

various kinds, at home and abroad, my first attempt in this regard being to find some non-English word possessed of the proper significance, that would readily fall into line with our common speech. My failure in this attempt was complete. I then essayed numberless English word clippings, hoping to make the elision, or contraction, of some one English word serve my purpose. This attempt likewise resulted in failure. Finally, by cutting off the last two letters of the English word *that* and the last letter of the word *one*, and uniting their remaining letters in their original sequence in these two words, I produced that word now proposed for the needed pronoun—to wit,

THON;

to the *th* in which I would give the same sound as in *they*. This pronoun's three cases will naturally suggest themselves to its user as being nominative, *thon*; possessive, *thons*; objective, *thon*. Note its literal and euphonic resemblance to the other pronouns, and that its final consonant has a neutral savor significant of its purport.

One thing I surely may be permitted to say in defence of this word, that it is simply an abbreviation, made in a spirit of sincere respect for the beautiful symmetry of the English tongue, and a due reverence for etymologic consistency; and that it is the expression of an honest attempt in the department of word-invention, which every user of our language, though writing never so little, is encouraged to enter by the numberless evidences, abounding throughout the entire range of its vocabulary, since its origin, of that inventive spirit under whose influence words have shaped themselves more and more so as to equal in speed of utterance one's mental action. I could also urge the imperative need I have experienced as a lawyer, when making certain written or spoken statements, by reaching some part thereof where such a pronoun as this must appear, else I must recast the offending sentence on the spot, or plunge on defiantly through some common, yet hideous, solecism.

The acknowledgment of a need for such a pronoun as this being universal, any argument in advocacy of it clearly would be a work of supererogation; and, as illustrations of its use doubtless will present themselves to every reader of this letter, I will give but one or two myself: If Mr. and Mrs. A. were joint clients of mine in a suit at law, I might address a note thus: 'If Mr. or Mrs. A. comes to the courthouse on Monday next I will be there to meet *thon*.' Or, suppose Mr. A. and Mrs. A. quarrel with each other and each comes to me, without the other's knowledge thereof, for advice in the premises, and I do the unprofessional act of effecting their mutual forgiveness and reconciliation; if I afterward undertake to describe to my wife the happy reunion of Mr. and Mrs. A. I may use this sentence: 'Then loving words for each other burst from their lips, each excusing the other and blaming—you cannot say himself or herself because one is a man and the other is a woman, but you can finish this sentence with this new pronoun—'*thon*.' Use of it will so individualize and pronominalize (so to speak) this word as to show its manifest grammatical distinction from the words *that* and *one* of which it is born; and the mental process by which it leads its user to the noun it represents will, I think, be found to be easy and natural, it not being an arbitrary sign.

ERIE, PA., July 23, 1884.

C. C. CONVERSE.

A New Pronoun.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE CRITIC:

THAT a new pronoun, of the singular number and common gender, is needed in the English language, is a fact patent to every English speaker and writer. That the incorporation of this pronoun with the grammar of our tongue and a general use of it in speaking and writing would be greatly facilitated by its formation from English word-elements and sounds which are already in common use, doubtless every English speaker and writer would unhesitatingly admit: And, as many of the most useful current words in the English language are abbreviations employed for despatch, it may safely be assumed, in touching upon this subject, that the further abbreviating of any English words, in such wise as to help language, in its perpetual race with thought, can but tend to its improvement, the first aim of language being to communicate our thoughts; the second to do it accurately; the third with despatch. The English word-makers and word-writers of our day are clearly practicalizing this assumption, and the philological atmosphere is full of winged words, the aim, in the making of which is to produce a minimum of word-body with a maximum of flying power.

Because of this condition of things philological, do I venture upon my present suggestion of a certain lingual abbreviation and compound, to be known as this pronoun, believing that such a word would be more likely to come into general use than an entirely new one, as concerning it the memory is not taxed by any novelty of word-essence, but simply by that of its form, the ordinary meaning of the two words, which are abbreviated and blended so as to form this new pronoun, being carried into, and preserved in, this new pronoun, while a strain of the euphony of the two previously separate verbal entities familiarizes the ear with the sound of the new word. This belief of mine was reached several years ago, after much digging among word-roots of