

A, e, i, o, u, w and *y* are vowels.

The remaining nineteen letters are consonants.

The union of two vowels in one sound is called a *Diphthong*.

When both vowels are heard, it is called a *proper Diphthong*; as, *ou* in *sound*.

When only one of the vowels is heard, it is called an *improper Diphthong*; as, *oa* in *boat*.

The union of three vowels in one sound is called a *Triphthong*; as, *iew* in *view*.

All the vowels, many of the diphthongs, and several of the consonants, have more than one sound. Thus, the vowel *a* has four sounds, as in *fate*, *fat*, *far*, *fall*; the diphthong *ea* has four, as in *bear*, *heart*, *heat*, *breast*; and the consonant *c* has two, as in *city*, *call*.

On the other hand, many of the sounds are represented by several letters. Thus, *e*, as in *me*, is represented by *ae*, *ay*, *ea*, *ee*, *ei*, *eo*, *ey*, *i*, *ia*, *ie*, *oe*, *oi*, and *y*; as in the words *Cæsar*, *quay*, *hear*, *see*, *neither*, *people*, *key*, *pique*, *caviare*, *relieve*, *foetus*, *turkoi*s, and *duty*; and the sound of *k*, as in *kill*, is represented by *c*, *ch*, *q*, and *gh*, as in the words *corn*, *character*, *quoit* and *hough*.

An accurate knowledge of the sounds of the vowels, diphthongs, triphthongs, and consonants, is only to be acquired by a careful attention to orthoepy, as it is to be found in pronouncing dictionaries of established reputation, and as it is practised by persons of education and taste.

SYLLABLES AND WORDS.

A *Syllable* is a single sound, represented by one or more letters; as, *a*, *an*, *ant*.

In every syllable there must be at least one vowel.