

There are still many words whose orthography is uncertain; surely these might be settled according to certain rules, if none of the others can be changed. I fear that those who disbelieve in the possibility of change might draw an argument in support of their view from the fact that the subject has already been discussed, apparently without results, in this Society. In the first volume of the Proceedings (1842) there is an abstract of a paper on English Orthography, by Mr. Yates, and at the end the following sentence occurs:—“After the reading of this paper a discussion arose as to the doctrines advanced in it, and generally as to the best mode of reforming our English Orthography.”

But in spite of this, if a constitutional reform in the orthography of our language is in any degree possible, to render it still more worthy of our love and admiration, I humbly suggest that the initiation of such an enterprise could not proceed from fitter hands than those of the members of the Philological Society.

IV.—ON THE HOMERIC WORD *Δύσπαρι*.

By C. B. CAYLEY, Esq.

MOST readers of the Iliad will have some recollection of two passages (l. 3, v. 39, and l. 13. v. 769, *et seq.*), in which Hector, encountering his brother Paris in an angry or a peevish mood, launches at him an address beginning with the abusive line (I read it with one unquestionable digamma)

Δύσπαρι Φείδος ἄριστε γυναιμανὲς ἡπεροπεντά.

of which I will, for the present, leave the punctuation undetermined. It is usually understood as comprising four terms, nearly as Lord Derby translates,—

“Thou wretched Paris, fair in outward form,
Thou slave to woman, manhood’s counterfeit,”

(though here the last half-line is not exactly to the point). On grammatical grounds it might, at least as plausibly, be construed in two terms, and understood—Thou pernicious

Paris of exceeding comeliness, thou woman-crazed cajoler; which rendering could do no grave injustice to the coherence, or rather incoherence of the phrase, so long, I mean, as we consider Δύσπαρι as a single word, meaning *κακὲ Πάρι*, or *δύστηνε Π.* or *infauste Pari*, or the like; of which assumption I shall now question the propriety. There would certainly be something in such a formation startlingly repugnant to the analogy of other compounds in which *δυσ* is prefixed to a simple substantive, because these compounds are understood, not as substantives, but as adjectives, or as adjectival phrases, in which *δυσ* has an adverbial force, so that we might replace it by *κακῶς* or the like, replacing the subsequent element by an adjective or participle. Thus *δύσποτος* is, not *a bad fate*; but *ill-fated*; nor do we find *δυσχειμαρος* for *a bad winter*, but *δυσχειμαρος Δωδώνη* for *bleak-winter'd Dodona* (Il. xvi. 234), nor even *δυσμήτηρ* for *a bad mother*, but *μήτηρ δυσμήτηρ* for *an unmotherly mother* (Od. xxiii. 97). So that Δύσπαρι ought to mean something like *κακῶς Παριειδές*, or, *thou that hast unluckily become Paris*, or, *connected with Paris*, and not *thou wretched Paris* or anything of the kind. It may be hard to judge with confidence how far these analogies can have been strained; but a similar formation to Δύσπαρι would in modern languages be so uncouth as to pass all understanding. Suppose the nearest prefixes we have to *δυσ* in their received acceptation are English *mis* and French *mé*, as in *misbeliever*, *miscreant*, *mécreant*. Perhaps in strict etymology *mis* is formed from Latin *minus*; and a *miscreant* is a *minus credens*, or, person who believes less than his neighbours, and is therefore generally voted a *misbeliever* or *miscreant*. Perhaps the French *mé* is sometimes from Latin *malè*, sometimes from *minus* (compare *mécontent* with Italian *mal-contento*, and *mépris* with Spanish *menosprecio*); and that English borrowers of words of this kind, hunting in a wrong track for etymological propriety or the "restitution of decayed intelligence," have turned *mécreant* into *miscreant* like *minus credens* when it should have become *malcreant* like *malè credens*. At any rate, *mis*, *mé*, have by usage become equivalent to *δυσ* or *κακῶς*: and yet, if an Englishman called

his neighbour, not *mis-creant*, but *mis-John* or *mis-Peter*, or let us say, to avoid feminine associations, if a Frenchman called his neighbour *mé-Jean* or *mé-Pierre*, a mortal thus addressed would feel himself, I am inclined to think, considerably more puzzled than offended. And if Hector had really called his handsome brother *Δύσπαρι* (or, as it were, *mé-Paris*), he would have showed, it appears to me, that he spoke Greek with no less an audacity than that with which he confronted the Telamonian missiles.

Nor am I reconciled to the compound *Δύσπαρι* by the analogy of *Κακοῖλιον* in the *Odyssey* (xix. 597): for *κακοῖλιον* is very like in sound to *κακὴν Ἴλιον*: and *κακὸς* is a familiar adjective. Perhaps *δυσ* was an adjective at some primeval epoch (like *ἡδύς*, the root of *εὖ*); but this usage can hardly have come down to the Homeric age. It is, however, more likely that *δυσ* has a real adverbial termination, like *ἐγγύς*, whether the latter be a corruption of *ἐγγυ-θι* or *ἐγγυ-σε*, or otherwise formed.

Again, the word before us cannot be justified by the appearance of *Δυσελένη* and *Δινόπαρις* in Euripides (*Or.* 1318 and *Hec.* 944), even if we do not construe these words adjectively; for Homer was already an antique classic in the time of Euripides, who may have misunderstood, or else affected to misunderstand him for the sake of a quaint epithet. This possibility leads me to conjecture, that in the line I first cited from the *Iliad* *δυσ* is a particle separated from its true belongings, just like *κατὰ* in *Il.* i. 40, where we read *κατὰ πíoνα μήρ' ἔκρα*, (or *μήρια κῆα*), for *κατα κῆα* (or *κάκκηα*) *πíoνα μήρια*, *I burned down the fat thighs*, and like other prepositions in innumerable instances. We may then understand *Δύς Πάρι Φείδος ἄριστε* as a transposition, *metri gratiâ*, for *Πάρι δυσ-Φείδος-ἄριστε*, *thou Paris unluckily most comely*; and the formation of the compound would be almost exactly analogous to the beautiful word *δυσαριστοτόκεια* in the speech of Thetis, *l.* 18, v. 54—

"ὦ μοι ἐγὼ δειλῇ, ὥ μοι δυσαριστοτόκεια.

which I venture to translate—

"Me wretched, in motherhood matchless to my own desolation."

In this manner the former line may be understood to mean, *Thou Paris unluckily most comely, thou woman-crazed cajoler*, and will cease to present a jumble of good and bad appellatives, or at least of pleasant and unpleasant, in which we surely miss the connective and adversative particles with which Homer's diction is for the most part so richly furnished.

V.—ON THE SO-CALLED 'A PRIVATIVVM.'

By T. HEWITT KEY, Esq.

THAT the truer form of this prefix is *av* is now very generally admitted : and I find it the less necessary to dwell upon this point, because in the third volume of our Proceedings (pp. 52, 53), I have already dealt with the question, in particular endeavouring to explain the anomaly by which some forty words in the Greek vocabulary, as *αεικης*, *αυπνος*, have dropped the nasal, although a vowel immediately follows, the original forms no doubt having possessed some intermediate consonant, as *s* or *h*, or else a *w*. Thus the two words just quoted seem to have been deduced from obsolete forms, *αφεικης*, *αυπνως*. What was stated in the paper referred to is confirmed by the prevalence for the most part of a nasal in the corresponding prefixes of allied languages ; as—

Lat.	Sansk.	Gael.	Welsh.	Gothic, etc.	Dutch.	Old Norse.	Swed.	Dan.
in	an	ana, an,	am	an	un	on	o	o u

In the Sanskrit Grammar published by the Professor at Oxford, the form *a* is assigned to the prefix, but with the qualifying remark that, 'when a word begins with a vowel, अ is euphonicaly substituted.' But in this he was no doubt biased by the long received doctrine of classical scholars. It may be as well to add that the "etc." attached to the heading "Gothic" must be interpreted as including German of all ages, Old Saxon, Anglo-Saxon, and of course our own language.