

manifest advantage of great simplicity ; but on the other hand it should be considered, that these points are extremely subject to being wholly overlooked or confounded with each other both in writing and printing ; and, in the science of mathematics, from which the learned author borrows them, it is a well known fact, that those treatises on fluxions, where this method is followed, abound in errors beyond all comparison more than those, in which the French notation by *letters* instead of points is adopted.* For this reason, therefore, marks of that kind should be used as sparingly as possible. We might, perhaps, conveniently enough designate the modified vowel by placing a small *letter* over it, as is done in the German language, where, for example, the vowel *a*, (which commonly has a sound like *ah* in English) if it has a small *e* over it ($\overset{e}{a}$) takes a sound like *a* in fate ; and the vowel *o* with a small *e* over it ($\overset{e}{o}$) loses its usual sound and takes one resembling the French *eu*. It is true, that the Germans also use two points (thus \ddot{a} , \ddot{o} ,) to denote these modifications ; but these have been so long and so generally employed in ancient and modern languages as a *diæresis*, that it does not appear advisable now to apply them to a new use. If *points* are employed at all, it would be better to place them perpendicularly over the vowel (thus $\overset{\cdot}{a}$) and not horizontally. But perhaps the most intelligible and least ambiguous notation would be found upon experiment to be, such as is adopted in the pronouncing dictionaries of our own language, that is, the common numerals ; instead, however, of placing them *over* the letter, as is there done, it will be better to place them *under* it ; as the room above will be wanted for the

* The learned De Sacy observes, too, that in *Arabic* the \smile (with two points) and the \smile (with three) are often confounded in the Manuscripts. See his *Arab. Gram.* vol. i. p. 18—19.