

Consonants are divided into mutes and semi-vowels.

The mutes cannot be sounded *at all* without the aid of a vowel. They are *b, p, t, d, k,* and *c* and *g* hard.

The semi-vowels have an imperfect sound of themselves. They are *f, l, m, n, r, v, s, z,* and *x* and *c* and *g* soft. *

Four of the semi-vowels, namely, *l, m, n, r* are also distinguished by the name of *liquids* from their readily uniting with other consonants and flowing as it were into their sounds.

A diphthong is the union of two vowels, pronounced by a single impulse of the voice; as *ea* in *beat*, *ou* in *sound*.

A triphthong, the union of three vowels, pronounced in like manner; as *eau* in *beau*, *iew* in *view*.

A proper diphthong is that in which both the vowels are sounded; as, *oi* in *voice*, *ou* in *ounce*.

An improper diphthong has but one of the vowels sounded; as, *ea* in *eagle*, *oa* in *boat*.

SYLLABLES.

A syllable is a sound either simple or compounded, pronounced by a single impulse of the voice, and constituting a word, or part of a word, as, *a, an, ant*.

Spelling is the art of rightly dividing words to their syllables; or of expressing a word by proper letters. †

*For the distinction between the *nature* and the *number* of a consonant, see the larger Grammar, 15th edit. p. 2.

† Dr. Johnson's Dictionary is the best standard English orthography.