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The Spelling of Names

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"In the April number of your excellent journal, our esteemed friend, Mr. William Brewster, has acknowledged—what I am sure no one would ever have dreamed charging him with—that he has experienced a difficulty in spelling correctly even so insignificant a word as a proper name, and in his strait he appeals to me for assistance. Now, although I am indicated, together with Mr. Brewster's fellow-committeeman, Dr. Coues, and the revered president of an ancient University, as one of those who does not know how to spell his own name, which is a very sad state of affairs indeed, yet I will try to explain why "these things are thus." It is possible Mr. Brewster's former intimate knowledge of philology (which he tells us, and he alone would say that, is now reduced to "simple ignorance") has been obliterated by the peculiar atmosphere which has enveloped him at the meetings of a prominent A.O.U. Committee, of which he is one of the most highly respected members. If he will permit me, I would recall to Mr. Brewster's memory the fact that in philological science a word is spelled according to the root or source from which it is derived, and it not infrequently happens that several words, although very differently spelled, have the same meaning. To give an instance of this effect of derivation, BREWSTER is always spelled in the way it was given, and why? Because all the

Brewsters have the same origin or source, for the ancestor of every one who has borne that name, without a single exception, first appeared in the Mayflower.

"With the name that has given our friend so much trouble, the case is slightly different, and those who bear it are all right, no matter under what guise of orthography they appear, even should it be the one assumed in Boston, for, having sprung from different roots or sources, in this respect unlike the Brewsters, all the spellings are perfectly correct, each after its own kind in strict accordance with philological rules. I trust the faded memories of student days, in spite of his occasional unphilological surroundings, will assert themselves in renewed force, and permit our esteemed friend to perceive and appreciate the clearness of the above explanation.

"But I cannot close, Mr. Editor, without expressing my very great satisfaction at beholding so eminent a member of the A.O.U. Committee on Nomenclature a-gunning for blunders. May he continue his meritorious search, and may it be attended with more success than in this his first effort, and should he again desire my assistance, I could point him to a field near to his hand where, without stint, he could gather trophies worthy of his prowess."

DANIEL GIRAUD ELLIOT