

16. **Y** stands for the spirant produced by squeezing the voice between the surface of the tongue and the palate.

**W** and **y** are nearly akin to vowels, as we see by pronouncing oo-et, ee-et first slowly, then rapidly, when we get the sounds *wet* and *yed*.

17. The digraph **th** is used to represent two simple sounds formed by making the breath or the voice rub against the edges of the tongue, its tip being placed against the upper teeth. The voiced form will in re-spelling be denoted by *th*.

18. We have now to consider the vowel signs **a, e, i, o, u**; and here a difficulty occurs.

We have seen that vowels are only voice (sonorous breath) moulded by the various shapes that the mouth takes. Now as either the back or the front of the tongue, or both at once, can take a low, a high, or a middle position, each producing a different sound, and as the lips instead of being in their natural position may be rounded, or pursed up, so as to modify any one of these sounds, the number of possible vowel-sounds to be represented by these five signs is very great. In English we have at least the following thirteen vowels:

**A** as in *ah* are sounded with the back of the tongue low.

|            |   |   |   |       |                          |
|------------|---|---|---|-------|--------------------------|
| U " " us   | " | " | " | "     | medium-high.             |
| *A " " an  | { | " | " | front | " low.                   |
| E " " ell  |   | " | " |       |                          |
| A " " ale  | { | " | " | "     | " medium-high.           |
| *I " " ill |   | " | " | "     | " high.                  |
| E " " eel  | { | " | " | "     | both back and front low. |
| E " " err  |   | " | " | "     |                          |

And with the lips rounded:

|              |   |                                          |   |   |                |
|--------------|---|------------------------------------------|---|---|----------------|
| *O as in on  | { | sounded with the back of the tongue low. |   |   |                |
| AW " " awe   |   |                                          |   |   |                |
| O " " go     | { | "                                        | " | " | " medium-high. |
| *OO " " good |   | "                                        | " | " | " high.        |
| O " " move   | { | "                                        | " | " |                |
|              |   | "                                        | " | " |                |

19. Besides these there are the sound of **ay** (yes) and of **oy**,

\*The difference between these and the other vowels formed with the same positions of the organs is that the voice-channel is wider, either the pharynx being more expanded, or (as Sweet thinks) the tongue not being so much arched along its axis. In either case the vowel sounds of *an, th, on, good*, and also of *ah*, and *err*, are appropriately called "wide vowels." To these we might add *a*, as in *ask*, but orthoepists differ as to its nature, some thinking it identical with *a*, in *an*.