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The Phonetic Herald

DEVOTED TO ORTHOEPY AND ORTHOGRAPHY.

1ST YER. PORT HOPE, CANADA, SEPT., 1885. N^O. 7.

ALFABETIC STUDIZ.

II.—SHADE VOWELS.

Besides the twelve vowels which are by almost general consent agreed to as heard in our language and which we have given categorically and exemplified at p. 18, there is another class called Shade Vowels. Phye, p. 54. defines a Shade Vowel as 'one that does not differ very strikingly from some standard one with which it is allied but yet is sufficiently distinct to entitle it to an independent existence.' He says further 'there are 6 well-recognized Shade Vowels . . . but it by no means follows that these are the only ones that can possibly be produced. Theoretically speaking, there is no limit to the number of sounds. . . . So far, then, as Shade Vowels are concerned, they consist of those sounds which although not the most obviously distinct are still sufficiently so to admit of separate recognition.'

But these fine distinctions are baneful to a practical alphabet. The more distinctions the worse unless they are quite necessary, whether one six or twenty. As opposed to them we quote:

1. "Only broad and well defined distinctions should be made."—HERALD p. 8.

2. The statement of the *Independent* writer. See HERALD p. 18.

3. "The alphabet of a great nation must be severely simple."—*S.R.A., Bul. 5.*

4. "An alphabet intended for use by a vast community need not attempt an exhaustive analysis of the elements of speech or a representation of the nicest varieties of articulation."—*IBIDEM 19.*

5. The general opinion that we must not do too much hair splitting.

All of this is not novel but has long been insisted on. In a pamphlet printed

in London in 1724, bearing the title: "The many Advantages of a good Language to any Nation," it is stated: "As letters and distinctions cannot be so numerous as to paint all the divisions of sounds which all tongues strike, small differences should not be minded."

In showing that fine division conflicts with such simplicity as an alphabet requires, (however desirable and perhaps necessary it may be for dictionary purposes.) we might consider the question as disposed of—the very term *Shade* implies that a slight difference only is expressed. Inasmuch as this summary disposal may not be accepted by others than those who wish a 12 vowel alphabet, it will be proper to consider them as a class. This we shall do in our next study.

Bear in mind that what we seek is a practical alphabet for popular use: the dictionary maker is at liberty to denote as many shades of sound (there are but 12 vowel sounds) as his ear or whims may dictate.

CONTRACTIONS.—Employment of these and what they represent may be explained as follows: Prolonging the second stroke of u or u downward indicates that a y sound precedes each. Then u becomes u_1 ; and u_2 , u_3 . They may be considered as composed of y blended with u and u respectively and hence are called contractions. Their capitals are U_1 and U_2 . Contractions are not innovation or unheard of novelty, either in language in general or in ours in particular. Thus we use Xx not as a letter for a single sound but for the compound sounds *cx* (or *ks*) and *gz*, as in *extra, exist*. So Zz is used always as a contraction for *ts* (or *dz*) in German and Italian.

MINIMUM & MAXIMUM.—Misunderstanding has arisen: in our prospectus we stated that *min.* of change from ordinary spelling would be the Five Rules, *max.* its own letter for each vowel. In early issues our spelling was a little beyond *min.*, involving certain principles. In last and present issues we have kept closely to the Five Rules and shall do so until a new *min.* is proposed, which we hope to do shortly. Below the *min.*, the question is not open or debatable. Between *min.* and *max.*, there is a fair and open field. We hope to see *min.* gradually raised as fast as there is about unanimous agreement—**CONCORDIASALVS.** Beyond the *max.*—involving new consonants—all is Utopian or visionary, at best theoretical. It is good, in some respects necessary, to have views beyond the *max.* They should be held in theory only. The time to practice is not yet.

U.S.S.R.A. MEETING was held at New Haven, Conn., 9th July. Report set forth that large number of letters of enquiry received proved increase of interest by people generally. Many express dissatisfaction with alphabet of Association, discontent being based almost wholly on their alphabet giving the vowels 'Roman' instead of 'English' values. The report recommends Association to publish a popular exposition of its alphabet giving in detail reasons that led to choice of each letter or rule as against every other letter or rule proposed.* It recommends employing a man to give his whole time to agitation by correspondence, personal interviews and addresses throughout the country. Rev. Dr. Wayland reported for Philadelphia Branch; Mr. A. Fernald, for N.Y. Branch. Chicago and San Francisco Branches also report. Besides the summer meeting, one will be held each year in last week of Dec. in N.Y. Prof. March, of Lafayette Col., was re-elected President.—*F. Educator*

[**Most urgently needed just now—convincing reasons, not arbitrary dogmatism. Agreement on an alphabet will then come naturally and finally. No one now sees beyond the narrow circle of his own partial views.*—EDITOR.]

WHY have we double *l's* in *full* and *fill* when single ones are enough in *fulfill*?

THE JOURNAL OF AMERICAN ORTHOGRAPHY, published at Ringos N. J., devotes the whole of its May-June 85 number to opinions of many active workers as to an improved 12 vowel alphabet. A sample of Pitman's in its four stages, by Pitman himself, is given; as is also two other very good, but not quite the very best, alphabets. "We bid you be of hope, gentlemen. We are making progress. Only keep the ebullition going—don't stop—and we shall succeed. As agitation stops, the molten mass will crystallize into alphabetic forms, the new as beautiful as the old Roman letters and in harmony with them. Don't talk sentiment but work. Begin work by remitting \$1 for a year's subscription to the *Journal*—at any rate, send 15 c. for the double number."

MR. A. L. BANCROFT, 721 Market St., San Francisco, Cal., recently presented an improved alphabet to the California State Teachers' Association. It provides separate shapes for 41 distinctions of sound. It has been published, being engraved on a large sheet with lithographic examples of its script. Those interested in alphabets should remit 10 cents for a copy. "Prove, *[i. e. try,]* all things; hold fast what is good." Every alphabet should be "seasoned" two years before public presentation. We believe that Mr. B. has not yet given a printed example.

"SCHOOLMASTER'S ENGLISH."—Prof. A. S. Hill, of Harvard, in an article on English in Schools, in *Harper's Monthly* for June, p. 127, says: "Among the things which teachers of every class should avoid is what I must be pardoned for calling 'Schoolmaster's English.' All those whose business brings them in contact with young minds, and who are to a great extent cut off from intercourse with the world of men and women, are apt to attribute undue importance to petty matters; to insist upon rules in cases where the best usage leaves freedom of choice; to prefer bookish and dignified ways of putting things to easy and natural ones."

A or Q? A or Q?—Left over till next.

S. R. A. means Spelling Reform Association.

SCHOOLMASTER'S ORTHOEPEY.—As to pronouncing *ask*, *fast*, *grass*, etc., as *ask fast gras*, etc., insted of saying *ask fast, gras*, etc., Phyfe says, p. 64: "It is the first shade vowel. A: regards its modification it is midway between *a** and *a* being the slightest modification by the tongue and palat that is practically possibl † It is said to hav come into use in the U.S. comparatively recently.‡ It is seldom correctly givn § and most persons ar not even aware of its existence.§ The ear requires some training to distinguish it || and vocal organs some practice to produce it.§ A proper use of this sound indicates a relatively high degree of culture¶ in the art of pronunciation."* Beginners find it difficult to employ it with ease.§ After having once lerned to produce it it requires practice to giv it redily †† and one shud acquaint himself with the list of words in which it occurs. †† In America ther is a tendenc, towards a nasality in speech in part counteracted by inclining in direction of Italian *a*.'§§

[*As in *arm*. †So very slight that we cannot tel it from *a* †Exotic then, or not indigenus when such a hot hous proces becomes necessary—els wud grow naturally. §Indeed! ||Another exampl of our neglected education. ¶Boston *culchaw*? **How ar the million Tom, Dick and Harry, to acquire it?— Is it wel to cultivate this artificial and so unnatural *shibboleth* as a caste barrier between *culchawed* upper-tendom and the masses who wil never acquire it? — ††Is not such strained pronunciation unnatural? In trying to giv it *o* in *ox* is apt to be givn ††This means keep a dictionary at hand and practs away at it until yur *affertation* is not noticeabl. From all uch schoolmaster's pedantry and general thraldom Good Lord, deliver us. §§As in *urn* or *father*. In other words, if we shade away from the broad open sound in *father* in attempts to giv this difficult modulation we ar liabl to nasality. Is it not wiser to keep clear of the shade vowel, not following them who use it, lest, in pronounciation, evil communications corrupt what is nevertheles very good manners?— Ed.]

WHY do we spel *speak* with *e* and *a* when its cognate *speech* has dubl *e*?



MR THEODORE TURNER.—*Grip*, published at Toronto, always trenchant and pointed, is the *Punch* of Canada. The above cut appeared in its Holiday no., lately out. It represents Mr T. Turner in the act of presenting his card which reads *Phthiaudorps Phtholonolo*, and in an extravagantly humorous colloquy, explaining and insisting that he has a right to spel his name as he pleases, if justified by analogy, as thus: *phth* for *Th*, as in *phthisis*; *i* for *e*, *machin*; *au* for *o*, *faut*; *orps* for *ore*, *corps*; *phth* for *T*, *phthisic*; *olon* for *urn*, *colonel*; and if *o on* spels *urn*, then *olo* spels *ur* or *e*. The caricaturist's art is a help in exposing the absurdities and incongruities of current orthograpy.

HOW SHOULD I PRONOUNCE? OR THE ART OF CORRECT PRONUNCIATION. A MANUAL for Schools, Colleges, and Private Use, by W. H. P. Phyfe, N. Y., Putnam's Sons, 1885, p. 305 small f2mo. \$1.25

It is true that Etymology arose within 50 years, as Cox has said, p. 24: It is quite as true that accurat Orthoepey wil be considered as having arisen in the last quarter of the present century. The book before us is part of the literature of progresiv Orthoepey. Phyfe, whose preface is dated from N. Y. City, while writing a manual, has contributed to that progres. The sounds of the language, their composition, formation

and classification, are fully given. He makes 18 distinctions in the vowels, viz. the 16 exemplified on p. 17, that (17th) heard in *dog, orange*, etc. (which we hold to be but a short form of that in *fork*;) and lastly that in *earth*—twelve distinct vowels and six explicitly called *shades*. Pronunciation is indicated by diacritical marks which are Websterian, but W. is advanced on in indicating the quality of the vowels in unaccented syllables which W. leaves unmarked in altogether do as you please way. Worcester, on the other hand, marks about everything unaccented as "obscure" — positively bad as favoring a mumbling, indistinct, muttering, obscure or very slovenly pronunciation which is to be deprecated and shunned as an American sin. We prefer Webster's non-committal way to this; but Phye commits himself, in most cases rightly, but often questionably. The determination of the quality of the vowels in unaccented syllables is one of the problems now demanding a satisfactory solution. Before 1900, let us hope, the Newton of Orthoepy will come and put this and much else to rights. He gives the pronunciation, according to both Web. and Worcester, of over a thousand words often mispronounced. The *O* in the large class of words of which *catot, sorry, soften* serve as examples is given as the vowel in *dog* and *orange*; and this we consider a great advance. They are commonly given with the *O* in *ox, not, bottle*, etc. Nearly all who use new letters take the latter, being driven thereto, in violence to prevailing good orthoepy, by having chosen a bad shape as *o*, for the vowel in *nor*, then, to avoid this shape, thus concededly ugly to themselves altho parents are known to be partial to their

offspring, they put the vowel in *oe* in this class of words for which vowel they have commonly a more shapely letter. Pitman is the most notable sinner in this respect: but he is not alone. *War, horse*, etc., is spelt *wor, hors*, etc., altho *wor, hors* etc. alone consists with his alphabet. With Phye, we believe that the vowel is more akin to that in *fork* than to that in *oe*. His statement at p. 179 is both true and important: 'l, r, m, or n may, like a vowel, form the basis of a syllable, as in *table paper, spasm, often*.' The publisher's name is sufficient guarantee of excellence in the make up of the volume. It should be studied by every one interested in the progress of Orthoepy.

EXPERIMENTATION. — "Fonetic spelling is yet in a tentative stage — not because it is not certain what sounds enter into the composition of a word; but because there has not been enough experimenting with letters of different shapes to enable us to say just which ones are easiest to the eye and of the most historic value. Nor can this be done at once. Many thousand trials, that have not yet been made, alone can lead us to a knowledge as to which characters are of the most economic value." — *Jur. Am. Orthoepy*.

Mr ELIAS LONGLEY, of Cincinnati, O., a veteran, sterling and active advocate of Simplified Spelling will stay with his family at Los Angeles, Cal., for a year; being in ill health. He has lately made important changes in his alphabet all in the right direction. Meantime, his paper, the *Fonetic Educator*, is published with increased vigor by Mr E. N. Miner at 737 Broadway, N.Y.

THE TEN RULES.

1. Omit *a* from the digraph *ea* when pronounced as *e* short, as *head, health, spread*.
 2. Omit silent *e* after a short vowel, as in *have, give, live, definite, hostile, simple*.
 3. Write *f* for *ph* in such words as alphabet, comfort, philosophy, telegraph.
 4. When a word ends with a double consonant, omit the last, as in *shall, cliff*, e.g.
 5. Change *ed* final to *t* where it has the sound of *t* as in *lasted, impressed, fixed*.
 6. Drop silent *e* when phonetically useless, as in *leave, grievance, vineyard, tilled*.
 7. Write *f* for *gh* when so sounded, as in *tuff, enough, ruff, sluff*.
 8. Drop one of double consonants when useless, as in *appear, skind, kist, whipt*.
 9. Drop *u* and *uc* when phonetically useless, and change *o* and *ou* into *u* when so sounded, as *guard, catalog, league, tongue, ruff, youth*.
 10. Change *s* to *z* in distinctive words, as *use* (noun), *use* (verb), *house*, (verb.)
- [The 8th rule is but an extension of the 4th and so includes it.]