtion now occurs; ou
to retain theſe faults which produ

*"*TA-KE*, *ma-ke*, *o-ne*, *bo-ne*, *ſto-ne*, *vil-le*,
runt, quæ nunc habenter pro monoſyllabis."—

† The words *number*, *chamber*, and many o
the French *nombre*, *chambre*, &c. Why was the ſpelling changed? or
rather why is the ſpelling of *luſtre*, *metre*, *theatre*, *not* changed? The
caſes are preciſely ſimilar. The Engliſhman who firſt wrote *number* for
nombre, had no greater authority to make the change, than any modern
writer has to ſpell *luſtre*, *metre* in a ſimilar manner, *luſter*, *meter*. The
change in the firſt inſtance was a valuable one; it conformed the ſpelling
to the pronunciation, and I have taken the liberty, in all my writings, to
purſue the principle in *luſter*, *meter*, *miter*, *theater*, *ſepulcher*, &c.

conveniencies in the acqui
guage, or ought they at o
and introduce order and re
phy of the AMERICAN

Let us conſider this ſubj

Several attempts were f
rectify the orthography of
prehend their ſchemes faile
count of their intrinſic diffi
any neceſſary impracticabil
propoſed, in moſt of theſe ſc
out ſuperfluous and ſilent lett
ber of new characters. Any
undoubtedly prove unſucceſs
ed that an orthography, pe
ſuch as would be formed b
ans on principles of ſcience
for that confuſed mode of ſ
liſhed. But it is apprehend
may be made, and an orth
ſuch as ſhall obviate moſt
which occur in learning ou
duced and eſtabliſhed with
tion.

The principal alteration
orthography ſufficiently reg

1. The omiſſion of all ſ
as *a* in *bread*. Thus *brea*
meant, *realm*, *friend*, would b
bilt, *ment*, *relm*, *frend*. Woulc
inconvenience, any embarra

means.

* The firſt by Sir Thomas Smith, ſecretary of ſtate to Queen Eliza-
beth: Another by Dr. Gill, a celebrated maſter of St. Paul's ſchool in
London: Another by Mr. Charles Butler, who went ſo far as to print his
book in his propoſed orthography: Several in the time of Charles the
firſt; and in the preſent age, Mr. Elphinſtone has publiſhed a treatiſe
in a very ridiculous orthography.

means. On the other hand, it w
of writing, and much more, of le
it would reduce the true pronunc
and while it would aſſiſt foreigner
dren in acquiring the language,
pronunciation uniform, in differe
try, and almoſt prevent the poſſib

2. A SUBSTITUTION of a cha
tain definite ſound, for one tha
indeterminate. Thus by putting
the words *mean*, *near*, *ſpeak*, *grieve*
meen, *neer*, *ſpeek*, *greev*, *zeel*. Thi
occaſion a moments trouble ;
would prevent a doubt reſpecting
whereas the *ea* and *ie* having di
give a learner much difficulty.
ſubſtituted for *grief* ; *kee* for *key*
laf for *laugh* ; *dawter* for *daught*
tuf for *tough* ; *proov* for *prove* ;
draft for *draught*. In this manne
tives, ſhould be changed into *k* ;
a ſoft ſound, as in *cheriſh* ; but *k*
Therefore *character*, *chorus*, *choli*
be written *karacter*, *korus*, *kolic*,
they thus written, no perſon co
pronunciation.

THUS *ch* in French derivative
into *ſh* ; *machine*, *chaiſe*, *chevalie*
maſheen, *ſhaze*, *ſhevaleer* ; and *piqu*
be written *peek*, *toor*, *obleek*.

3. A TRIFLING alteration in
addition of a point would diſting
without the ſubſtitution of a nev
very ſmall ſtroke acroſs *th* would diſtinguiſh its two
ſounds. A point over a vowel, in this manner, *ȧ*, or
ė, or *ī*, might anſwer all the purpoſes of different let-
ters. And for the dipthong *ow*, let the two letters be
united

united by a ſmall ſtroke, or b
piece of metal, with the left l
to the *o*.

THESE, with a few other
would anſwer every purpoſe,
phy ſufficiently correct and re

THE advantages to be deri
are numerous, great and pern

1. THE ſimplicity of the
tate the learning of the langu
of years for children to lear
the buſineſs is rarely accompl
are bred to ſome buſineſs th
ciſe in writing, finally learn t
out heſitation ; but moſt peo
imperfect maſters of ſpelling,
takes, whenever they take u
note. Nay, many people, ev
ion, never attempt to write a
conſulting a dictionary.

BUT with the propoſed ort
learn to ſpell, without trouble,
the orthography being very r
terwards find it difficult to m
in that caſe, be as difficult to
to ſpell *right*.

BESIDES this advantage,
to acquire the pronunciation c
ſo difficult and embarraſſing, t
ly diſcouraged on the firſt at
many years labor, to reſt contented with an imperfect
knowlege of the ſubject.

2. A CORRECT orthography would render the pro-
nunciation of the language, as uniform as the ſpelling
in

in books. A general uniformi
States, would be the event of ſu
I am here recommending. All pe
would ſpeak with ſome degree of
formity.* Such a uniformity in tl
ſireable; it would remove prejudice
tual affection and reſpect.

3. SUCH a reform would dim
letters about one ſixteenth or eight
ſave a page in eighteen; and a ſav
in the expenſe of books, is an a
not be overlooked.

4. BUT a capital advantage of
ſtates would be, that it would m
tween the Engliſh orthography
This will ſtartle thoſe who have
ſubject; but I am confident that
object of vaſt political conſequence

THE alteration, however ſmall,
publication of books in our own
render it, in ſome meaſure, nece
ſhould be printed in America.
never copy our orthography for t
conſequently the ſame impreſſior
not anſwer for both countries.
the preſent generation would rea
preſſions; but poſterity, being
ſpelling, would prefer the Americai

BESIDES this, a *national langua*
tional union. Every engine ſhould
der the people of this country *na*
attachments home to their own c
ſpire them with the pride of national character. How-
ever

* I ONCE heard Dr. Franklin remark, "that thoſe people ſpell beſt, who do not know how to ſpell;" that is, they ſpell as their ears dictate, without being guided by rules, and thus fall into a regular orthography.

ever they may boaſt of Indepe
of their government, yet the
ciently independent; an aſtc
arts and literature of their par
imitation of its manners, are
Americans. Thus an habit
country, deſerved indeed and c
attention from their own inte
reſpecting themſelves.

OBJECT

1. "THIS reform of the
people to relearn the language
troduced."

BUT the alterations propoſ
ple, that an hour's attention
to read the new orthograph
week's practice would render i
ſon would write it without
Would this ſmall inconvenien
Would not the numerous nat
tages, reſulting from the chan
make ſo inconſiderable a ſacrifi
I am perſuaded they would.

BUT it would not be neceſ
beyond the middle ſtage of life
to learn the propoſed ortho
without inconvenience, conti
They would read the *new* ort
culty; but they would write i
advanced, and even to the pre
al, if they ſhould not wiſh to t
change, the reformation would be almoſt a matter of
indifference. It would be ſufficient that children
ſhould be taught the new orthography, and that as faſt
as they come upon the ſtage, they ſhould be furniſhed
with

with books in the American ſpe
of printing would be proportione
books among the riſing generatic
introduction of the ſcheme woul
children would learn the propoſ
eaſily than they would the old ; a
ation would not be troubled with
none but the obſtinate and capri
jections or make any oppoſition.
be ſo inconſiderable, and made c
ples, that a column in each newſ
new ſpelling, would in ſix mon
people to the change, ſhow the
imperceptibly remove their objecti
neceſſary to enſure ſucceſs in the
this reform, would be, a reſolutio
ing all their acts to be engroſſed
phy, and recommending the plan
ſities in America ; and alſo a reſol
ties to encourage and ſupport it.
begin the reformation by publiſh
and ſmall tracts in the new ortho
would firſt be publiſhed in the ſa
excite attention to it, and men wc
onciled to the plan.

2. "THIS change would rend
uſeleſs."

THIS objection is, in ſome mea
the foregoing head. The truth
this effect. The difference of or
render books printed in one, ille
quainted only with the other.
not be ſo great as between the ortl
and of the preſent age ; yet Cha
read with eaſe.

3. "THIS reformation would injure the language by obſcuring etymology."

THIS

THIS objection is unfounde
true that the change would o
few inſtances, it might ; but it
etymology of many words ;
the change would obſcure it,
tion to the reformation.

IT will perhaps ſurprize my
in many particular words, the
correct than the ancient. Ye
fects diſhonor on our modern
Chaucer, four hundred years ag
er ; *dedly* for *deadly* ; *erneſt* for
breſt for *breaſt* ; *hed* for *head* ; a
was the moſt agreeable to the p
wrote *bin*, *examin*, *ſutable*, with
Middleton wrote *explane*, *genu*
moſt eaſy and correct orthograp
alſo *luſter*, *theater*, for *luſtre*,
many other inſtances, the moc
tion ; ſo that allowing many
been made in orthography, wi
we muſt acknowlege alſo that
been introduced.

IN anſwer to the objection, t
raphy would obſcure etymolog
the etymology of moſt words
the learned ; and to the unlear
known. Where is the man
Engliſh words to the elementar
ſtances, the ſtudent has been
tive roots of words ; but I pre
tenth of the words in our lan
been diſcovered, even by Junius
etymologiſt. Any man may lo
and find that *fleſh* is derived from the Saxon *floce* ; *child* from *cild* ; *flood* from *flod* ; *lad* from *leode* ; and *loaf* from

* IN Chaucer's life, prefixed to the edition of his works 1602, I find *moove* and *prove* ſpelt almoſt correctly, *moove* and *proove*.

from *laf* or *hlaf*. But this disc
other purpoſe, than to ſhow, that
years, the ſpelling of ſome words h
ed: We ſhould ſtill be at a va
primitive roots.

In many inſtances indeed ety
learned in underſtanding the comp
of a word; and it throws much li
of language. But the true ſenſe
not always, nor generally, to be le
the primitives or elementary w
meaning of a word depends on its
true ſenſe is to be obtained by a
thors, to dictionaries and to practi
rivation. The former *muſt* be
lead us into *error*.

But to prove of how little cor
of etymology is to moſt people, l
words. The word *ſincere* is de
ſine cera, without wax; and thu
purity of mind. I am confident
thouſand ever ſuſpected this to
word; yet all men, that have any
guage, uſe the word in its true ſen
cuſtomary meaning, as well as Ju
etymologiſt.

YEA or *yes* is derived from the
avoir to have, as the word is n
therefore *have*, or *poſſeſs*, or *take*
does this explication aſſiſt us in u
does not every countryman who l
derſtand and uſe the word with
the profoundeſt philoſophers?

The word *temper* is derived from an old root, *tem*, which ſignified *water*. It was borrowed from the act of *cooling*, or moderating heat. Hence the meaning of

 temperate,

temperate, *temperance*, and all t
riginal ſtock. But does thi
current ſenſe of theſe words
us to underſtand the format
what manner an idea of a v
correſpondent abſtract idea;
from a literal and direct ſen
preſs a variety of figurative
the cuſtomary ſenſe of the w
and as well underſtood by an
capacity, as by men of ſcienc

The word *always* is comp
it had originally no referen
mology or compoſition of t
us into error. The true n
which a nation in general an
therefore is of no uſe but to t
it will ſtill be preſerved, ſo fa
in dictionaries and other book
ular ſubject.

4. "The diſtinction bet
meanings and ſimilar ſound

"That diſtinction," to a
great Franklin, "is already de
Does not every man prono
alike? And does the ſame
hearer into a miſtake? Does
der the diſtinction eaſy and
the words of the ſentence
knew ever miſtaken for *new*
pronouncing an animated
miſtaken for *piece*; *pray* fo
Never, I preſume, is this fi
caſion of miſtakes.

If therefore an identity of *ſound*, even in rapid ſpeaking, produces no inconvenience, how much leſs would

an

an identity of *ſpelling*, when the ey
to ſurvey the conſtruction? But e
rion of truth, which has removed th
caſe, will alſo aſſiſt us in forming ou

THERE are many words in c
with the *ſame orthography*, have
meanings. The word *wind*, whetl
round, or *air in motion*, has the *ſa*
its no diſtinction to the *eye* of a ſi
its meaning is never miſtaken.
ſhows at ſight in which ſenſe the
ſtood. *Hail* is uſed as an expreſſi
nify frozen drops of water, falli
Rear is to raiſe up, or it ſignifies
army. *Lot* ſignifies fortune or
ground; or a certain proportion
does this diverſity, this contrarie
occaſion the leaſt difficulty in the
books? It cannot be maintained
found in all languages;* and alth
as a defect, and occaſion ſome trou
ers, yet to natives it produces
nience.

5. "IT is idle to conform the c
to the pronunciation, becauſe the
changing."

THIS is one of Dr. Johnſon's
very unworthy of his judgement.
ſtance from being a real objection,
ficient reaſon for the change of ſp
ciple of *fixing the orthography*, whi
changing, any *ſpoken language* muſt
lation to the *written language*; t
words would have no affinity with the letters that com-
poſe

* IN the Roman language *liber* had four or five different meanings; it ſignified *free, the inward bark of a tree, a book*, ſometimes *an epiſtle*, and alſo *generous*.

poſe them. In ſome inſtances
no mortal would ſuſpect fron
bour, *wrought*, are pronounce
principle, Dr. Johnſon ought
centuries, and given us, in his
Saxon orthography, *wol* for
eyen for *eyes*; *eche* for *each*, &
gone as far as poſſible into an
the changes of pronunciatio
radical language in its purit
guage, that doctrine did not
ſpelling of words changed wit
theſe changes we are indebted
ments; and it is hoped that the
formity with the national prac
be obſtructed by the erroneo
Johnſon. How much more
Dr. Franklin, who ſays, "the
guage began to be fixed too ſo
tion muſt vary, from age to
changes of language will alwa
mon ſenſe would dictate a
ſpelling. Admit Johnſon's pr
ic orthography for the ſtand
hered to in future; and the
nunciation of our national to
as great a difference between o
guage, as there is between t
preſent Engliſh and German.
more a guide to the pronuncia
phy of the German or Greek.
taking place, in conſequence o
vanced by Johnſon and othe
embraced by the nation.

ALL theſe objections appear
erable weight, when oppoſed to the great, ſubſtantial and
permanent advantages to be derived from a regular
national orthography.

SENSIBLE

SENSIBLE I am how much eaſ
provements, than to *introduce* ther
ſtarts the idea of difficulty; and ye
elty that excites the appearance;
ination of the propoſal, the difficu
we firmly *believe* a ſcheme to be p
is *half* accompliſhed. We are m
red by fear from making an att
the encounter.

HABIT alſo is oppoſed to chang
our errors dear to us. Having ſu
ties in childhood, we forget the la
the perplexity we ſuffered in the
the progreſs of our ſtudies to have
ſy.* What ſeems intrinſically ri
habit.

INDOLENCE is another obſtac
The moſt arduous taſk a reforme
make people *think*; to rouſe the
which, like the mantle of ſleep,
and contentment.

BUT America is in a ſituation t
great reformations; and the preſe
lar degree, auſpicious. The m
country have been awakened. N
for many years, preſenting new o
unexpected diſtreſſes have called
invention; and the application o
demanded every poſſible exerciſe o
Attention is rouſed; the mind ex

* THUS moſt people ſuppoſe the preſent
the *eaſieſt* and *beſt*. This opinion is derived from habit; the new mode
of ſpelling propoſed would ſave three fourths of the labor now beſtowed in
learning to write our language. A child would learn to ſpell as well in
one year, as he can now in four. This is not a ſuppoſition—it is an aſ-
ſertion capable of proof; and yet people, never knowing, or having for-
got the labor of learning, ſuppoſe the preſent mode to be the eaſieſt
No perſon, but one who has taught children, has any idea of the diff
culty of learning to ſpell and pronounce our language in its preſent form

tellectual faculties invigorated
to receive improvements, w
nations, whoſe habits have n
events.

NOW is the time, and *thi*
may expect ſucceſs, in attemp
language, ſcience and govern
here propoſed, may be fatal;
government, the minds of m
dolence; a national acquieſc
and poſterity be doomed to
which time and accident will

LET us then ſeize the preſ
a *national language*, as well a
Let us remember that there
the opinions of other natio
people, our reputation abro
things, we ſhould be federal
do not reſpect *ourſelves*, we
nations will not reſpect us. I
upon the mind of every Am
means of commanding reſpec
the character and dignity
people.

To excite the more attent
here ſubjoin what Dr. Frank
to effect a reform in our mo
philoſopher has ſuffered notl
notice. He very early diſcov
attend the learning of our la
ſual ingenuity, invented a pla
objection can be made to his
tion of *new* characters, for
ſmall ſtroke, connecting the letters, would anſwer all
the purpoſes of new characters; as theſe combinations
would thus become ſingle letters, with preciſe definite
ſounds and ſuitable names.

A

* SEE his Miſcellaneous Works. p. 470. Ed. Lond. 1779.

A SPECIMEN of the Doctor's ſp
given, as I have not the proper ty
ments in favor of a reformed mo
given in his own words.

COPY of a Letter from Miſs S——
who had ſent her his Scheme of
Dated, Kenſington (England) Se

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE tranſcribed your al
think might be of ſervice to thoſe
an accurate pronunciation, if that
I ſee many inconveniences, as we
would attend the bringing your le
into common uſe. All our etym
conſequently we could not aſcer
many words; the diſtinction too
ferent meaning and *ſimilar* found w
leſs we living writers publiſh new
believe we muſt let people ſpell or
(as we find it eaſieſt) do the ſam
eaſe and with ſincerity I can, in t
myſelf,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful and affect

Dr. Franklin.

* THIS indefatigable gentleman, amidſt
public and private, has compiled a Dictiona
form, and procured types to be caſt for prin
too old to purſue the plan; but has honore
manuſcript and types, and expreſſed a ſtrong
take the taſk. Whether this project, ſo dee
try, will ever be effected; or whether it will
prejudice, remains for my countrymen to determine.

† THIS lady overlooked the other ſide of the queſtion; viz. that by a reform of the ſpelling, words now ſpelt alike and pronounced differently, would be diſtinguiſhed by their letters; for the nouns *abuſe* and *uſe* would be diſtinguiſhed from the verbs, which would be ſpelt *abuze, uze*; and ſo in many inſtances. See the anſwer below.

Dr. FRANKLIN'S *An*

DEAR MADAM,

THE objection you make
"that it will be attended wi
ficulties," is a very natural c
when any reformation is pro
government, laws, and even
wheel carriages. The true qu
there will be no difficultie
whether the difficulties may
whether the conveniences v
greater than the inconvenienc
culties are only in the begini
they are once overcome, the
either you or me, who ſpell we
again the difficulty of changi
is not ſo great, but that we n
a week's writing. As to the
the two difficulties are comp
them true ſpelling in the preſe
ing them the new alphabet a
ing to it, I am confident that
the leaſt. They naturally fa
ready, as much as the impe
will admit of; their preſer
becauſe contrary to the pre
new rules it would be *good*.*
ing to ſpell well in the old w
tain it; thouſands and thouſa
without ever being able to a
difficulty continually increaſi
ally varies more and more
foreigners it makes the learni
guage, as written in our boo

Now

* THIS remark of the Doctor is very juſt and obvious. A countryman writes *aker* or *akur* for *acre*; yet the countryman is *right*, as the word *ought* to be ſpelt; and we laugh at him only becauſe *we* are accuſtomed to be *wrong*.

† THIS is a fact of vaſt conſequence.

Now as to the inconveniences
firſt is, "that all our etymologies
ſequently we could not aſcertain t
words." Etymologies are at pre
but ſuch as they are, the old book
and etymologiſts would there fin
the courſe of time, change their
their ſpelling and pronunciation ;
to etymologies for their preſent me
call a man a *knave* and a *villain*,
ſatisfied with my telling him, that
riginally ſignified a *lad* or *ſervant*,
der *plowman*, or the inhabitant of a
preſent uſage only, the meaning o
termined.

YOUR ſecond inconvenience is,
tween words of different meanir
would be deſtroyed." That diſti
ſtroyed in pronouncing them ; and
alone of the ſentence to aſcertain
words, ſimilar in ſound, we intend
in the rapidity of diſcourſe, it will
written ſentences, which may be r
tended to more particularly in ca
we can attend to a paſt ſentence,
hurrying us along with new ones.

YOUR third inconvenience is,
already written would be uſeleſs.
ence would only come on graduall
I and you and other now living r
forget the uſe of them. People
read the old writing, tho they prac
the inconvenience is not greater th
happened in a ſimilar caſe in Italy
habitants all ſpoke and wrote Latin ; as the language
changed, the ſpelling followed it. It is true that at
preſent, a mere unlearned Italian cannot read the Lat-
in books, tho they are ſtill read and underſtood by many.

But

But if the ſpelling had ne
now have found it much
write his own language ;
have had no relation to ſou
ſtood for things ; ſo that i
ing the idea he has when
he muſt uſe the letters *Epi*

IN ſhort, whatever the d
ces now are, they will be n
than hereafter ; and ſome ti
or our writing will become
as to the difficulty of lear
would already have been
the Saxon ſpelling and writ

I am, my dear

Your's

London, Craven Street, Se

* THAT is, if the language had
been pronounced as the modern *Ital*
a complete anſwer to all objections t

† IN the ſame ridiculous manner,
wrong, tongue, true, rhetoric, &c. ar
nabur, rong, tung, tru, retoric.

The I