

NOTES ON PRONUNCIATION.

GRAY'S ELEGY (continued).

The ploughman homeward plods his weary way:

The spelling *plough* is historic, indicating not its derivation but that it was once pronounced with a guttural over a wider area than now. This guttural, temporarily denoted by *ch*, is still heard in Scotland and north of England, chiefly among the rural population, more conservativ of orthoepy than townsmen and citizens. Besides *pluch* and *pluch* ar heard in Scotland. If an American attempt to giv it, he wil commonly say *pluh* or *pluk*. The sound is between them. The tung is bro't bak til it almost tuches soft palat: if it tuches it, k is heard; in h, tung is flat on mouth-floor, not drawn bak archt tords soft palat as in *ch*. *Ch* is quite frequent in German. Its proper pronunciation and that of its voiced yoke-felo *gh* is a shiboleth almost to yung America. Old foggy tutors ineffectually try to hamer-it-in by repetition insted of giving its formation to practis.

The first part of the difthong is givn as *o*, *o*, *o*, or *o*; its scend, *u* or *ü*. Sheridan, who in 1780 rote our first (leaving Kenrick's, 1772, and Perry's, 1775, out of account as minor) pronouncing dictionary, a complete copy of which we hav, says *o* and *ü* ar its parts. Jones, who rote "Sheridan Improved," stil givs *ou* so late as his 12th edⁿ, 1807. Walker, 1791 on, givs *ou*, saying distinctly that its first part is the vowel of *nor* or *coll*. Nobody now givs *o*. Has the difthong changed? or was Sheridan mistaken, others copying him too much? Original observation is yet rare. (Dictionary makers ar great copiers; thus, one omitted *uncle*, so did others, not observing omission!) Pitman givs *ou*; our corresp^t, N, foloing Ellis, givs *uu*, appearing to confound *o* and *u*. M. limits it tho: he says:—

"When the difthong precedes a vowel as consonant, the first element is vowel in *up*, but, *son*: when the difthong ends a word or is folod by a voiced consonant, the first element is vowel in *alm*, *father*. . . . In U. States it appears to me to be usually the vowel in *father* in all words."—HERALD, March, 1886.

Other authoritis ar cited there. Murray givs either *ou* (au) or *uu*. The later, au, is cokeny, also 'down east.' Whitney says:—

"The mouth-organs do not rest an instant in a position at begin^g—g, but use it merely as a starting point. . . . It is mater of dispute among English tonists, whether initial position in these difthongal slides is that of a (*far*) or that of the neutral vowel, and some of the best authoritis (as Ellis) favor the later. Very probably ther is actual difference of usage in different parts of the English-speaking community. The fact that, as we hav seen, ther is in ordinary speaking no prolongation of the initial element, makes satisfactory determination difficult. I am fully persuaded that I begin with a *far*."—Part 8, §15, of 2d Series, *Oriental & Ling. Studies*.

Insted of *ou*, in which *o* and *ü* ar ex-

tremes of opness and closenes respectively, les extreme sounds ar really used, viz., *ou*. The reader shud ever bear in mind that *o* is elast with *a*-sounds.

(To be continued.)

PAIRD VOWELS.

The contention of a correspondent that *i*, as in *ill*, is the same in Ger. and Eng. is but an examp^l of a rule w. I put by Powell (*Introd. to Study of Ind. Languages*):—

"The difference of tone between long and short values of what is nearly the same sound is greater in Eng. than in almost any other language."

The stupidest hoodlum among us yeling in a crowd redily distinguishes *mill* and *meal*, *sit* and *seat*, *hit* and *heat*, *pill* and *peal*, and so on for scores of words. For *e*-sounds compare *talc* with *tell*, *saint* with *sent*, *mate* with *met*, *taint* with *tent*, etc. As to *a*-sounds, *a* is wel differentiated from *o*, but vowel in *what* not so wel from that in *father*, *art*, etc. These appear to form the only pair badly differentiated. For *o*-sounds compare *scald* with *scold*, *not* with *note*, *for* with *fore*, *got* with *gout*, etc. For *u*-sounds compare *full* with *fool*, *could* with *cooled*, *pull* with *pool*, etc. In Ger., *i*, *e*, *u*-sounds ar just about as widely differentiated as in Eng. They hav *e* and *i*, *a* and *e*, *ü* and *u*, much as we hav—not so with *o*- and *a*-sounds. We hope to giv diagrams tru to nature of vowel-scales in chief mod^l lang^s. In Romance Lang^s pairs ar not so wel separated—sound-shifting erthquakes hav not yet rent their vowel-systems.

Corollary: English requires more vowel-signs differentiated than other tungs.

U AND Ü.—As to Mr Jones' contention, last month, as to infrequency of *u*, we say that all depends on how *yu* count. Is *ou*-difthong to be counted in? We say, yes. Is *o* to be considered *ou*? Who shal decide? Estimats vary from 1/2 to 4 per centum—truth lies between, about 2 p. c. We read Mr Jones' leter with *u* 18 times, *ü* 23 times. We shal giv a table of 10 000 sounds.

"TYRANT CUSTOM."

"Custom calls him to it!
What custom wills; shud custom always do it.
The dust on antique time wud lie unswept,
And mountains error be too highly heapt,
For truth to overpeer."

KEY: *a a a e e i i o o u u ü*
as in art at ale ell cel ill Inor ox no up put ooze
= The *f* loing ar used in pronunciation only:—
: = lip-protrusion; ' = nasal; o = obscure.
Vari- (*a er e i o u ü*)
etis. () *a e u E, i e i y o, o u, ü a, e, a*
as in fast learn erect tung God your fare
stanch firm remain jovial folly into there

These pages hav a missionary object.
Yur influence to extens circ^l is solicited