

a nation two letters may be used for a diththongal sound or glide. German *Reform* uses *ai* for *i*, and *au* for *ou*—very natural as they are represented in current Ger. by *ei* and *au* respectively.

2. THE CENTRE OF GRAVITY OF ENGLISH IS IN AMERICA. We have here 55 or 60 millions speaking it and will have 100 m. by 1900 and 200 m. by 1950. G. Britain and Ireland have 27 millions no room for more, starting now. Of the 27 m. the greater bulk of Scotland, Ireland and Wales must be counted out as being markedly dialectic. Most parts of Eng. speak dialects markedly and anything but euphonic. We are told that of London is spoken English. But Cokny dialect is as thick and all pervading there as the London fog. Even the educated have more or less of it—like the fog the mud and drizzle, it is everywhere. In America, although there are peculiarities of speech we have but one market dialect, that of the negro of the southern States. Leaving out this and tones called Americanisms, we have speech comparatively homogeneous and this is to be studied instead of heterogeneous British dialects. We cannot resist the belief that Ellis' and other opinions were born of the latter and they have misled M. The difference between most model British speech or such as is not plainly local or dialectic and this homogeneous American speech is not wide—not wide enough at any rate to prove a stumbling block.

Mr J. G. Gholson of Broughton, Ill., writes, as to quotation from him on p. 45, that he holds "that the initial and final positions of diththong in *owl* are exactly pictured in the common representation *ou*, that is *o* in *ox* and *u* in *rule*." He holds too, however, that the vowel in *ox* has the same quality as that in *art*—a heresy we once held but voluntarily abjured. It is untenable.

Mr M. L. Rous writes from Toronto that vowel in *pare* is diththongal, its elements (?) being *e* as in *Ben* and *u* as in *bum*, not *æ* and *u* obscure as inferred from his pamphlet referred to on p. 47.

BURN & BUN.—Mr Rous amplifies our statement p. 47. He holds that vowel in *burn* is equivalent to *e* in Fr. *de* and final *e* in Ger. *liebe*; that in *bum*, to *e* of final syllable of German *liebes*.

A TWELF-VOWEL ALFABET.

(E. Jones in *Jur. Am. Orthoepy*.)

I entirely agree with editor of Fonetico HERALD that 12 vowels are enough for all practical popular purposes and that 4 additional vowels in Am. S. R. A. alphabet are not necessary, seeming introduced with sole object of meeting an arbitrary and fanciful method of pairing vowel sounds. Dr Hamilton truly says "the 12 sounds indicated are commonly believed to need alphabetic representation. Pitman, Graham, Vickroy, E. Longly Larison, Pikard—to which add Ellis and Eng. S. R. A.—for the most part agree that these specified sounds, no more, no less, need separate signs."

Mr Pitman complains, not without reason, that everybody wants his own scheme. But it must be remembered that as result of discussion carried on the past few years, Pitman's own views are considerably modified. It is probable that the last word on the best scheme of reformed spelling will not be spoken for some time to come. It is gratifying however to those who have taken a life interest in this movement to notice a very perceptible assimilation of views on the question, a drawing together of opinion, a dropping of this and of that crochets. Unanimity on all points is not expected. If a recognized central authority were appointed to hear pros and cons on every point of difference, with power to determine, it would be an advantage. Until such tribunal is set up there is nothing for it but to go on discussing and experimenting as best we can, because there is no dictator in the republic of letters.

FRANCE.—Prof. Paul Passy writes from Neuilly sur-Seine: "I have no doubt at all that three years hence the fonetic will be the common method of teaching English in France." We are not so sanguine of even free America. Will 1900 see it prevalent here? Throughout nearly all Europe except Britain they have a decimal system of weights, measures and money. We have decimal currency but they are ahead of us otherwise. We shall not be surprised if they get ahead of us in teaching modern languages, even our own, unless our fossil drybones wake up and bestir themselves.