

by giving different sounds to the same combination of letters. Alas, how cruel the tricks of English spelling are! Take for example "ough" observe how strangely inconsistent the spelling is for the pronunciation. A pupil that can believe in *through*, *though*, *fought*, *cough*, *rough*, *plough* and *hiccough*, will believe anything. Originally spelling was intended to present an invariable representation of the same sound with the same symbol. This was the primary function of alphabetic writing. The sound which fell upon the ear was to picture to the eye a certain letter and no other. If a particular sound had been represented by one character in one place, but by another in a different place, the result of such in the earliest stages of our alphabet would have been fatal. But the language of our present literature as it appears to us reaches only to the eye, and it must be learned by the ear from the intercourse of our daily life. Fancy a person deducing from analogy the pronunciation of "sound" and "wound," "love" and "move" "door" and "poor," "arch" and "monarch," "lamp" and "swamp," "laughter" and slaughter." Take an example of a word of one syllable with the same radical vowel. In the word "we" the two letters as they are written give a phonetic representation. Prefix an "o" (owe) and the sound of the "we" is not heard. substitute an "e" for the "o" (ewe) and we have an entirely different sound; again place an "a" before the original word (awe) and we get still another sound; affixing a "t" at the end of our word "we" and it is pronounced "wet."

Examine now examples of dissyllables. We have "busy," "bury" and "surely," "putting" and "butting." We have also peculiarities in diagraphs; "ch" is apt to give you some trouble as "chain," "chaise" and "chord." "Ph" may be put in the

category with "ch." "Gh" is ready to keep him company with its manifold servants, in "ghost," "cough," "hiccough" and "Lingham." "S" appears equally as misleading in "has," "sat," "sure" and "leisure"; "th" brings up the rear in "thin," "thyme" or "them." We learn in practice to readily recognize the distinction between "th" voiced and non-voiced, because we have acquired the pronunciation of every word in which it may be found, but how few there are outside of those who may have given the subject some attention that are aware of a difference in pronunciation.

At best our language was but a transfer from the Latin, and the only original parts it possessed, that is two symbols for "th", were left out, not because the sounds which they represented had taken their departure, for they still remain. "C" may be pronounced like "k," "S," "sh" as in the words "can," "city," "gracious."

"G" has two sounds as in "go" and "gentle." "Z" may be "z" in "zone" or "zh" as in "azure." "Sh" may be "si," "ci," "ss" or "ti" as in "mansion," "precious," "pressure" and "caution."

Very frequently I have been asked why we retained letters in a word when they were not pronounced, probably never had been, and altogether likely never would be. This is a very difficult question to answer. Why should we have an "s" in "island" or an "hy" in rhyme? The former comes from "ealand," and the latter from "rime," both Anglo-saxon roots. Why have we a "c" in "scent" a double "s" in "scissors"? Why "tongue," except from false analogy with *langue*, instead of the Saxon "tung"? Why "could" instead of "coud"? why "reason" instead of the old French "reson"? why "parliament" instead of "parlement"; "summer" instead of "sumor" or