To Set Spell on End

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Source: *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Jul., 1906), pp. 325-326

Published by: [Modern Humanities Research Association](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3713456>

Accessed: 24/06/2014 20:26

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MISCELLANEOUS NOTES.

'TO SET SPELL ON END.'

Certes, dame, þou seist as hende;
And I shal setten spel on ende,
And tellen þe al.

Dame Siriz, 62.

IN Prof. Schipper's sixth edition of Zupitza's *Übungsbuch*—the first in which *Dame Siriz* appears—this expression was not commented on at all. Prof. Holthausen asked for an explanation in his review in *Engl. Studien* (31, 268). In the one now given in the seventh edition (Glossary, *in v.* 'setzen'), 'setzen on ende,' 'zu ende bringen,' Prof. Schipper was evidently inspired by Mätzner's note: 'say my speech to the end.' But it strikes one that there can hardly be any question as yet of saying the speech 'to the end,' for the lover is only just beginning. Moreover, when we come to think of it, the text does not say so, for 'on ende' is not 'to the end.' Mätzner's only quotation in support of his explanation has, it is true, 'to þan ende,' but with the verb 'to say,' not with 'to set.'

It is thus necessary to look for a different explanation, which is fortunately not far to seek. 'To set on end' suggests a stick or pole, or something similar, and this brings us to another 'spell,' *viz.* a 'spill.' If we now study the context, it becomes at once clearer. The lover is tentatively feeling his way; 'I hope,' he has said (37 ff.), 'that if I tell thee my errand thou mayst not become wroth,' and when he is encouraged by the lady's more than friendly reply ('even if thou shouldst speak me shame, I will not blame thee') all his hesitation disappears, and he says (61 ff.): 'Truly, Lady, thou speakest so kindly now, that I am determined to tell thee all.' For line 62, as will be immediately apparent, means nothing else than 'I am determined.'

The key to the difficulty is to be found in the phrase 'to set the spell up on end' borrowed from the game of 'knur and spell' (see *E. D. D. in v.* 'knur'). The 'spell' is 'a thin piece of wood with a

cavity at one end to receive the knur or ball... The spell acts as a lever to raise the ball to a proper height when it is struck with the batstick or bat.' Cf. *ib.*, *in v.* 'spell' as well as a slightly different description *in v.* 'knur.' To 'set up the spell on end' is therefore evidently to do one's best to send the ball in the proper direction; and the *E. D. D.* gives an example of the figurative use of the expression in Yorkshire, with the meaning 'to show firm determination for the mastery' (*in v.* 'spel,' *sub* 8, 'Ah's be fooarst to set t'spel up an end'), and then more generally, 'to be determined.' The expression is analogous to that in *Romeo and Juliet*, IV, 5, 6: 'to set up one's rest,' which may have been suggested by the game of Primero, although undoubtedly also understood in its military sense, as Keightley has urged. The two phrases mutually elucidate each other.

H. LOGEMAN.

'DEEP PATHAIRES' (*Arden of Feversham*, III, v, 51).

This word is certainly difficult, but I do not think that conjecture is any cure for it. The various proposals to alter it seem to be based on the assumption that the example quoted by Mr Littledale is unique and that the word is therefore imperfectly attested. This is not so; it occurs at least twice. This important evidence in its favour has escaped even the Argus eyes of the *N. E. D.* To the passage from *Arden of Feversham*, III, v, 51, should be added a parallel from W. Smith's *The Hector of Germanie*, 1615, sig. B 4 verso, where old Fitzwaters, rival to his own son for the hand of Floramel Clynton, surprises him in his wooing, draws upon him, and is held back by the steward. Young Fitzwaters cries:

If I could feare the wauing of a Sword,
 Mine enemies had frighted me ere now;
 But I'me invaluable [*sic*], like my minde,
 Not to be wounded but with darts of loue;
 And I as little estimate a Father
 In these Pathaires, as he esteemes my grieve.

'Suspires' is impossible here, and the recurrence of the word seems to me to dispose of such substitutes as 'petarres' and 'pathaines.' Two compositors could not blunder alike over such an out-of-the-way word. The case of 'the prenzie Angelo' in *Measure for Measure*, III, i, 95, is exactly parallel: 'prenzie' would have had a short shrift at the hands of most modern editors but for the fact that the epithet recurs, with marked distinctness and emphasis, in the next sentence. In the case of either word it seems impossible to doubt (1) that the printer copied it