

their ideas of pronunciation rather from the look of the words in the book than from any traditional way of uttering them. This will most likely account for some cases, specially for one on which I shall have something to say presently. But there are other cases in which the American usage, though it sounds odd to a British ear, is strictly according to the analogy of the English tongue. I heard in America "opponent" and "inquiry," and very odd they sounded. But they simply follow the English rule of throwing the accent as far back as we can, without regard to the Latin or Greek quantity. If we say "théâtre"—which, by the way, is accidentally right, according to the Greek *accent*—"aúditor," "áblative," and a crowd of other words of the same kind, we may as well say "opponent" and "inquiry." The only reason against so doing is, I suppose, that they are a little hard to say, which is doubtless the reason why, while everybody says "aúditor" and "sénator," nobody says "spéctator." But there is one word on which I wish to speak a little more at large, as a clear instance in which the schoolmaster or the printed text or some other artificial influence has brought about a distinct change in pronunciation. The word "clerk" is in England usually sounded "clark," while in America it is usually sounded 'clurk.' I say "usually," because I did once hear "clurk" in England—from a London shopman—and because I was told at Philadelphia that some old people there still said "clark," and—a most important fact—that those who said "clark" also said "marchant." Now it is quite certain that "clark" is the older pronunciation, the pronunciation which the first settlers must have taken with them. This is proved by the fact that the word as a surname—and it is one of the commonest of surnames—is always sounded, and most com-

monly written, "Clark" or "Clarke." I suspect that "Clerk" as a surname, so spelled, is distinctively "Scotch," in the modern sense of that word. Also in writers of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, the word itself is very often written "clark" or "clarke." But of course "clerk" was at all times the more clerkly spelling, as showing the French and Latin origin of the word. It is plain therefore that the pronunciation 'clurk' is not traditional, but has been brought in artificially, out of a notion of making the sound conform to the spelling. But "clurk" is no more the true sound than "clark;" the true sound is "clairk," like French "clerc," and a Scotsman would surely sound it so. "Clark" and "clurk" are both mere approximations to the French sound, and "clark" is the older, and surely the more natural approximation. The truth is that we cannot sound "clerk" as it is spelled; that is, we cannot give the *e* before *r* the same sound which we give it when it is followed by any other consonant. We cannot sound *e* in "clerk" exactly as we can *e* in "tent." This applies to a crowd of words, some of Teutonic, some of Latin origin, in which the spelling is *e*, but in which the sound has, just as in "clerk," fluctuated between *a* and *u*. The old people at Philadelphia who said "clark" also said "marchant." And quite rightly, for they had on their side both older English usage and, in this case, the French spelling itself. The sound "marchant" has come in, both in England and in America, by exactly the same process as that by which the sound "clurk" has come in in America, but not in England. In these cases the words are of Latin origin; so is "German," which people used to sound "Jarman" as in the memorable story of the Oxford University preacher who wished the "Jarman theology" at the bottom of the