ALFABETIC STUDIZ.

IV—DIFTHONGS.

A DIFTHONG, according to Webster, is a coalition or union of two vowel sounds pronounst in one sylabl; as *ou* in *out*, *oi* in *noise*.

A SYLABL, according to the same author, is an elementary sound or combination of elementary sounds utrd together or at a singl efort or impuls of the voice.

Now, since it is plain that no two vowel sounds can be utrd by one impuls of the voice, it is equaly plain that the above definition of *difthong* must be eroneous. The sounds represented by *oi* in *oil* ar two separat vowel sounds that canot be utrd in one sylabl, and therefore canot constitute a difthong

'A DIFTHONG is *not* a union of two elementary sounds in one sylabl, but is itself a distinct elementary sound made *during* a glide of the organs of speech from the position for one sound to the position for another.

Supose a word comencing with Italian *a* (as in *arm*) and *i* (as in *it ;*) thus, *aïce*. In pronouncing this suposed word, let the sounds of these vowels be givn in ful; the transition from one to the other is very awkward. Nature likes not discords. She has a tendency to ʔofn evry harshnes and irregularity, and, hence, a new sound is soon produced by droping the body of these sounds when they come in this succesion, and by pasing the organs of speech from the position for Italian *a* to the position for *i*, a new sound is produced *during* the glide of the organs from one position to the other. This new sound is that of *i* (as in *ice*.) It is not a union of two other sounds, but a separat and distinct sound made *during* a glide of the organs.

In the same way, the difthong *ou* or *ow* has been produced from broad *a* (as in *all*) and long *oo*.

It has been customary to clas the so-called difthong *oi* or *oy* (as in *oil* or *boy*,) as a distinct element; but this so-called difthong is the broad sound of *a* (as in *all*,) folowd by *i* (as in *it ;*) and these ar not even pronounst in the same sylabl, since it is imposibl to utr two vowel sounds by one emision of the voice.—*J. G. Gholson in the Lodestur.*

The difthong in *out* apears to hav *o* (as in *ox*) for first position, and *u* (as in *put*) for second, insted of ɵ and u respectively, as taut above. With this exception, we believ the above doc trins corect in the main ; and, so far as we no, Mr G. is entitled to ful credit for propounding them. The difthongs

or glides ar singl sounds, the vocal organs changing position *during* the emision of breth. The change is very quik from ɑ to i in *i* (as in *ice*,) slower in *ou* (as in *out*,) and stil slower from ɵ to i in *oi* (as in *oil*.) The diference as to slownes or quiknes of change is one of *degree* merely, not one of *kind.* In a very slow pronunciation of *boy* they wud become two vowels necesarily. This wil reduce Mr G.'s contention that *oi* in *oil* is not a difthong, but two separat vowels to the fine point of how slowly they ar utrd — so a matr of opinion, depending on habit of speech, or varying with emotion, etc., and so coverd by the "personal equation."

In producing *i* [as in *ice*,] so quik is the change from one position to the other that the ear does not so redily detect the positions as in the other two difthongs. Hence the propriety, apart from expediency, of representing it by a singl letr. In *ou*, the movement is slower, each position is dwelt on, and so is more aparent; represent it by two letrs. Similarly and *a fortiori*, we shud hav two letrs for *oi* [as in *oil*.]

Let the reader consult the order of the vowels as givn on page 18, where they ar aranged from high to low. The first position for *oi* is 8th on the scale, the second is 2nd, so that the oral vocal aparatus has to change thru *six* positions —a posibl explanation of the slownes of change.

If subscribers send us their orthoepic ultis, we wil try to resolv them.

☞ "I hold that a man has jist as mutch rite tew spel a word as it is pronounced as he has to pronounse it the way it aint spelt."—*Josh Billings.*