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The Phonetic Herald

DEVOTED TO PRONUNCIATION AND REVISED SPELLING.

2ND YER. PORT HOPE, CANADA, MAR., 1886. N^R. 13.

ALFABETIC STUDIZ.

V—DIPHTHONGS (continued.)

The first element of this diphthong has been variously represented. So far as my observation goes, it is identical, however pronounced, with the first element of *I*. In both, the first element, in my own pronunciation, differs according to the sound that follows. When the diphthong precedes a voiceless consonant, the first element is the vowel in *up*, *but*, *son*; when the diphthong ends a word or is followed by a voiced consonant, the first element is vowel in *alms* *father*. Thus, *out*, *couch*, *south*, *house* have *u* as in *up*; *loud*, *gouge*, *Lowther*, *houses*, *owl*, noun, *our*, *how* have *a* as in *father*. So, *ripe*, *right*, *righteous*, *like*, *knife*, *ice*, have *u* in *up*, *jibe*, *ride*, *Elijah*, *knives*, *writhe*, *eyes*, also *isle*, rhyme, *ire*, *nine*, *why*, *I*, *ay* have *a* in *father*.

I do not find this distinction recognized in any author, tho it corresponds closely with classification by Prof. Gregory, Edinburg, cited in Ellis' *Early Eng. Pronunciation*, Part I., page 108.

Ellis, certainly, the greatest authority on *Eng.* pronunciation, says: "The first element of long *I*, as I speak it, seems to be the vowel in *but*." He gives views of many others, among which I notice the following only:

Benjamin Franklin,	the vowel in	<i>but</i> ,
Wilkins,	"	"
Willis and Smart,	"	<i>first</i> ,
Sheridan and Knowles,	"	<i>what</i> ,
Haldimand,	"	{ Ger. <i>mann</i> ,
		{ Fr. <i>matelas</i> ,
Walker and Melvil B.	"	<i>father</i> ,
Melvil Bell,	"	unaccented <i>ask</i> ,
Many Londoners,	vowel in	<i>man</i> , <i>sat</i> .

Ellis adds: "Now this being a personal pronoun, it is heard every day constantly.

But after competent orthoepists have carefully examined it they are unable to agree as to its analysis. One reason is difference of pronunciation, but another appears to be that the first element is pronounced with extreme brevity so that in British speech it is insufficiently heard as distinct from the following glide.

..... The preceding discussion will apply to first element of present pronunciation of *ou* in *now*, *cow*." But in his more minute discussion of the same diphthong in Part IV. p. 1153, he says: "As to the first element, it is subject to at least all the variations of that of long *I*; but, owing to the labial final, the tendency to labialize the first element is more marked."

The above argument, every word of which my own observation corroborates, is what induces me to urge adoption of a single sign for each diphthong.

As to pronunciation in America, it appears to me to be usually the vowel in *father* in all words. The New England variety however appears to be that in *at* or *man* nasalized. The first elements of *I* and *ou* seem the same, tho they may be a slight effect produced in *ou* by the following *u*.

Montreal, 25 Feb. '86.

M.

It better accords with our last study, p. 45 to speak of *positions for*, instead of *elements of*, a diphthong. The positions are those assumed by the oral vocal apparatus

In throwing open *M*'s points to our readers, we remark

1. OPTIONAL SINGLE SIGNS SHOULD BE PROVIDED FOR *I*, *ou* and *oi*. Shud Gholson's contention (p. 45) be sustained that *oi* is composed of two separate sounds and so is not diphthongal, it should be excepted. If preferred by an individual or by

a nation two letters may be used for a dithongal sound or glide. German *Reform* uses *ai* for *i*, and *au* for *ou*—very natural as they are represented in current Ger. by *ei* and *au* respectively.

2. THE CENTRE OF GRAVITY OF ENGLISH IS IN AMERICA. We have here 55 or 60 millions speaking it and will have 100 m. by 1900 and 200 m. by 1950. G. Britain and Ireland have 27 millions no room for more, starting now. Of the 27 m. the greater bulk of Scotland, Ireland and Wales must be counted out as being markedly dialectic. Most parts of Eng. speak dialects markedly and anything but euphonic. We are told that of London is spoken English. But Cockney dialect is as thick and all pervading there as the London fog. Even the educated have more or less of it—like the fog the mud and drizzle, it is everywhere. In America, although there are peculiarities of speech we have but one market dialect, that of the negro of the southern States. Leaving out this and tones called Americanisms, we have speech comparatively homogeneous and this is to be studied instead of heterogeneous British dialects. We cannot resist the belief that Ellis' and other opinions were born of the latter and they have misled *M*. The difference between most model British speech or such as is not plainly local or dialectic and this homogeneous American speech is not wide—not wide enough at any rate to prove a stumbling block.

Mr J. G. Gholson of Broughton, Ill., writes, as to quotation from him on p. 45, that he holds "that the initial and final positions of dithong in *owl* are exactly pictured in the common representation *ou*, that is *o* in *ox* and *u* in *rule*." He holds too, however, that the vowel in *ox* has the same quality as that in *art*—a heresy we once held but voluntarily abandoned. It is untenable.

Mr M. L. Rous writes from Toronto that vowel in *pare* is dithongal, its elements (?) being *e* as in *Ben* and *u* as in *bum*, not *æ* and *u* obscure as inferred from his pamphlet referred to on p. 47.

BURN & BUN.—Mr Rous amplifies our statement p. 47. He holds that vowel in *burn* is equivalent to *e* in Fr. *de* and final *e* in Ger. *liebe*; that in *bun*, to *e* of final syllable of German *liebes*.

A TWELF-VOWEL ALFABET.

(E. Jones in *Jur. Am. Orthoepy*.)

I entirely agree with editor of Fonetico HERALD that 12 vowels are enough for all practical popular purposes and that 4 additional vowels in Am. S. R. A. alphabet are not necessary, seeming introduced with sole object of meeting an arbitrary and fanciful method of pairing vowel sounds. Dr Hamilton truly says "the 12 sounds indicated are commonly believed to need alphabetic representation. Pitman, Graham, Vickroy, E. Longly Larison, Pikard—to which add Ellis and Eng. S. R. A.—for the most part agree that these specified sounds, no more, no less, need separate signs."

Mr Pitman complains, not without reason, that everybody wants his own scheme. But it must be remembered that as result of discussion carried on the past few years, Pitman's own views are considerably modified. It is probable that the last word on the best scheme of reformed spelling will not be spoken for some time to come. It is gratifying however to those who have taken a life interest in this movement to notice a very perceptible assimilation of views on the question, a drawing together of opinion, a dropping of this and of that crochets. Unanimity on all points is not expected. If a recognized central authority were appointed to hear pros and cons on every point of difference, with power to determine, it would be an advantage. Until such tribunal is set up there is nothing for it but to go on discussing and experimenting as best we can, because there is no dictator in the republic of letters.

FRANCE.—Prof. Paul Passy writes from Neuilly sur-Seine: "I have no doubt at all that three years hence the fonetic will be the common method of teaching English in France." We are not so sanguine of even free America. Will 1900 see it prevalent here? Throughout nearly all Europe except Britain they have a decimal system of weights, measures and money. We have decimal currency but they are ahead of us otherwise. We shall not be surprised if they get ahead of us in teaching modern languages, even our own, unless our fossil drybones wake up and bestir themselves.

Mrs E. B. Burz writes from New York: "Rules A and B are excellent, concise and easily remembered and devoid of rigidity, which I deem a very important feature. The rigidity of the 24 Joint Rules and consequent tho't requisite to apply them is my objection to them. . . I wud be glad if yu wud use markt *u* (*ü*) to distinguish the vowel in *put* from that in *but*. Yur preference for Roman values wil caus yu to demur probably. Truly I am delighted with yur work in its present direction and with yu think we shud hav a jurnal devoted to Revision of Speling apart from the shorthand magazines and coming ofner than the bulletins of S.R.A. Yur Dec. number embodis and recomends principls that I urged on S.R.A. at its inception, and hav been urging ever since." [We hav receivd like favorabl opinions from several quarters. Shal Rules A and B be adopted? Speak now or ever after hold yur peace. This is the first time of asking. — Ed.]

RULES A & B vs. 24 JOINT RULES. — It is interesting to compare orthograpy as givn by folowing A and B with that by the 24 of p. 31. Oportunity is givn by examining *M*'s letr. Result: difference in two words only—above (*abuv*) and usualy (*uzualy*). *A* and *B* do not include 6th, 13th and latr haf of 20th. They go beyond the 24 in some respects especially folowing a *sound* principl stated by Archbishop Trench: "The intention of the ritn word, the end whereto it is a mean, is by aid of signs agreed on beforehand to represent to the eye as accurately as posibl the spoken word." Let us restate them:—

- A. OMIT evry useles letr.
 B. CHANGE { *d*, *ph*, *gh*
 if sounded so { to *t*, *f*, *f*.

TWO QUESTIONS now pres most urgently for ansr: 1. What vowels shal hav alfabetric representation? 2. Which five shal hav *a e i o u* assignd to them? To the first we hav helpt contribute an ansr. The ansr to the second is coming and from widly diferent quarters of the world. Let us poses our souls in peace—"the mil of the gods grinds slowly" but it is exceeding sure.

HERALD for 1885, bound, postpaid, 25 c.

ICELAND has a language almost unchanged for over a thousand years. It was establishd as a kingdom in 874. Its isolated position has preservd its language which is that comon tung of the 8th to the 10th century from which the Scandinavian tungs Danish, Swedish or Norwegian hav sprung, while Icelandic is almost its continuation to our day. Danish incursions into England, Scotland and Ireland ar matr of history and hav left an impres on our tung of much interest. In Icelandic, we hear almost the very tones the invaders spoke. Icelandic is aproximately fonetic in its printed representation, as all tungs wer originally in their ritn forms. In cours of time Icelandic has drifted a litl from the comparatively fonetic. English has drifted very much more. In Iceland ther is a movement to correct this gradual deviation, and approximate the fonetic more closely.

ORTHODOX SPELING.—Our Montreal correspondent "preferd that his communication be put in orthodox speling." That's just what we 'v done! Curent Speling as revised by leading filologic scolars of the English speaking world working concurrently and conjointly to that end is the most orthodox speling that we no of. Such Revised Speling is got by folowing 24 Rules givn p. 31. How these rules wer reacht we already explaind p. 21 *et seq.* We cud not think of treating *M* so shabily and maring the consistency of our pages by using the curent speling with all its etymologic errors, pedantic mistakes and outrageous inconsistencies.

A, AN, THE.—In fonetic specimens in *Videt* as well as in most papers advocating the reform 'a' is used for the indefinit articl in same form and sound as in 'an', proper, for a is only contraction for an by dropping *n*, and shud hav same sound as in an. *G* (as in *ale*) is regarded as improper for the litl word [as is also 'a.]. 'The' is also made short by authority of Webster to giv a vowel between *i* in *this* and *u* in *thus* which is *e* in *then*. As both these articls when pronouncet with emfasis ar utrd with *a* and *e* they may yet on determination critically be so speld uniformly.—*Videt*, *Valparaiso, Ind.*

NEW PUBLICATION.

THE COMPLETE FONETIC ALFABET, where in by use of five obscure vowels the accent and pronunciation may always be non. A. J. Graham, publisher, 744 B way, N. Y. Price 35 cents.

This pamphlet of 36 pages is commonly credited to Mr Edwin Coombs, Washington, D.C. We wish we could exclaim *Eureka* of it. Providing for over fifty distinctions of sound, we mean discriminating divisions of sounds — ther being not many over 30 (sounds) is too many for practical popular purposes, altho of use *perhaps* in a dictionary. A dictionary alfabet must be an extension of a popular one and so must be invented after settlement on the latter. As obscure vowels are much considered, this gives the pamphlet special value as a contribution to literature of a vexatious subject. 'Obscure' appears used in Worcester's sense — very sweeping as already complained. Actual count of the vowels in over 11 pages of *N. A. Review* was made by the author. Of 5922 vowels, 3492 are put down obscure and 2430 as fixed — 59 and 41 per cent. We have reason to expect that a very large part of those deemed obscure will have their quality determined readily enough, a smaller part will be found to lack quality altogether or to be mere tones or breath — a washer between the wheel and axle of two other sounds — while a still smaller part must remain doubtful until qualitis are determined by critical comparison. This must be well accomplished ere the last has been said as to an alfabet. We largely endorse the following from the *Washington Chronicle*:

"His object has been to furnish a means by which every elementary sound in our language might be represented — a complete fonetic alfabet. That he has succeeded in presenting it in precisely the best form, he does not flatter himself, but he may justly claim to have done excellent work in that direction. If we regard his alfabet as designed for actual use, we incline to think that he has erred on the side of redundancy, making unnecessary or even non-existent distinctions, as between *w* in *wave* and *w* in *worthy*, or vocalized *e* in *wisdom* and *e* in *zero*; but as an alfabet for the consideration of philologists, orthographers, and orthoepists, it is not open to serious objection. One peculiarity is that it contains separate characters, not only for the elementary sounds and for such diphthongs as *oi* and *ou*, but also for frequently occurring combinations, as *ir* in *irksome*, *gu* in *language* and *ia* in *civilian*. As one character of this class he retains *x* — the equivalent of *ks* — and he uses *q* as equivalent

of *kw* (or *ku*) spelling the word *quest*, for example, *quest*. This use of single characters for frequently occurring composite sounds would materially abbreviate the labor of writing and on that ground at least there is much to be said in its favor, while the labor of learning the additional characters would be very slight. A feature on which he lays especial stress is the recognition of the obscure sounds of the vowels. Most foneticians have failed to recognize any distinction between *a* in the last syllable of *guidance* or *servants* and *a* in the first syllable of *action* or *hazard*, treating each simply as *a* short. Mr. Coombs treats the latter as a fixed and definite sound and the former as a variable and indefinite one, contending that in the unaccented syllables the vowel is often variously pronounced in the same word, according to the context, the mood of the speaker and the rate of speech. He proposes, then, to fix those vowel sounds which are fixable representing each invariably by the same sign and attaching to each sign invariably the same sound; but in addition to these he would use for each of our five vowels one sign more and allow that to stand for any sound which is commonly attached to that vowel and which cannot be accurately represented by any one of the definite vowel signs. One thing which deserves mention is the simplicity of the new script forms and the care taken that diacritical marks shall fall on the letters most rarely used, matter of very great importance in practice when an alfabet comes to be used in writing. Mr. Coombs' book gives evidence of care and laborious attention to detail, which happily supplement the ripe scholarship and thorough familiarity with fonetic principles manifested in its pages. It is not too much to say that "The Complete Fonetic Alfabet" is a work which no one interested in the correct representation of English speech can afford to neglect reading."

ONTARIO. — At a recent meeting of University of Toronto Senate, ruling the provincial university. Mr Houston gave notice of motion that fonetic spelling be received at examinations. Revised Spelling would have better chance to be allowed. It will be discussed next meeting.

U. S. — A congressman has introduced a bill appropriating \$50,000 to enable a Chicago journalist to promulgate and propagate a system of spelling by sound. We suppose the bill will be killed. It would be money much better spent than most that Congress appropriates if ten or one hundred times \$50,000 were spent so as to abolish the existing want of system and put a sound system in its place. — *Mirror & American, Manchester, N. H.*

THE FONETIC HERALD is published monthly (except July and Aug.) It is devoted to PRONUNCIATION, and to explaining and exemplifying the simplicity and practicability of amending our ORTHOGRAPHY, so as to spell by sound instead of by memory. 25 cents a year.