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The Fonetic Herald

DEVOTED TO ORTHOËPI AND ORTHOGRAPFI.

1ST YER.

PORT HOPE, CANADA, Me., 1885.

N^O. 5.

ALFABETIC STUDIZ.

I.—HOW MANY VOWELZ? AND WHICH?

The last buletin ov the U. S. Speling Ref. Association iz just tu hand. The folowing iz the vowel scheme givn in it, tharfore approved by the Association:

Short.

1. I i, pick, it.
2. E e, them, ell.
3. A a, cap, at.
4. O o, fast, ask.
5. O e, not, what, odd.
6. O o, wholly, obey.
7. U u, but, up, won.
8. U u, pull, wool.

Long.

9. pique, peak, eat.
10. they, veil, ail.
11. care, air, ere.
12. far, are, ah.
13. nor, all, awe.
14. holy, owe.
15. burn, urge, word.
16. rule, pool, ooze.

The Association propozez a diferens ov shape for each ov the sounds calld *short*, and tu indicate the coresponding so-calld *long* sound by the same shape with the comon mark ov length, a horizontal stroke, abuv. Thus, the vowel in *they* wil be denoted by 'e' with stroke abuv. In explanation, it iz stated:—

Nations which use the Roman alfabet make the same letr stand for a short vowel and its long, distinguishing the two, when needful, by a diacritical mark, uzually the macron. Slight diferenses ov quality ar disregarded. It iz propozd tu use the new alfabet in this way. In popular print the diacritical mark may always be omited, ecsept where a diferens ov quality iz *felt*."

It shud be notist that the words 'fast' and 'ask' ar expected tu be pronounst with the *a* like that in the word *father*.

Altho the terms *long* and *short* ar used it iz not intended tu imply that the *long* difer from the *short* in quantity only: it iz expresly stated that 'slight [?] diferenses in quality ar disregarded.' So that between a so-calld *long* and its coresponding *short* vowel ther may be a diferens in both quantity and quality.

Now here iz a mudl (tu put it mildly) not desirabl. The chief distinguishing qualitee ov sounds shud be discriminated and indicated by establish dif ferenses in the shapes ov the faces ov the letrz reprezenting them. This iz a very important principl. Each shape shud with unvarying constancy indicate infalibly *its own* elementary sound.

By this mixture ov new letrz and diacritics, 16 distinctions ov sound ar made while ther ar but 12 sour. thos numberd 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 13 16. The

11th differs not in quality from the 3rd, nor the 12th from the 4th, the 14th from the 6th, nor the 15th from the 7th. The *quantity* of a vowel depends mainly on the accent, surrounding letters and emphasis. *R* following a vowel gives it increased length or rather increased volume, for quantity means volume instead of length simply. *R* is the most noticeable letter in this respect. Quality is inherent, essential, abstract. Quantity is variable having all degrees (with no fixed boundary between long and short) from the lightest whisper to the loudest blaring speaking-trumpet, varying with the speaker, the word, the place, and the time; even in the same speaker when under different emotions.

Tu sum up and specify, the following sounds, given in order from high to low, need alphabetic distinction:—

- i pique peak eat seize fiend deer eve machine fetus Caesar fatigue Peter
- ii pick it in women busy hymn history guinea forfeit cringing
- iii they veil ail weigh way campaign pray gauge fading aching
- iv them ell head heifer jeopardy friend any said many says bread
- v cap at Isaac have Africa assassination angry fancy fanatic
- vi are far ah father papa ma.na harm heart Haerlem guard
- vii not what odd yacht bottle consider knowledge comparative God
- viii nor for awe George bought reform reformation broad taught
- ix but up won burn urge word companion enough cupboard flood
- x wholly obey holy owe harmony harmonious potato tobacco floor four
- xi pull wool good stood signature put sugar push nature bushel
- xii rule pool ooze bruise through do shoe woo move soup two

It should be observed that long *i* as in *fight* is considered a diphthong composed of the sounds number vi and ii. This will be explained in due time.

A few fail to distinguish a difference between sounds vi and vii. They are the closest together in quality of the dozen sounds specified above. Besides their distinguishable difference in quality, hard to convey except *viva voce*, the lower jaw is depressed more in vi (and the mouth opened wider) than in vii.

These are the sounds commonly believed to need alphabetic representation. Pitman, Graham, Vickroy, E. Longley, Larison, Pickard and others agree that these specified sounds, no more and no less, need separate signs.

A writer in the N. Y. *Independent* has truly said (what should be borne well in mind) that 'every sound, especially every vowel sound, is capable of an indefinite number of variations without loss of its identity. A trained ear can discern a dozen shades of *O* for instance; but one letter will do for the whole group. An alphabet for practical use must not take note of minute distinctions. We have only to find a letter for each group and we shall have a practical phonetic alphabet.'

Mr Wm H. Orr writes from Toronto: I much prefer your paper retaining its present size so that it can be enclosed in letters. Issue it as often as you can afford it. . . . The Five Rules are excellent; insert them often in the expectation that some newspapers may practise them and so popularize them.

THE FIVE 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, genuine.
3. Write *f* for *ph* in such words as alphabet, phantom, comfort, philosophy, telegraph.
4. When a word ends with a double consonant, omit the last, as in shall, cliff, eg.
5. Change *ed* final to *t* where it has the sound of *t*, as in last, impress, fixt.

AN OPEN LETTR

TO MEMBERS OV MODERN LANGUAGE CLUB,
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, TORONTO.

Sirs,—That our alfabet iz defectiv cannot be unknown tu yu, az must also that laudabl atempts ar being made tu (i) *revise* the use ov the lettrs we hav and (ii) *enlarj* the alfabet so as tu more properly denote orthoepy—in other words the rectification ov our exceddingly irregular orthograpy. In so doing it iz found that the introduction ov a few new forms becomes necessary. Ov these, thoz for the vowel sounds ar by far the more important. Having setld what vowel sounds need representation it becomes an important question tu which ov these sounds shal be assignd the existing vowel lettr. Opinions hav been givn; but, these not being in ful harmony, it appears need^{ul} tu carefully re-examin the basis ov such opinions, so az if possibl tu arrive at convincing reasons for the selection made. Yu ar askt tu giv yur careful and deliberat attention tu the matr az a practical and important one in comparativ linguistic nolej. It iz one involving comparison ov pronunciation ov the more prevalent modern languages.

The problem wil appear more clearly if we consider what wud hav been the resulting confusion had diferent nations adopted sets ov shapes diferent in each at the time the Arabic superseded the Roman notation thruout Europe. For exampl, supoz the shape 4 had been taken by us tu represent six, while the Germans used it for four, the French for two, and so on. It iz manifest that when the shapes ov the nine digits wer introdust intu Britain or all Europe, it was proper tu uze them with no other than international or comparativly cosmopolitan, valyuz. If 4 wer found tu represent four by other nations, then it wud hav been a great mistake tu hav givn any other numerical valyu tu it. If that wer true in the days when the Arabic notation spread intu Europe, it

iz, *a fortiori*, important az tu new lettr in these days ov world wide intercours. Otherwise, the amount ov transliteration wil stil be enormus. It iz believd by many that any alfabet which leaves this principl out of view wil not be acceptabl.

In like manner, the 5 current vowel lettr a e i o u shud be uzed by us with valyuz in at least comparativ accord with their use by other nations.

A e i o u being assignd tu represent specified sounds, the first part of the problem iz solvd. Yu ar not askt tu go beyond. Selecting good forms for the other vowel sounds (categorically givn elswhere) wil complete the alfabet vowel representation. What ar the elementary sounds yu alredy know or can lern. They ar tu be found in all standard treatises on English. The subject belongs tu English az regards its history, structure and etymology; but it also belongs tu comparativ filology and comparativ orthoepy.

Yu ar in exceptionally good environment for its solution: yu hav tutors and professors for the Romance tungs az wel az for German and English; yu can redily get any secondary light yu need from ded tungs, Sanscrit, Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac az wel az Arabic: they ar at yur elbo.

Any ansr not based on a thoro consideration and several months digestion and comparison wil be worthles.

The problem iz a grand one, scientific and cosmopolitan. It furnishes yu az linguists with a practical purpose or an objectiv point in yur work—one by which yu can compare and test results. See on this point remarks by Mr Henry Sweet, past president ov Eng. Filologic Society, az recorded elswhere.

Ezra Cornell sed: "J wil found an institution where any one can lern anything." Light iz wisht in this matr—we stil look tu institutions ov lerning for it. *Sit lux.*

Allow me tu congratulate yu on the existence ov a Club such az yurs. It had neither place nor name in my college days. It iz ominous for good—the dawn ov an era ov precise scholarship.

Further explanations givn by adressing
YURS RESPECTFULLY

A. HAMILTON.

Port Hope, 8th May, 1885.

ENGLISH SP. REF. ASSOC'N.

From the *Fonetic Journal's* account of the annual meeting in London we extract the following:—

Mr J. B. RUNDLE then moved the re-election of officers. He said that the present age had been described as one in which the novel had replaced the sermon. It was encouraging therefore to find the question of spelling reform mentioned in the novels of the day. In that popular work, "All Sorts and Conditions of Men," there were three separate attacks on spelling in its present condition. If it were brought home to the teachers who had now so laboriously to impress upon the minds of the young the spelling of our language that that spelling was condemned by the leading etymologists of the day, who were all in favor of fonetic spelling, he thought they would be weaned from their present opinions; and then through them might be reached the *Inspectors*, who were the greatest opponents of anything in the way of change of spelling.

Mr PAGLIARDINI seconded the motion, and remarked that Lord Tennyson had consented to become one of the vice-presidents of the Association because he wished that the pronunciation which brought out the effects designed in his poetry should be faithfully recorded for the use of future times.

The motion being agreed to Mr Henry Sweet, M. A., was called upon to deliver his lecture on "Spelling Reform in its relation to the Practical Studies of Language."

Mr SWEET began by quoting Prof. Seeley's remark that the study of History, while it should be scientific in its method, should pursue a practical object. Mr Sweet would extend the application of this remark to the science of philology. Hitherto, this science, Mr Sweet said, had not exerted any favorable influence on the practical study of language, but rather the reverse, as shown by the former hostile attitude of philologists and classical scholars to spelling reform. The remedy for this lay in the recognition of a science of *Living Philology*, based on the thorough study of living languages by means of phonetics and psychology. Two common but erroneous

notions were, that an accurate pronunciation could be acquired by mere imitation, without the help of phonetic analysis, and that minute distinctions could be safely disregarded in understanding or speaking a living language. Even a purely literary study of a language should be based on its colloquial form, for this alone was simple, regular and definitely limited in the range of its forms and vocabulary. No language could be really mastered except through a phonetic notation, [not excepting our own]

NEWS.—We are always glad to receive items of news. If papers are sent, paragraphs should be marked.

POSTAGE.—The postage (Canadian) on a single copy of any *periodical* weighing less than an ounce is half a cent. — One-half cent stamps are for sale. This applies to the *HERALD*.

Every public reading room in the country should be supplied with more or less of the literature of Simplified Spelling. Sum one in every city and town should attend to this. Mechanics' Institutes, Y.M.C. Associations, colleges and other places have reading rooms. To accustom the public to the sight of new spellings is even more needed than abstract arguments. The educated already know most of them. The ignorant will not understand. Such printed literature should be properly placed and regularly put up.

The *Chatham Planet* says we "do not go by any classification of sounds given by the authorities." As this is so indefinite and lacks example and explicitness, we are at a loss. We have diligently compared the best authorities both with one another and with the actual, the sounds themselves and their mode of production by the vocal organs; in other words, scientific phonology and the physiology of speech. Authorities on anatomy differ; careful dissection is the final appeal. Dissect sounds, Mr. P., compare authorities, and give us a better.

The *PHONETIC 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.