

original word, *Isar* or *Isara*; so that locally this *a* must have been sounded somewhat in our English way, or the name would not have been phonetically expressed and handed down in the modern dialect as *Isère*.

Again, take the familiar word *Clermont*, the name of the principal town in the Department of Puy de Dôme: the *e* also here represents *a* in the Latin word *clarus*—*Clarus Mons*. And similarly in *Clairvaux* in the Department of Aube=*Clarus vallis*,—although here the *ay* sound of *a* is represented by *ai*, as in *Aquitaine* also, from *Aquitania*, *Aix* from *Aquæ*, &c. In *Seine* from *Sequana*, the diphthong *ei* to some extent represents the same sound.

In the common words, *père*, *mère*, *frère* from *pater*, *mater*, *frater*,—*cher* from *carus*, *chair* from *caro*, *aimer* from *amare*, *taire* from *tacere*, *plaire* from *placere*, &c., there seem to be traces of the English long-sound of *a*. So also in *maire* from *major*—although there can be no doubt that in *Lago Maggiore*, we approach nearer the real vocable *major*. In the Italian word for an apple—*mela*—we are compelled to pronounce at least the stem of the Latin name for that fruit in the English manner—*mal-um*: this word ought to have been transmitted to us pure and simple, if *mah-la* was the sound that struck the ear of those who first wrote down the modern word.

One more instance will suffice to show that our English *a*-sound, however wrong it may be, has more to say for itself, than could have been conceived.

Take *Reate*—*Ree-ay-tee*, as the ordinary Englishman would call it; a very ancient city in Central Italy. Its modern existing name is *Rieti*—*Ree-ay-tee*—proving that the *a* in this case had the English sound in the ear of the person who reduced the popular language to writing. Compare *Teate*, *hodie Chieti*.*

* *Castra*, which in so many instances became *Caster* (comp. *Lancaster*), in more than one became *Caister*. (e.g. in Lincolnshire) in which we have phonetically the English sound of *a*. The Anglo-Saxon form of *caster* was *ceaster*, wherein *ea* was still pronounced *ay*. Where we have *chester* for *caster*, the *e* had probably the sound which we give it in Derby, Hertfordshire, &c. In other words the *ea* came at length to be written *a*, as in *shame* identical with *sceam* modesty. In the fact that *a* came to represent *ea*, we have probably the origin of the English sound of *a*.

The Anglo-Saxon *æ* also, was converted in some cases into *ea*, still sounded *ay*, as in *læsan* to leave. *Great* and *break*, with us, retain the sound of *ea*; but to call *leave*, *lave* is not considered polished. *Shame-fast-ness*, from *sceam-fæst-nes*, has been changed to *shame-faced-ness*: "faced" is, of course, the phonetic blunder of some unweeting person, but it serves to shew that the *a* representing *æ* of *fæst*, (firm, resolute,) had the *ay* sound. In Wessex (Devon e.g.) the Anglo-Saxon rendering of *ea* survives: *heal* is popularly *hayle*. &c.—Query: Was *tea* intended to be the French *thé*, or the unusually elegant botanical *Thea*? The Chinese word is said to be *tcha*. In Persian *cha-khutai* = *tea* of Cathay.