

ANALYSIS OF SOUNDS

IN THE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

Language or Speech is the utterance of articulate sounds, rendered significant by usage, for the expression and communication of thoughts.

Articulate sounds are those which are formed by opening and closing the organs. The closing of the organs is an articulation or jointing, as in *eb, ed, et*. The articulations are represented by the letters called *consonants*. The sounds made with the organs open, are called *vowels*, as *a, e, o*.

Sounds constitute the *spoken* language, addressed to the ear; letters or characters, representing sounds, constitute *written* language, which is presented to the eye.

The letters of a language, arranged in a certain order, compose what is called an *Alphabet*.

The English Alphabet consists of twenty six letters, or single characters—*a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z*. The compounds *ch, sh, th*, and *ng* are also used to represent distinct sounds; and another sound is expressed by *oi, or z*, as in *brasier, azure*, pronounced *brazier, azhur*.

Of the foregoing letters, *a, e, o*, are always vowels; *i* and *u*, are vowels or diphthongs; *w* is also a vowel; and *y* is either a vowel, a diphthong or a consonant.

A, has five sounds, as in *late, ask, ball, hat, what*.

E, has three sounds, as in *mete, met, prey*.

I, has three sounds, as in *pine, pit, fatigue*.

O, has four sounds, as in *note, not, move, dove*.

U, has three sounds, as in *truth, but, bush*.

Y, has two sounds, as in *chyle, pity*.

The sounds of the vowels most generally used, are the *long* and the *short*.

Examples of the first or long sound.

- a in *make, fate, grace.*
- e in *me, mete, meter.*
- i in *bind, strife.*
- o in *hold, post.*
- u in *rudely, rude.*
- y in *ply.*

Examples of the second or short sound.

- a in *mat, band, grand.*
- e in *bet, men, send.*
- i in *bit, pin, wish.*
- o in *not, boss, bond.*
- u in *dun, must, fund.*
- y in *pity, cyst, cylinder.*