

Quite distinct from the pronunciation of particular words are any general characteristics in the way of utterance which speakers of English on either side may notice in speakers of English on the other side. Americans constantly notice what they call the "English intonation," the "English accent," and I have even seen it called the "horrible English intonation." Now I am not very clear what this accent or intonation is, and the less so as I have sometimes been told that I myself have it, sometimes that I have it not, but that I speak like an American. As no man knows exactly how he himself speaks, I cannot judge which description is the truer. On the other hand we Britishers are apt to remark in Americans something which we are tempted to call by the shorter word "twang," a description less civil perhaps than "intonation" without an adjective, but less uncivil surely than "horrible intonation." As to the origin of this "twang" I have heard various opinions. Some trace it to a theological, some to a merely geographical cause. It has been said to be an inheritance from the Puritans as Puritans; others say that it is simply the natural utterance of East-Anglia, without reference to sect or party. As an American mark, the thing to be most remarked about it is, that, though very common, it is far from universal. It would be in no way wonderful either if everybody spoke with a twang, or that nobody spoke with a twang. But the facts, as far as I can see, are these. Some people have the twang very strongly; some have it not at all. Some, after speaking for a long time without it, will bring it in in a particular word or sentence; in others it is strongly marked when a few words are uttered suddenly, but dies off in the course of a longer conversation. And I distinctly marked that it was far more universal among women than among

men. I could mention several American friends from whose speech—unless possibly in particular technical words—no one could tell to which side of the Ocean they belonged, while the utterance of their wives was distinctively American. To us the kind of utterance of which I speak seems specially out of place in the mouth of a graceful and cultivated woman; but I have heard hints back again that the speech of graceful and cultivated Englishwomen has sometimes had just the same effect on American hearers. But, on whichever side our taste lies, there can be little doubt that the American utterance, be it Puritan, East-Anglian, or anything else, is no modern innovation, but has come by genuine tradition from the seventeenth century.

It is otherwise with some peculiarities which concern, not the natural utterance of words to the ear, but their artificial representation to the eye. If the schoolmaster is a deadly foe to language, English or any other, the printer is a foe no less deadly. Half the unhistorical spellings which disfigure our printed language come from the vagaries of half-learned printers, on which side of the Ocean matters very little. As for Latin words, one is sometimes tempted to say, let them spell them as they please; but it is hard when Teutonic "rime," a word which so many Romance languages have borrowed, is turned into "rhyme," merely because some printer's mind was confused between English "rime" and Greek "rhythm." So with specially American spelling-fancies. If anyone chooses to spell words like "traveller" with one *l*, it looks odd, but it is really not worth disputing about. Nor is it worth disputing about "color" or "colour," "honor" or "honour," and the like. But when it comes to "armor," still more when it comes to "neighbor," one's Latin back in the