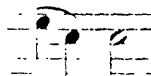
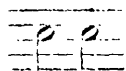


a first and a seventh tone thus being changed into two seventh tones. "Tháng teng," a "cask-shaped lantern," is not uttered with a second

and first tone, but with two first tones; not



but



Thau g teng.

These are given as instances of the change in the tones

Tháng teng.

resulting from the formation of compound words. To a foreigner, the whole subject is very difficult.

Practical efficiency of tonal distinctions.

This entire contrivance of tones as an element of spoken language may, at first sight, seem not only clumsy and difficult but uncertain and impracticable—necessarily leading to mistakes and most serious misapprehensions. But this is not the case, and whatever our opinion of the cleverness and ingenuity of the expedient, there can be no doubt of its success. The whole system of tones is most disheartening to the foreigner attempting to learn to speak Chinese, and for a long time the task seems an impossible one, the tones being difficult of recognition and still more difficult of accurate utterance. Yet the little children learn them with the utmost exactness, and utter them most distinctly, never failing to give the proper modulation. Thus trained, the Chinese see in a tone not the *accident* of a monosyllable but a *constituent part*. The common people and even the educated men seem never to have analysed their words and recognised the *articulate* and the *tonal* elements. If the tone be wrongly uttered, the error is deemed as great as if the mistake had been one of articulation. To say "béng" (second tone) instead of "bêng" (fifth tone) is regarded as an error not less than it would be to say "têng" for "lêng." Indeed the use of a wrong initial element would be thought a lighter fault than a false modulation.

From these facts it is evident that to a foreigner endeavouring to acquire a Chinese spoken language, a musical ear is of the highest value. No mental qualification is of equal importance. The language is not otherwise difficult; its structure is simple and its vocabulary limited. But the inability to recognize the pitch of sounds and the intervals of different tones, is as fatal to success in the acquisition of a Chinese spoken dialect as deafness itself. In acquiring most languages the articulation must be caught, and if that be effected, the work is