

rh, and nh ; not in comparison with other letters of the alphabet.

The difference in sound between lh and l, rh and r, nh and n will be readily noticed by comparing the sounds of each of these pairs of letters in lhian, a net, and mo lian, my net ; rhamh, an oar, and mo ramh, my oar ; nhamh an enemy, and mo namh, my enemy. Of course lhian, rhamh, and nhamh are invariably spelt in books lian, ramh, and namh.

The letters p, b, f, v and m are called labials, or lip-letters ; and the letters h, c, ch, g, y, t, d, lh, rh, nh, l, r, n, ng, and s, linguals or tongue-letters. As m, n, and ng are sounded partly through the nose they are called nasals, or nose-letters. All these letters have two distinct sounds, a low or flat sound, and a high or sharp sound. In the case of the labials, however, the difference between these sounds is of so slight a character that it is scarcely worth taking into account. In the case of the linguals the difference amounts to a good deal. Compare for instance the sound of t in tal, an adze, with its sound in tinn, sick. The difference between its sounds in these two words is almost equal to the difference between th in thank and t in tin.

By the low or flat sound of a consonant is meant its sound in union with a low or flat vowel, such as a, o, u, or ao ; and by its high or sharp sound, its sound in union with a high or sharp vowel, such as i.

It is not to be assumed that the Gaelic consonants agree in sound with the same consonants in English. The fact is that with the exception of h and m there is not a consonant in Gaelic that has the same sound, and only the same sound, as the same consonant or any other consonant in English.