

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AS SPOKEN AND WRITTEN.

IT is surely needless here to set forth the importance of facilitating to foreigners, especially in Asia, a knowledge of the English language, and of extirpating plebeian errors among ourselves. As little can it be needful to insist on the grave difficulty interposed by the discord between our writing and our speaking. The topic no longer belongs to mere closet-students, for it has been taken up by our School Boards; and the enthusiastic party which would, in the interest of education, revolutionize our orthography, now joins hands with kindred spirits in the United States; where especially the Germans, annoyed to find how hard to their children is the mastery of English orthography as compared to German, are naturally and rightfully impatient of its artificial difficulties. In calling those enthusiastic who desire to effect uniformity and simplicity at the cost of simple *neography* (that is, as though their problem were—to create literature for a language as yet unwritten), no disparagement of enthusiasm is intended; indeed to achieve a conquest far less complete much enthusiasm is needed. Still, it is here contended, that those who fix their aim so high have no due understanding of the task before them, nor any discernment that to win a stronghold does not ensure keeping it when won. Their argument (even that of the widely learned Professor Max Müller) does not touch the bottom of the subject.

The history of the English language has been peculiarly unfavourable to uniformity in writing its sounds. No principles were laid down among Anglo-Saxon writers; and Norman clerks, importing Norman words, caused a confusion, which was increased by Latin and Greek superimposed. In modern days Dr. Samuel Johnson's dictionary, which more than any other has for the present fixed our

spelling, followed no intelligent principles. In different shires the pronunciation differed and differs. Between North and South England there is sensible variety, and much greater between England and Ireland. The vastness of our literature and its diffusion in foreign countries complicates the problem of converting our two languages—that which is spoken and that which is written—into a harmonious pair. A sudden jump which should break continuity of development would present to the foreigner and to the child *two* written languages instead of one, and would presently aggravate difficulty for any but very superficial knowledge. No fact is more obvious than that our spoken language (as perhaps that of all nations) varies with *time* as well as place. One function of literature is to arrest this change, as far as may be; to regulate the admission of new words, and to forbid novelties of pronunciation, especially all that promote confusion. Small indeed is the shifting in orthography, compared to the innovations in utterance, especially in a country which has many provincial dialects and no public schools in which uniformity of pronunciation is cultivated. Such exactly is our case. We barely yesterday attained any general system of national teaching, and in it we have not even begun to make elocution a substantive object of culture. Precisely because the pronunciation has changed while the orthography is nearly fixed, a far greater chasm has arisen between the written and the spoken language than existed two centuries ago. Yet, as if blind to this fact, people are vehemently urging us to take that which is ever shifting as our standard, and remodel into conformity with it that which is comparatively stable. Nor is this the only extravagance of the proposal: its advocates seem blind also to the fact, that the written medium of thought is at once more distinctive and far more copious than the spoken tongue; and they are proposing to degrade the nobler instrument into the weakness of the less noble. It is surprising to hear a learned man gravely reason that we seldom make any serious mistake in listening to a speech, as to whether a *soul* or a *sole* is intended, or in what sense *sole* is used; therefore, there will be no harm in adopting a single mode of writing the four words *right, rite, write, wright*. Undeniably it is a defect that any such ambiguity exists as the pronouncing *sole* and *soul* alike: but because we have this defect in one instance, are we therefore to introduce it, knowingly and voluntarily, in other instances, and to confound four more words because we have already confounded two? Nay, we are coolly told that we might drop the word *rite* out of the language and use *ceremonial* for it; and drop the use of *sole* in the sense of *alone, only*. No doubt the wear and tear of time does thus cast out words which are uncomfortably ambiguous; and modern Greek instructively shows how the immense degradation of the national utterance has forcibly ejected or remodelled numbers of classical words; but it is rather despotic to suggest extinction of words in the literature where

is no ambiguity, merely because a corrupt pronunciation has introduced ambiguity. Surely, if we must change, the more rightful way is to adopt the Irish pronunciation of *soul* (*sowl*), which is very probably the correct one, and certainly is the more convenient. And this points to the thought, which will presently be enlarged on, that the Irish in some important respects have evidently retained a purer and better pronunciation than that of London and Southern England; nay, in one respect better than that of all England. Hence, instead of ridiculing *all* their peculiarities as brogue, some of them (if we are wise) will rather be imitated and cultivated, thereby bringing our utterances nearer to the written standard, with advantage also to distinctiveness.

Be that as it may, it is at least absolutely necessary to *define* what is the *right* pronunciation (whether or not we can persuade this generation to adopt it) before we can wisely begin so vast a change as a total remodelling of our orthography; especially when it is possible that before those die out who are "bigoted" against the new spelling, the pronunciation might make new and grave deviation from the much-lauded phonotype. This is every way to be expected, unless in the national schools the tendencies to slang and laziness of utterance be held in with a strong bridle. Such, according to Virgil, is the proneness of all things to degenerate,

"Sic omnia fatis

In pejus ruere . . .
Non aliter quam qui adverso vix flumine lembum,
Remigiis subigit,—si brachia forte remisit," &c.

In the memory of the present writer, change (he would rather say corruption, depravation) has been observable enough; and the remark may be extended to France. Paris had an Academy, to which all France looked up. In accordance with its *decisions* a grammar for the English was compiled by M. de Lévizac. The seventh edition, dated 1817, was revised by M. Stephen Pasquier of the University of Paris. (I have before me my school-boy copy.) It lays down (p. 22), "H, when aspirated, is sounded with a *strong guttural impulse*, as in 'harpe, 'héros, 'hideux, 'honte, and about a hundred more words." The Greek aspirate is prefixed to the *h*, as if to make assurance doubly sure; and certainly until of late I quite believed, from old remembrance, that in "C'est une honte," the *h* was sounded more emphatically than in English speech. But now I am informed by most decisive authority that *no* initial *h* at all is to be heard in Parisian utterance. A decree from the Academy, without schoolmasters to enforce it, apparently has been unfruitful of result, although all educated France intended reverential submission. Other changes of pronunciation are also going on.

That which early in this century was called namby-pamby, or the pronunciation of "a dandy" (itself a word quite new then), appears to

be in London current and fashionable—the use of short *a* instead of broad *a* in grant, command, grass, task, and numerous other words; and besides, an entire suppression of *r* at the end of a syllable or before a consonant. Thus *lord, hard, door, lorn, pore, pork* are sounded *laud, haad, daw, lawn, paw, pawk*, without reproof, if I am rightly informed. *Arms* and *Alms* are alike corrupted into *Aams*. Are we now invited to change our writing into conformity with this corruption, for the convenience of school-children, who are required to learn English quickly? Probably Northerners will say, No: but in any case we have to define what is right. My mother was a Londoner: she may have been a little old-fashioned in her tongue, but she did not confound Which with Witch, Wheel with Weal, &c., but gave to the *h* in Wh its rightful sound. In the combination Wh the English writing has deviated unwisely from the Anglo-Saxon, which had Hw for it, as in Hwile, *which*; Hwif, *while*; Hwistl, *whistle*; Hwit, *white*. This corrupt sounding of Wh as mere *w* damages at least seventeen root-words, and surely ought to be rebuked as sharply as the perversion of Horse, Hand, Hedge, Hill, into 'Orse, 'And, 'Edge, 'Ill, &c. W for Hw is an especial disgrace of Southern England. At least Ireland and Scotland are staunch for the *h*; how far northward in England the mischief has now spread, may be hard to decide. My school-master always sounded in Whole the *w* as well as the *h*; which was not pedantry, if (as I am told) in some counties this is the pronunciation of the peasants. To distinguish Whole from Hole, is an advantage; and in spite of Anglo-Saxon hael (hale), Whole *may* be related to Wheel. As a general remark—if any one is too old to change his utterance, he can at least confess and counsel the right way to the new generation. The word Whole suggests two small corrections which are needed in orthography: first, we ought to write Wholely (just as Solely, Vilely) so as to secure the sounding of double *l*; next, in the unseemly word Whore, we ought to omit the *w*, which is a stupid, causeless addition. Wickliffe writes *Hore*. *Wholly* ought not to rhyme to *Holy*.

Further, it may be remarked, that in many names of places the *r* of *wick* and *wich* is omitted by Londoners and others; as in Berwick, Dulwich, Greenwich, Keswick, Norwich. But in Keswick itself I observed that residents sounded the *w*, as indeed in the town of Derby its name is sounded as it is spelt; while the aristocracy call it Darby.* Names, both of places and of men, are a problem apart; and (it may seem) need first attention and summary treatment. As in manuscript it is pre-eminently important that names be clearly written, because it is impossible or hazardous to guess at them by the context; so in speech the sound of a name ought to be in close harmony with the writing. If we insist on writing Keswick, Greenwich,

* "They have learned from their grooms," said an old lady to me in my boyhood, "to say Darby and Barkshire."

with the *w*, we ought to sound the *w*; conversely, if it be thought better to drop the *w* in utterance, we ought not to write it. Considering the value attached to archives and legal documents, few will desire to omit the *w* in writing the names; and as there is no intelligible gain in omitting it in speech, it seems evident that our pronunciation ought to go back to the earlier standard. If any one's time is so precious that he cannot say "a gentleman," but feels constrained to say "a gent," of course we cannot put him into Newgate for the offence; but we can condemn it as vulgar, and such condemnation has its weight. To speak more generally—we are forced to admit in many words two pronunciations: one, which alone is correct, which ought always to be used on solemn occasions, or in any public address, in poetry and serious reading; another, permissible in rapid and familiar speech, where small deviations from accuracy may pass. So we tolerate *tuppence* for *two-pence*; but not in the parable of the Good Samaritan. In poetry, as we prefer the old "medicinal" to "médicinal" which has mischievously supplanted it, so we may hold to "médicine" in three syllables as alone correct, though in homely speech we admit "méd'cin." Are we therefore to write it *medsn*? But in names it seems needful to be pedantically accurate. It is deceptive to say *Ciciter* when we mean *Cirencéster*; and many persons are therefore sensible enough to utter the latter word in full. When we can endure the length of *Chichester* and *Colchester*, is it a great drain on our time and strength to say *Gloúcester*, *Wórcester*, and not *Gloster*, *Wooster*? If, to humour Shakespeare, we *must* say *Gloster*, then let us write *Gloster*, as in the old books, and admit a double spelling. To accept *Gloucester* and *Gloster* side by side, and pronounce one with three syllables, the other with two, is just what the Greeks did in poetry and prose, or in various dialects. So in *Pope*, *Diomed* and *Diomedes*, *Merion* and *Meriones*. Grave remonstrance may fitly be made to families who write themselves *Beauchamp*, *Cholmondely*, *Colquhoun*, and pronounce the names *Beecham*, *Chumley*, *Cohoun*. If they are proud of the old spelling, ought they not to be equally proud of the old pronunciation?

No one, I suppose, will desire to present to the foreigner two or three dialects of England, instead of a single normal language. To go on as we are, has its serious inconvenience; yet it does not display and avow arrogance of one part of the United Kingdom to another. London does not now say to the great northern towns, "We are the metropolis; our pronunciation must be your standard;" nor to the Irish does she say, "Let us have none of your brogue." So to speak outright certainly would not win their efforts to strive for a common standard of utterance: but this is what one county will have to say to all the rest, if we attempt to fix the pronunciation without a previous well-considered survey based on principle and right. Before proceeding to enunciate what principles ought to guide us where there is local

diversity, it may be permitted to make some minor suggestions as to the choice of spelling where choice is allowed, where also there is no variety of pronunciation. For this is a small field, as to which there is least occasion for controversy; in which therefore one may hope for earliest agreement. Next, I will suggest a few cautious innovations.

First, then, I place words in which a double spelling is current; and I maintain (what I hope will be generally conceded) that we ought to select that mode of writing which agrees the better with the sound. According to which principle we ought to write:

Jail, *not* Gaol.
 Jailer, *not* Gaoler.
 Show, *not* Shew.
 Hiccup, *not* Hiccough.
 Hocks, *not* Houghs.
 Chesnut, *not* Chestnut.
 Guage, *not* Gauge.
 Lackey, *not* Lacquey.
 Licorice, *not* Liquorice.
 Alchymy, as of old.

Chymist, *not* Chemist.
 Chymistry, *not* Chemistry.
 Accounts, *not* Accompts.
 Accountant, *not* Accomptant.
 Harken, *not* Hearken.
 Cartridge, *not* Cartouch.
 Vial, *not* Phial.
 Skeptic, *not* Sceptic; and
 perhaps a few others.

Assailants who aim at a total upturn swell their forces by producing some of these words. Their argument, without these, is abundantly strong in favour of partial change and other aids. By not conceding this, we strengthen them.

Gaol, Gaoler, stand alone in English with *g* soft before *a*. Of course the French *Geôle* is the origin; but in this, *e* follows the *g*. Few now write *Shew*; but the word is produced by Phonotypists to reproach us. Strew and Strow are (I believe) both good, as verbs; identical in sense, differing slightly in pronunciation. To Straw is a third variety, but nearly obsolete. Hiccough is confessed to be a mere fancy. Hough, Houghs, are quite isolated in giving to *gh* the sound of *k*. To retain the *t* before *n* in Chesnut *because* it comes from Latin Castanus, is as weak as it would be to write *Lacme*, *Poulsesser* in modern French. Skeptic is the American way of writing.

Secondly, where irregularity is *unique*, or nearly so, the public will never be sorry to get rid of it. A few illustrations shall be ventured.

1. *Schedule* is the only word in use in which *Sch* has the German sound. (How the obsolete *Seneschal* was pronounced, I do not know.) I think we ought to write *Shedule*, in conformity with *Sheet* from *scida*; also *Scism* (as *Scissors*), *not* *Schism*. Then every remaining *Sch* means *Sk*. 2. Clerk, Serjeant, and Heart, Hearth, have *er* or *ear* for *ar*. Clerk has a new sense, diverse from Cleric. Might we not extinguish these exceptions? 3. *Yacht*, alone in the language, has *ch* mute. Who will regret the loss of the *ch*? We shall only need then some fit mark on the *a* to denote the right sound. 4. By collating *Conceive*, *Conceit*; *Deceive*, *Deceit*, we see that *Receive* ought to form *Receit*. The *p* in *Receipt* is surely a mere vexation. 5. The word *Guild* until

recently (in London at least) used to rhyme to Mild, Child, Wild. I never heard in my early days Guild, Guildhall, sounded with short *i*. Now, it seems, Guild is gratuitously confounded with Gild. On Aristotle's principle, that perspicuity is the first excellence of language, we may claim to go back to the long *i* in this word, though we cannot help confounding Guilt with Gilt in our utterance. 6. That *ia* has no proper place in *Parliament*, has been pointed out by Mr. E. Jones of Liverpool, and, no doubt, by others. *Parlement* is the old and only right spelling; and the sooner it is resumed the better. 7. *Busy*, *Business*, with *u* sounded as *i*, is a peculiar anomaly, and without historical justification. *Busy* is in Dutch *Besig*, in Anglo-Saxon *Bisig*. Surely we ought, without hesitation, to write *Bisy*, *Business*, if not rather *Bizy*, *Business*. 8. Perhaps ten words end in *mb*, with *b* mute. *Tomb* got its *b* from the French, which probably had it from the *Masilian* Greek; *Womb*, *Lamb*, have *b* from the Anglo-Saxon; but Dutch has *Wam*, Swedish *Vame*, Danish *Vom*; also German has *Lamm*, Dutch and Danish *Lam*. In Latin, *Tum-ulus* has *Tum* for root. Certainly if we wrote *Toom*, *Woom*, *Lam*, no one would miss the *b*. But in *Limb*, *Numb* (*Benumb*), *Thumb*, the *b* has no support in etymology, nor in kindred languages. In *Dumb* it has perhaps a small excuse from Icelandic. *Lam* would presently look to us as natural as *Ram*, *Ham*, *Jam*, *Sham*, *Slam*; *Lim* (the true Anglo-Saxon) as *Slim*, *Dim*, *Rim*, *Brim*, *Prim*; *Num*, *Benum*, *Thum*, as *Gum*, *Hum*, *Rum*, *Sum*. But in the word *Climb*, the *b* has both etymological reason (compare French *Grimper*) and potential life, as *Clamber* shows. In *Cumberland* I have heard *Climb* sounded with short *i* and vocal *b*, which I doubt not is the old and only true pronunciation; nor is it more difficult than to sound *p* in *Limp*, *Imp*, *Jump*. Here, to write *Clime* for *Climb* would be mere depravation. 9. In two words, beginning with *Bu*, the *u* is strangely superfluous. I do not mean in *Buoy*; for careful speakers rightly sound the *u*, and do not confound the word with *Boy*; but I mean, *Build* and *Buy*. The German *Bild* at once ought to warn us of what is right, and embolden us to drop the *u*. In *Wedgwood's* learned and valuable dictionary I find that to *Build* was in old English expressed by *Bylle*, even the *d* being unessential, as in *Sound*, *Soun*: but for *u* there seems no pretence. The verb *Buy* was in old English *Bigge*, again without *u*. *Wycliffe* writes *Bigger* for *Buyer*. Unless we are going to extirpate *gh* in *Nigh*, *High*, and many other words, it is obvious to correct *Buy*, *Buyer*, into *Bigh*, *Bigher*. The past tense, *Bought*, still displays the *gh*. 10. The eccentric word *Women* ought certainly to be written *Wimen*. 11. *Nephew* should be *Neveuw*, *French* *Neveu*. *Dabitur licentia sumta pudenter.*

But to resume the general question, "How is the best pronunciation to be settled?" Here we may rest on two principles: first, that is best which gives (mentally) most distinction of sense; secondly, when other things are equal, that is best which (orally) is best heard.

The second condition is almost identical with preference of long Italian vowels, which are melodious, or fitted to music. Each topic admits much illustration; but I will advert to the latter first. Consonants are not so well heard as vowels, or at least as long vowels. In the hum of an assembly the hearers of vowels are often able to guess at consonants which they cannot hear. Men with large lungs, as practised singers, can peal forth long vowels with a strength hard to limit, because these vowels can be dwelt upon; but liquids and sibilants are the only consonants on which the voice can dwell; and of vowel sounds, the Italian are the clearest, especially broad *a*, long *o*, and long *u*. Of all vowels, the short *i* is the hardest to utter audibly, as will easily be found in shouting out such a name as Dickson or Hickson (Dixon, Hixon). On the ground of melody and ease of hearing, I claim for our old-fashioned southern broad *a* (Italian *a*) and for the still fuller-voiced *aw*, *au* (modern Greek ω), a preference over the narrower sounds by which the more northern counties have been invading the south for fifty years past. Let me denote Italian broad *a* by \grave{a} . To me the standard pronunciation in the following words (and many others) is:

áss, gráss, páss; àsk, tàsk, gràsp, bàsket; grànt, commànd, plànt;
Frànce, trànce, glànce; fàst, làst, pàst; fàsten, vást, càst; càstle,
fàther, ràther, &c.;

in which the utterance of short *a* is by many thought elegant. Again, let me denote Greek ω (English *au*, *awe*) by \grave{o} . In my mother tongue I learnt: òff, dòff, tòss, cròss, sóft, óft, lòft, còffee, còffer, òffer, &c.; but I am told that a short *o* is the now prevalent fashion, and is much prettier. Further, the clipping of words, to which a slipshod pronunciation ever tends, by omitting vowels, lessens the number of syllables and crams consonants together. This surely ought to be resisted with all our might. The greatest defect of our language as to melody (which is nearly measured by penetration of the air) is its excess in consonants; a mischief which the contraction of words by elision of the vowels ever tends to aggravate. The vulgar are not satisfied with 'peach for impeach, 'prentice for apprentice, *spose* for suppose; but they would confound pelisse and police in *plice*. Nothing more distinguishes careful and cultured pronunciation than the accurate utterance of the unaccented vowels, generally short—a task which often is not easy. In Hystérical and Histórical the contrast of the accented vowels is clear enough; but it is not so easy to distinguish *e* from *o* in Mystery and History, Literal and Littoral, or to discriminate Accessary from Accessory, if indeed they ought to be two words. When unaccented vowels are long, as in Cóntrite, Fínite, Fémàle, no embarrassment arises: but when they are short, they are obscured and confused, and *a* is undistinguishable from *u*, or even from *e*, *i*. If we learned by the ear alone the words Mútàble, E'mphàsis,

Púrpose, Fávourable, Plánt, Lión, we might suppose the *ä* and the *ö* to be *ü*. Similarly Dámage, Rávage, Sávage, Órange, might seem to be Damej or Damij, Ravij, Savij, Orenj or Orinj. Again, *e* and *i* ending an unaccented syllable, cannot be discriminated; as in Pérmeate, Végétate, Gérminate, Persévère, Pársimony, Púurity. Such being the *natural* result of the stress accent placed strongly on one syllable, it would be a great error to invent a set of short vowels to define these varied utterances. It suffices to know on which syllable the stress falls; and this for the foreigner is sometimes the chief matter, in words of more than two syllables—a circumstance out of which will presently arise some discussion.

But, with such facts before us, it is evident that no recasting of our orthography can make the ear alone a guide to correct writing, unless we make disgraceful havoc of words.

But, continuing the argument of melody, we must admit, that if it is to dictate that the broad vowels *à, ò*, of the South shall dominate the narrow ones of the more northern counties, it equally decides against the Southerners in favour of the long Italian *û* as the true sound of *oo*. In Hull, for instance, they say *Book* with the long *oo* of southern *Fool*, and (as far as known to me) never give to *oo* the short southern sound. In the Midland counties also Room, Groom, have *oo* = *û*, but in my native London I learned to pronounce near twenty words with *oo* short; equivalent to the vowel of Puss, Full. They are Book, Brook, Cook (Cookery), Crook, Hook, Look, Nook, Rook (Rookery), Shook, Took; Broom, Room (Roomy), Groom (Bridegroom); Good, Hood (Hoodwink), Wood (Woody, Wooden), Stood, Foot, Wool (Woolly, Woollen). Not a single inconvenience appears from sounding every *oo* long; and if any high authority will enunciate that Yorkshire and the North are here right (hard as I might find it to adapt my tongue to the change), I should rejoice in it as removing arbitrary anomalies, and in some measure promoting audible speech. The new generation would grow up into the better way. Blood, Flood, Soot, remain anomalous in the South, as Foot in Lancashire,—sounded so as to rhyme with Nut!

I go back to illustrate the principle, that, of two rival pronunciations, that is better which better discriminates words, and aids to fix the sense. In the culture which ennobles a language there is a constant striving towards sharper distinction, which (by a perverted use of the word) Herbert Spencer would call "differentiation." In the Iliad *ἔλκος* and *ὤσειλή* indifferently mean a wound; but in prose Greek *τραῦμα* is a wound, *ἔλκος* an ulcer or sore, *ὤσειλή* a scar, *ἐσχάρα* the scab over a burn. This is a single illustration of a general fact. Accurate thought leads to distinctive phrase. Poets, for metre or rhyme, or to avoid prosaic accuracy, take liberties; so too do silly persons, thinking themselves witty when they are only coarse—as in saying the *hide* of a man for his skin; his *shell* (*testa, tête*) for his head; his *beak*

or *snout* for his nose; *amalgam* (μάλαγμα) for gold; *tin* for silver; *gizzard* and *pluck* (odious word!) for heart; and so on. Moreover by lazy pronunciation words slightly differing in sound are confounded, which above was illustrated by *police* and *pelisse*. We are bound to struggle against every such degradation of our tongue. The enemy is ever at work, attacking in detail; and we must resist in detail, or he beats us. Moreover our written tongue is sedulously cultivated for accuracy, while our spoken tongue has been left to the untender whims of slang and laziness. Necessarily our written medium of thought is both more copious and more accurately distinctive: we must vehemently refuse in a single word to degrade it, where it is more exact, in compliment to the spoken tongue. As said above, better to pronounce *Soul soul*, as the Irish do, than deliberately confound it with *Sole*. I have compiled a list of 207 groups of words, pairs or triplets, in which the written language makes distinctions unknown to us in speech. Granting that in very few cases of this list can a distinctive utterance be suggested, that is no reason for renouncing the written distinction. We are traitors if we surrender any point of superiority which our higher organ possesses. But sometimes it is not impossible to elevate the lower organ, the spoken tongue, by recovering for it lost discriminations. I have already named the *Wh* (*Hw*), but I proceed to treat of the *r*.

How far the Scots retain the full vibration of *r*, I less perfectly know: but every Irish gentleman seems to me accurately to pronounce it, and I cannot doubt that he has the true primitive sound, which we from carelessness have lost. For instance, we have three words, *Or*, *Ore*, *Oar*; for which the Irish have three sounds, but the English only two. The same is the case with *For*, *Fore*, *Four*. Notoriously in many languages the *r* is liable to transposition, but that does not necessarily lead to a weakening of its vibratory force. *R* is indeed among the consonants easiest to hear. At least, I think that in a room full of people *Mirror* would be better heard than even *Miller*; *Merry* certainly than *Mewy* (the "dandy" substitute), *Roar* than *Lone*, *Lawn*, though the last is a mouth-filling word. We emasculate the language by getting rid of as many *rs* as possible. See the process in the word *Iron*. Its proper sound is exactly as in *Irony*, and what can be better? This is still the Irish pronunciation; is also that which we English instinctively give to it in poetry or other solemn reading. But in the uneducated mouth the *r* was first transposed, as if we wrote *I-orn*, next it became *I-ern*, very similar to the Welsh *Haiarn*. Anglo-Saxon has *Iren* and *Isen*, German *Eisen*. It is open to possibility that the Welsh modified our pronunciation. Be that as it may, *I-arn* has almost been softened into *I-an* in careless lips, the *r* quite vanishing. But this is only one word out of a hundred.

So few persons seem to have pondered on the topic here brought forward that yet further illustration may be expedient. We have

no difficulty in distinguishing Own from Owen; nor if we sounded Bowl so as to rhyme with Fowl, should we be prone to mistake Bowl for Bowel, or Growl for Growel (if Gruel were so sounded, rhyming with Bowel); yet we cannot in speech discriminate Flour from Flower. Why is this? It is because we do not fully vibrate final *r*, but insert a furtive short vowel between it and the *ou*, converting Flour into Flou-är, Flou-ër. Growl is a monosyllable, but an Englishman seems forced to make Flour into two syllables.

We have almost made two letters out of *r*, which may be distinguished as the perfect *r* and the imperfect or broken *r*. Of these, the latter must be carefully noted for its influence on the vowel preceding. Our *r* is broken, when it ends a syllable or precedes a consonant; then a part of its vibration is lost, and the previous vowel is elongated and modified. Hereby *e*, *i*, *u*, lose all distinction, as in Her, Fir, Fur; Hers, Furze; Pert, Flirt, Spirt, Spurt. Indeed, when the syllable is unaccented, even *ä* and *ö* seem to be merged in *ü*; as in Friär, Briär, Liär, Buyër, Mirrör, Honör or Honour. Nor only so, but a peculiar sound (elsewhere unheard in English) is assigned to *a*, *e* long, before broken *r*, which seems to be the French grave *è*, as in Stare, Wary, There, Hair, Bear, Heir, Wear, Were, Ere, which all rhyme perfectly. Thus Tear is really two words, Tear (to rend) sounded as Tare, and Tear (larme, lacruma) sounded as Tier. The Irish, on the contrary, ignore this French *è* sound, and consistently sound Mare, Fare, Pair, &c., with the vowel of Mane, Fane, Pain, retaining for *r* its full vibration: likewise, as I think, they give the same vowel sound to There as to Here, Mere, Near. It is not at all likely that we shall ever follow them throughout. If just enough difference remain to mark nationality, who can grudge it? a compatriot of Bellerophon might surely talk Doric! But if we cannot go the Irish length, and pronounce Ore, Fore, with a fully vibrated *r*, with long Italian *ô*, and without any interpolated vowel, any "Patahh furtive" of the Hebrews, before *r*;—yet we may strongly insist that in every *r* something of vibration shall be heard; that Born shall not rhyme to Gône and Lawn, nor Car to Ah! nor Or to Paw; that Arms shall not sound as Alms; nor Order, Lord, be as Awder, Laud; in short, that in Corn, Cart, Court, Mortal, Murky, War, Worn, Short, and all other words with *r*, this letter shall have a most unmistakable roughness. Even so, we do not solve the whole question how *r* is to be sounded where our counties differ,—as, how to discriminate Ore from Oar or Or, which is a type of many other words; whether Door, Floor, Four, Pour, are to rhyme with Oar, or with Or, Nor, For. Until such questions are settled, we cannot adopt a complete consistent Phonotype.

It may here be added, that Irish ladies, without the smallest affectation or effort, pronounce Calm, Palm, Alms, just as they are written, retaining the *l* and making the *a* sharp and short as in Män. About

Half and Calf I am not so sure, but it seems impossible to doubt that such was the English pronunciation at no distant time, and such it *ought* to be now. The lip has been unschooled and wilful: we must not let it be master of the situation. There is no more *difficulty* in sounding the *l*, than in Elm, Helm, Elf, Pelf, Shelf, in all which we sound the *l*, and make the vowel short. A specious compromise would be, to allow breadth to the *à* in Calm, Palm, Psalm, Alms, &c., to lay down, that *in strictness* the *l* ought to be at least slightly heard, and that its omission in homely talk is a regrettable liberty. Whoever approves this as a theory, will perhaps extend it to Walk, Stalk, Talk, Chalk, Balk or Baulk, in all of which *a* has the sound of *au*. So in Falcon we utter *a* as *au*, yet do not with the French omit to sound the *l*. Indeed, no good case is made out to Phonotypists for eliding the *l*.

Another topic opens upon us with initial Kn, Gn, Ps—combinations which people seem to imagine are unpronounceable to English lips. Yet no English schoolboy finds difficulty as to these in Greek, nor even to the yet harder initial sounds Kt, Khth, Pt, Bd, Phth, Mn, Pn. No one thinks of dropping the first consonant in ψάλλω, ψαλμός, μνήμη, πρήμη, γήσιος, γρωτός, γνόφος, δνόφος, βδελυρος, κνίζω, κνάω, &c. Not inability, but mere laziness or inobservance, make the English say Salm for Psalm, Nife for Knife, Nat for Gnat, Night for Knight, Nave for Knave. German accuracy here rebukes us. They do not boggle over the K of Knabe and Knecht, which at bottom are the same words as our Knave and Knight. To one (German or English) who comes to us with the request that we will drop the K in order to accommodate the popular speech which confuses Knave with Nave, Knight with Night, we may respectfully but firmly reply: "Sir! you mistake the culprit (the spoken language): he has debased himself; and now to please him, you try to wheedle his comrade (the orthography) into like debasement. The only cure is, that he repent and retrace his steps. We may wink at his laziness, but we will not sanction it. If we are implicated in his offence, we will not justify ourselves, nor plunge into new mischief by tampering with sound literature." For Knife the French have Canif; and it surely were better to pronounce a furtive vowel between K and *n* than to lop the K off; and similarly of the other words. Difficulties in detail remain. The *g* in Cognizance will probably ere long be sounded, since Recognize gives the hint. Just so, Ignore, which forty years ago was sounded with Italian *gn* as in Signor, now is assimilated to Ignorant and Ignoble with *g* hard. The *g* in Sign, Benign, Malign, cannot be spared. It has potential life. *Sign* must not be confounded with mathematical *Sine*, nor divorced from Signal. Some mark must be devised to show that *g* is mute. When *mn* ends a word, it is hardly needful to tell that *n* is mute; for the tongue naturally fails. But since with derivatives the *n* reappears in vigour, as in Solemn, Solemnity; Condemn, Condemnable; most of

us will regard Solem, Condem, as the opposite of improvement. One who loves and reveres his native English may well feel indignation, that those who shrink from enunciating initial K, G, P in the combinations Kn, Gn, Ps, as harsh,—at the same time, by clipping or shortening all our vowels, crowd our consonants into unpronounceable combinations. Who first made *diddest*, *haddest* into *didst*, *hadst*, we cannot know. In Shakespeare the ending *ation* makes three syllables for the metre. Poets, whose task is to develop and conserve melody, in later days seem rather to have studied to cram words and thought into the smallest possible compass, and thus (perhaps!) to make poetry a philosophy. Whenever two vowels come together, they must (forsooth) forbid their belonging to different syllables. Thus *-tion* became *-shun* in utterance; Chariot, Warrior, became two syllables instead of three, and Heaven, Tower, Power, &c., were clipped into monosyllables. In boyhood I used to hear from modest, unlearned, but not unrefined lips in Hampshire such plurals as Birdis, Nestis, Houndis, according to the old melodious principle which forbids great agglomeration of consonants. If we can manage to utter Nests, Breasts, Sixths, it is monstrous to complain of initial Kn, Ps, as hard. The Germans say Die Sonne, the sun; Mein Sohn, my son: we, by shortening the vowel of Sohn corrupt Sun and Son into one sound. Our poets bear a strong responsibility for much of this depravation. Nay, some of them, not unadmired, write as if aiming to get into one syllable as much as possible, as, viewst for viēwēst, rigidst for rigidest, and a hundred of other examples; whereby they produce a lumbering jumble of consonants comparable to those of some old Latin tragedian. If we are to fix the language now, let us first define its noblest and least unmelodious state, and not assume that every depravation is to be acquiesced in as a κτήμα ἐς ἀεί.

If in this generation we protest in favour of a right pronunciation, and schools do their duty, the next generation will grow up with a *new ideal*. The defective utterance will gradually be thought vulgar, and it will become possible, without diverting attention injuriously from the matter to the manner, to pronounce rightly upon all high occasions. That is the proper way of healing the discord between our literature and our speech, *whenever the former is wholly right and the latter wholly wrong*. The argument applies even to initial Wr. The W was certainly once sounded. It is more difficult to be heard than the K, the G, or the P just discussed; therefore, no doubt, it insensibly went out of use. In Dutch and Scandinavian the Wr becomes Vr, which is as well heard as Fr. If we seriously tried to utter the Wr in Wry, Writhe, Write, &c., *probably* either Vr or Hr would be the practical result. Just so, in ancient Greek, when the old digamma (W) got before an r, in few dialects could it stand. It either vanished or became β (V?) or was converted into the aspirate (H): thus *ῤρῖζω* became *ῤῖζω*. The root *ῤρῖχ* (Sanskrit, Vrih), according to

Benfei, "to roar," generated βρύχω. It is also possible that the effort to sound W before r would introduce a furtive vowel, as in Woríte, Wory, Worénch, Worést.

The words just written down show the immense importance of the stress accent. In the Greek language, each dialect having strictly conformed its orthography to its local pronunciation, nothing more was needed after the Macedonian conquest of Western Asia to facilitate the use of Greek to Asiatics, than the adding of accents,—*three* indeed, the distinction of which is lost to the modern Greeks. To Indians and others who try to learn English from a book, the information concerning our accent can hardly be given in grammars, since it is matter of detail, and to consult the dictionary for every word separately is most laborious. Practically no one can so learn; every one must have an oral teacher, until grammars are written in Indian languages for learners in English, and accent the English words. But it would be a great assistance to have the right accent printed in all the English pieces set before them, at least on polysyllables. How unintelligible do words become with the accent misplaced; as Capáble, Tabérnacle, Penúltima, Modérate, Bravéry! But even dissyllables sometimes change their sense with the accent, and contrast a verb with a noun. I have no complete list of such, nor is usage quite uniform with some words. The following are a specimen:—

<i>Verb.</i>	<i>Noun.</i>	<i>Verb.</i>	<i>Noun.</i>	<i>Verb.</i>	<i>Noun.</i>
insult	ínsult	objéct	óbject	detail	détail
accént	áccent	colléct	cóllect	convért	cónvert
desért	désert	ejéct	éject	commúne	cómmune
transpórt	tránsport	digést	dígest	defile	défile
conduct	cónduct	incréase	íncrease	produce	próduce
refúse	réfuse	ally'	álly (?)	prefix	préfix
subyéct	súbject	perfúme	pérfume	suffix	súffix

Not unlike are préténd, prétext; compóse, cómpost.

More peculiar is it that *Móderate* (*verb*) has a secondary accent on the last syllable, and its *a* is long (German ä), while *Móderate* (*adjective*) has no secondary accent on the last, and the *a* is, in consequence, almost an *e* (*móderet*), nearly as the *a* in *O'range* (*Orenj*).

In numerous cases the accent has been thrown back in this century from the penultima to the antepenultima, or even to the fourth syllable from the end, against all law of Greek and Latin euphony, and generally with damage to the sound. In my early childhood I learned to say *Indústry* (as *Indústrious*) and *Contráry* (as *Contrárious*), and was surprised to be afterwards told that *In'dustry*, *Cóntrary* were alone correct. (The Nursery Rhyme has—"Mary, Mary! quite *contráry*," &c.) *Alexánder* was the first pronunciation, which ere long changed (surely for the worse) into *A'lexander*, reversing the primary and secondary accent. *Accéptable*, *Accéssary*, have been corrupted into *A'cceptable*,

A'ccessary ; even Parliaméntary into Párliamentary, monstrously throwing the accent on to the fifth syllable from the end. Contémplate, Illústrate, have been changed to Cóntemptate, I'llustrate, perhaps to give a rhyme to some versifier ; Medicínal to Medicinal, much for the worse. It is remarkable that the tendency appeared in Athens, about the time of Pericles. The melodious *τροπαῖον, ὁμοῖος* were changed to the flimsy *τρόπαιον, ὁμοιος*. But plenty of old-fashioned people among us stand out against throwing the accent farther back than the antepenultima in some of these words ; indeed insist on retaining Contémplate, Illústrate. Decōrous and Sonōrous stand firm against their rivals Décorous and Sónorous, which I believe are going out. Decádence has of late been supplanted by Décádence, imported from France ; rhymesters of course prefer Décádence ; but perhaps the verb Decáy will keep Decádence, aided also by the noun Cadence. The time may shortly arrive, when a middle class well educated from books, and not reared in the trail of aristocratic pronunciation, will restore to the language a better accentuation and add to our long vowels. Already they insist on saying Opposite, Maritime, Dýnasty. Before long they may give us Medicine, Infinite, and Literáry instead of the obscure Literáry. We cannot fix the language : but it would be something if we could guide the movement aright. The foreigner needs to be informed that in words of Greek and Latin origin the accent shifts by a law of its own ; as in Démocrat, Demócracy ; Hármony, Harmónious ; Mélody, Melódius ; expressly that it may *not* be thrown further back than the antepenultima. There is also a frequent tendency to shorten in a trisyllable the vowel which was long in a monosyllable ; as Grāve, Grāvity ; Cāve, Cāvity ; Suāve, Suāvity ; but this rule will mislead us, if applied to Saxon words, as appears in Brāve, Brāvety. For this and very many reasons the pupil, especially the foreign learner, requires a text in which the length and quality of vowels is marked. How deceptive are Finite and I'nfinite ! Divine an iamb with accent on the last ; Finite, a pure spondee, accented on the first. If Direct is known to be an oxytone, the doubt remains whether it be an iamb or a spondee. In fact this is not at the speaker's will ; though prevalently perhaps the adjective Direct is a spondee, and the verb Direct oftener has *i* short. It is easy so to mark our vowels as to set all these doubts at rest in that part of our language which is derived from Latin and Greek. It is the Saxo-Norman portion which contains the words which are so capriciously written as to puzzle us, even when we cannot throw the fault on pronunciation changing with lapse of time. Superfluous letters are the greatest vexation. Final *e* mute is held not to be superfluous, because it lengthens the vowel next preceding it, as in the difference between Pan and Pane ; the latter being = Pän. Yet this very *e* mute is apt to be obtruded out of place, where it only misleads. Here are a dozen words in which (seemingly) *e* ought to be expunged ; Have, Give, to Live, Love, Glove, Shove, Dove ;

Shone, Bade, Sate, Ate. In the three first I advise its omission, also in all verbal adjectives from Latin -ivus, as Activ, Plaintiv, Fugitiv. A properly dotted *o* sets right the four next words; the four last are antiquated forms,—what may be called first aorist, co-existing with the more popular second aorist, Shon, Bad, Sat, Et.

With a simple mark to denote that a letter is mute* (say a compact little mathematical zero), our worst difficulties of notation vanish. The cedilla and the Greek aspirate, to modify consonants, remove a large number of uncertainties concerning consonantal sounds. How to mark *S* when it has the sound of *Z* is difficult, only because there are so many solutions. Here let the remark be dropt, that the dot on *i* and *j* ought to be removed from print. Neither is found with the capital letters *I* and *J*. With *j* the dot is useless even in MS. In handwriting the loop of *e* is apt to blot, which leads to writing *e* almost like *i*; therefore alone a dot is of use even in MS. All useless dots dull the eye to the perception of useful ones, and ought to be cleared off. Reserving (') to denote the stress accent, we at once have at our disposal for modified vowels, ä ë ï ö ü; à è ì ò ù; â ê î ô û, of which some are superfluous, viz., ì, ù; indeed ê is wanted for three English words only, viz., brêak, grêat, stêak, sounded as brake, grate, stake, from which they differ in sense. Nevertheless this triple row of vowels is not sufficient, unless we largely alter our received spelling. I want double dots under a e o u (â ë ö ü).

Thus armed, we can make our received orthography suggest to a learner precisely the right sounds, with very few and insignificant exceptions which perhaps ought to be summarily dealt with.

Here may be noticed a very few words in which the spoken tongue may vaunt itself as more discriminating than our manuscript. But a few marks added will give equal precision to the latter.

Böw, of an archer or of a shoe-tie; Bow, bend the head.

To Söw (seed); Sow, female pig.

To Röw (a boat); Row (ignoble word), tumult.

Döes, female deer; Does, doeth.

To Möw (grass); a Barley Mow, rick, stack.

Any other such ambiguities can by easy devices be removed.

The problem of teaching the foreigner or the child to read correctly a book set before him is but *half* the problem of Phonotype. It is complex enough in our received mode of writing, yet with a sufficiency of well-devised marks, it can be solved; and may be made simpler by very moderate correction, also without disfiguring the text, especially if by slight change we revert to better pronunciation. To solve this half of the problem would be of immense importance, and in my judgment ought not to be delayed. To solve the other half would be so to write and print that he who hears the sounds of our

* But *g* is certainly wrong in Foreign, Sovereign, and may perhaps be well dropt also in Feign and Deign. The *f* can well be spared in -tch.

tongue shall at once be able to write them down from his ear in the very way which we hold to be orthographic. This would require a total reconstruction of the written language. To attempt it I account to be irrational, and believe all effort for it to be a misdirection of energies which might otherwise be of avail: moreover, such effort damages the hope of attainable reform, inasmuch as it stirs up disgust against all change. But there is a remark, not yet made, which may bear usefully on a large class of words.

The Phonotypists make very light of diligently confounding Rain, Rein, Reign, under a single spelling (and this is but one example out of 200), arguing that we could well endure *Rane* as expressing all three, because in every language words have many ambiguities. For instance, Box means: 1. A certain shrub or tree; 2. A coffer made of boxwood, and hence, any wooden coffer; 3. A blow on the cheek; 4. A *bakhshiesh*, or small gift at Christmas. What hardship, then, would it be if *Rane* had three very different senses? The reply is, that if we could write the sound Box in four different ways answering to the four different senses, it would facilitate the learning of English. Suppose that we wrote—1. Bocs; 2. Boks; 3. Box; 4. Bokhs, sounding all alike, the pupil would at once be warned of four different senses, and would *the better remember them* by reason of the different writing, which acts as a *memoria technica*. Also, inasmuch as bad reasoning chiefly rises out of ambiguous words, nothing so aids accurate thought as accurate marks of distinction. If it were possible, we ought to remove ambiguities both to the ear and to the eye; or at least to the eye, if we cannot to the ear. But we are unable thus to create distinctions at will. Surely, then, when tradition itself freely gives us in certain words distinctions for which we vainly wish in others, it were great folly to throw away the advantage. This would be a *levelling down*, and not a *levelling up*.

Finally, to fix ideas, I briefly explain one vowel system which would be efficient and sufficient. I say *one* system; for there are, of course, many possible, and in twenty-five years' effort I have changed my mind often enough.

1. System of circumflexed vowels:

â, âll fâll fâlcôn âltar âlter wâter wâr wârd.

ê, *only in* brêak grêat stêak.

î (French *i* long), marine machine suite.

ô, môve tômb shôe.

ù (Italian long *u*), rûe rûle blûe rôûte.

2. System of grave accents:

à (Italian broad *a*), tàsk fâther fâst.

ò, òrder òft lòft lòst. (è ì ù are in general superfluous.)

3. System of double dots *above* the vowel :

ä, mäne ängel chämber dänger cäpable sävour, *to moderäte.*
 ë, läver ëvil këy conceit wëir hëar tëar ëqual.
 ï, sigh tie lie whilom ïron sïnecure divïne.
 ö, böne böld öld öar möw töw gö.
 ü, ünite müle türeen valüe nätüre.

These might, with excellent result, be printed in *all* our literature.

4. System of double dots *beneath* the vowels :

a (after W or Qu), wasp was watch quarrel equal.
 e head pleasure. (Better to drop *a* in seventy words.)
 o, son ton cover covet worry onion front.
 u, put push pull bushel butcher bulwark.

5. Long \bar{a} and \bar{c} (only before *r*), as in Märe, Thëre.

Besides the omission of *a* in about seventy words, such as Deaf, Dead, Dreamt, Early, &c., the *u* should be dropt in Honour, Favour, &c. No one approves *u* in Rector, Editor, Tutor, &c. To printers, writers, and learners, all really superfluous letters are an annoyance. Happily we have got rid of *k* in Publick, Musick, &c. For One, Once, I propose to write 'one, 'once.

Many have suggested marks for our consonants. Webster's Dictionary has a complete system, and many others would succeed. The practical question is, Which least offends the eye, and will meet least opposition? It is not requisite here to lay before the reader what most pleases the present writer. Suffice it to insist that the problem has more than one good solution.

F. W. NEWMAN.