

INTRODUCTION.

I.

GAELIC READING AND SPELLING.

LETTERS AND SOUNDS.

The letters of the alphabet represent the sounds used in speaking. They are thus merely signs. We spell a word containing two or more sounds by placing two or more letters after one another, each representing a sound contained in the word. We pronounce a word by joining together the sounds represented by the letters in it.

A perfect alphabet would contain a letter or sign for every simple sound used in the language. An alphabet of this kind, however, would be somewhat long and rather difficult to learn. Besides, for the ordinary purposes of life it is not really needed. When two sounds are fundamentally of the same nature, like that of a in far and a in fat, the same letter suits well enough to represent both sounds.

The Gaelic alphabet consists of thirteen consonants, b, c, d, f, g, h, l, m, n, p, r, s, t; and five vowels a, e, i, o, u. Practically however it contains seventeen consonants, b, c, ch, d, f, g, h, l, m, n, ng, p, r, s, t, bh or mh, dh or gh; and