

set of sounds
l stop.

ence also *dentist*.

Some con-
not stop the
se are called
ke an *ib* and
omes a *v*. If
an *if*—the *p*
labials. The

GRANTS.	
SHARP (Hard).	TRILLED.
h	...
...	...
sh (sure)	r
s	l
th (bath)	...
& wh	...

from the back to

t. Hence *b* and
hard or sharp.

9. The Grammar of Letters.—Letters are conventional signs or symbols employed to represent sounds to the eye. They have grown out of pictures, which, being gradually pared down, became mere signs or letters. The steps were these: picture; abridged picture; diagram; sign or symbol. The sum of all the letters used to write or print a language is called its **Alphabet**. Down to the fifteenth century, we employed a set of Old English letters, such as *a b c—x y z*, which were the Roman letters ornamented; but, from that or about that time, we have used and still use only the plain Roman letters, as *a b c—x y z*.

The word **alphabet** comes from the name of the first two letters in the Greek language: *alpha, beta*.

10. An Alphabet.—An alphabet is, as we have seen, a code of signs or signals. Every code of signs has two laws, neither of which can be broken without destroying the accuracy and trustworthiness of the code. These two laws are:

(i) One and the same sound must be represented by one and the same letter.

Hence: No sound should be represented by more than one letter.

(ii) One letter or set of letters must represent only one and the same sound.

Hence: No letter should represent more than one sound.

Or, put in another way:

(i) One sound must be represented by one distinct symbol.

(ii) One symbol must be translated to the ear by no more than one sound.

(i) The first law is broken when we represent the long sound of *a* in eight different ways, as in—*fate, braid, say, great, neigh, prey, gaol, gauge*.

(ii) The second law is broken when we give eight different sounds to the one symbol *ough*, as in—*bough, cough, d-ough, hicccough (=cup), hough (=hock), tough, through, thorough*.

11. Our Alphabet.—The spoken alphabet of English contains forty-three sounds; the written alphabet has only twenty-six symbols or letters to represent them. Hence the English al-