

THE A-FAMILY.

[These difficulties can be grapt with only by scientific methods, if hoping for satisfactory results. Acurat noledge of orthoepic facts wud help to setl spelng.—SWEET.]

Vowel sounds ar infinit in number. A traird ear can recognize many varieties of evry principal vowel. Yet it is wel to consider four sub-varieties of the *a*-family and to treat them as four separat entities. Some readers wil then be les puzld.

(1) "Italian *a*" (*a* in HERALD-notation) is open-neutral *a*, most open of them all, with tung neutral (that is, neither front nor bak). Western, of Frederiksstad in Norway, teaches so—limited space prevents discusion now. (2) Close-neutral *a*, our *a* or *a*₂, not so open as *a*, the "short *a*" of continental Europ. (3) Close-front *a*, our *æ*, as in *man* mæn as comonly spoken (but *ma*₂*n* in northern English, including Scottish). (4) Close-bak *a*, our *o*, as in American *not*. In a givn dialect they ocur in pairs, *o* and *æ* in America, *a* and *a* in northern English and on the continent—all this speaking broadly.

Sometimes a shades

{	<i>æ</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>o</i>
		<i>ɑ</i>	

 off toard *æ*; again, to-ard *o*; *a* may aproach *a* from insuficient mouth opening. This schematic diagram with *a* at corner of a triangle, or, better, at loest part of a segment of a semicircl, concave upward, wil help memory and understanding.

The American boy's *papa* is *pop*·ə, *pop*, *pæ* or *pæp*. Try to hav him say *pa.pɑ*—Yu ask him to giv two vowels foren to his vocal scale; his *o* occurs in *stopt sylabls only* (i. e., ending in a consonant) while *pa.pɑ* has both open—and he (feeling all this by speech habit) wil giv *pæ.paw* or "paw". If yu ar not satisfied with his *fi.cog*·o for *Chicago*, he wil alter the midl vowel and either hold it (*o*·) or thro more stres on it (at the expense of neighboring vowels, rendering them obscure) saying *fæ.cawg*·ə. This forcing proces is unnatural to him, and wil prove futil. In one district the vertical pair (*a*, *ɑ*) wil be prevalent; in another, the horizontal pair (*o*, *æ*) is so. A good ear wil discriminate all four, even more, but in practis two is all the average ear diferentiates and uezes in discrimating tho't-pregnant words (platform, plank 16).

Mrs Burnz' "special dril" mentiond on our p. 92 is to discriminate *a* and *o*, the 2d and 4th sounds above, the closest of all. She has described this dril recently (*Jur. Or. & Or.*, Aug.) and says "The uniqueness of *o* is that it cannot be lengthend or drawld;" tru, and chiefly due to its ocurrence in *stopt sylabls*, mainly in ones *stopt* by *stopt* consonants (*p*, *b*, *t*, *d*, *k*, *g*, inclu-

ding, of course, *ch* = *tf* and *j* = *dj*), thus explaining its characteristic ("uniquenes") snap and short duration. Mrs B. ads "To produce *o* the jaws ar wel apart, the tung slightly drawn bak and thus thiknd, while the voice is thrown *upward* as tho thru the bak roof of the mouth. In making ah [*a*] the tung lies flat, the jaws ar wel apart and the voice is thrown freely out of the open *front* mouth."

Last summer a riter (H. T. C. A., of Hunwick) in the Newcastle (Eng.) *Chronicle* gave a popular account of speech in Tyneside in which he said:

"The personal pronoun, in either forms, maintains its Latin sound on Tyneside. The short sound is comon in English, but the long sound is difrent, only the Northumbrian does it justice. He uezes the short sound in anser to a question not replied to by yes or no; for instance, 'Wer yu there?' 'I was. [*a waz*] In the case of the pronoun there it wud be the short sound. Now if the question was 'Who was there?' 'I was' [*a waz*], the pronoun wud be long and spelt *Aa*."

Now, a newspaper riter, however clear and tru his views, is handicapt for lak of a good notation, type for which is not at hand. For this, editors care litl; readers, les. Tho the *Chronicle's* riter is on the spot and knows what he is talking about, too—more than is tru of his clas—let us turn for "acurat noledge of orthoepic facts" to some one with "scientific method" and notation. For one, Ellis has done this with paleotype for the district (in *E. E. Pron.*, pages 2069 to 2083); and for Newcastle itself was at "great pains to make this comparativ specimen as correct as posibl." In it the vowel *æ* occurs not—*has* is *hez*, *have* is *hev* (Germans say *hef*). We ar in dout whether Ellis discriminates *o* and *a* in his notation. He records *a* (our *a*) in

a, ask (aks), babble, (be)cause, fast, going (gan), happen, hold (had), I, Jack, lad, lass, last, laugh, man, my, old (ad), that, very, want, was, what, would, wrong.

He records *aa* (our *ɑ*) in these words:

all, call, certain, crow, I (emfatic), know, law, own, talk, yard.

"Momus" pertinently asks (in *Jur. Or. & Or.*, Jan.) : "Why spel *what* with *ə* when clearly the vowel is the short of that in *arm*? Why spel *not* with *ə* when clearly we hear short *a*? Why spel *owl* with *eu* when *au* wud indicate beter?" Manifestly, in America, for *not*, *what*, *watch*, we say *not*, *hwot*, *wotf*, and *wot*^{tr} for *water* is comon, tho *wot*^{tr} (with open *o* = short *aw*) is authoritativ.

Tabular comparison of symbols in main systems of notation wil help elucidate :

HERALD-notation	<i>o</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>ɑ</i>	<i>æ</i>
Amer. Dialect Society	<i>o</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>æ</i>
Standard dictionary	<i>ə</i>	<i>ɑ</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>a</i>
Ellis' notation	?	<i>a</i>	<i>aa</i>	<i>æ</i>
Tuttle's "	<i>ɑ</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>æ</i>