

# The Fonetic Herald

DEVOTED TO ORTHOËPI AND ORTHOGRAFI.

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## ALFABETIC STUDIZ.

### III.—SHADE VOWELS (*continued.*)

What shade vowels need and deserve alphabetic representation? This is best answered by specifying such as have separate letter-shapes assigned in alphabets at some time or another. This will give the general opinion of those who go beyond twelve vowels. We believe we are safe in saying that the alphabets look on with most favor represent twelve vowels only. If any alphabet has been overlooked it has been due to our not being aware of its existence. Any such omission will not affect conclusions. The reader must remember that we seek the necessary distinctions of sound requisite for alphabetic purposes in practice popularly—not for dictionary use.

a. In 1843, Mr A. J. Ellis insisted that the vowel in *burn* was essentially different from that in *but*. From '44 to '47, it had its own sign in both fonography and fonotypy. It was abandoned in both after three years in which it provoked much opposition. Mr Pitman has not departed from twelve vowels since '47. He has given a graphic account of what he holds was worse than three years loss of time to the movement. It crippled it in ways not yet in full recovery from.

b. Dr Comstock published the New Testament in Philadelphia in '47, and gave a separate character to vowel in *air*, which he considers composed of the vowels in *end* and *up*. Those in *tube*, *etc*, *oil* and *out* are given single signs as if simple: the general opinion considers them diphthongs.

c. Mr A. Longley still uses the alphabet of '54 with the vowel in *care*.

d. Graham in his Handbook of Fonography, N. Y. '60, distinguishes vowels

in *air*, *whole*, *her*, *ask*.

e. Mr Elias Longley, between '58 and '84 published at least two primers and much else. Up to Oct., '84, he insisted on distinguishing the vowels in *air*, *earn* and *arm*. Since, he uses none at all. In this he is influenced more by a spirit of compromise than conviction. He states that he found after five years' trial that it was impossible to get his previous alphabet accepted.

f. Knudsen uses that in *bird* or *fur*,  
g. Benn Pitman, (*New Test.*, Cincinnati, about '62) has *earth*, *air*, *ask*.

h. Bancroft (*San Francisco Alphabet*, 1884), gives *her*.

i. Coombs, (*Complete Phonetic Alphabet*, N. Y., 1884) gives *arm*, *earnest*, *air* and *irksome*.

j. U. S. S. R. A. gives *care*, *far*, *burn*.

k. Simpson of Leamington, Ontario, published an alphabet at Ridgeway in '81. It is a system of diacritics, making the same distinctions as Webster: *care*, *far*, *there*, *term*, *firm*.

l. An alphabet has just appeared anonymously in Canada which gives *earn*.

The vowel in *whole*, as distinguished from that in *no*, is not considered worthy of alphabetic discrimination by any but Graham. As it stands alone, we omit it.

Again, it makes no difference whether we are to discriminate the vowel in *arm* from that in *ask* (pronounced *ask*), or *vice versa*. If *arm* be the principal, *ask* is the shade; if *ask* be principal, *arm* is its shade.

Of the six shade vowels given by some writers, as Phye, it appears that four only have ever been considered worthy of alphabetic distinction, viz:—

1. *arm*, *far*, [from *ask* (*ask*)]

2. *earn*, *her*, *earth*, *bird*, *term*, *firm*, *earnest*, *irksome*.

3. *burn*, *urn*.