

REMARKS ON THE KEY.

It will be well for those who use this Dictionary to make themselves well acquainted with the *Key to the Sounds of the Marked Letters*; and having done this, they will readily understand the pronunciation given to the different words.

The pronunciation is given to most of the words in their proper orthography, without recourse to respelling; and the vowels which are not marked are silent. Thus *a* in *beat*, *fear*; *e* in *able*, *give*, *harden*; *i* in *pain*, *heifer*; *o* in *mason*, *famous*; *u* in *though*; and *w* in *borrow*, are not sounded.

Vowels marked with a dot underneath (thus, *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*), are found only in syllables which are not accented, and over which the organs of speech pass slightly and hastily in pronouncing them. This mark is employed rather to indicate a slight stress of voice, than to mark a particular quality of sound. If the syllables on which the accent falls are uttered with a proper stress of voice, these comparatively indistinct syllables will naturally be pronounced right.

The peculiar sound of the letter *a*, which is indicated by this mark (*ä*), is never heard except when it precedes the letter *r*; and it is the sound which we constantly hear in the words *care*, *fair*, *share*, differing plainly from the long slender sound of *a* in *fate*, *pain*, *player*.

The letter *a* marked thus (*ä*) has an intermediate sound between the short sound of *a* as in *fat*, *man*, and the Italian or grave sound of *a*, as in *far*, *father*.

The peculiar sounds of the vowels *e*, *i*, *u*, and *y*, which are indicated when they are marked thus (*ë*, *î*, *û*, *ÿ*), occur only when these vowels are succeeded by *r* final, or by *r* followed by some other consonant, as in the words *her*, *herd*, *sir*, *bird*, *cur*, *curd*, *myrrh*. The sound is as short as these vowels, thus situated, readily or naturally receive; yet it differs from their proper short sound in *met*, *merry*, *pin*, *mirror*, *hut*, *hurry*, *lyric*, in a manner analogous to the difference between the sound of *a* and *o* in *far* and *for*, and the proper short sound of these vowels in *fat*, *not*.