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# The Fonetic Herald

DEVOTED TO PRONUNCIATION AND REVISED SPELLING.

2<sup>ND</sup> YER. PORT HOPE, CANADA, FEB., 1886. N<sup>R</sup> 12.

## ALFABETIC STUDIZ.

### IV—DIFTHONGS.

A **DIFTHONG**, according to Webster, is a coalition or union of two vowel sounds pronounced in one syllable; as *ou* in *out*, *oi* in *noise*.

A **SYLABL**, according to the same author, is an elementary sound or combination of elementary sounds uttered together or at a single effort or impulse of the voice.

Now, since it is plain that no two vowel sounds can be uttered by one impulse of the voice, it is equally plain that the above definition of *difthong* must be erroneous. The sounds represented by *oi* in *oil* are two separate vowel sounds that cannot be uttered in one syllable, and therefore cannot constitute a difthong.

A **DIFTHONG** is *not* a union of two elementary sounds in one syllable, but is itself a distinct elementary sound made *during* a glide of the organs of speech from the position for one sound to the position for another.

Suppose a word commencing with Italian *a* (as in *arm*) and *i* (as in *it*); thus, *aioc*. In pronouncing this supposed word, let the sounds of these vowels be given in full; the transition from one to the other is very awkward. Nature likes not discords. She has a tendency to avoid every harshness and irregularity, and, hence, a new sound is soon produced by dropping the body of these sounds when they come in this succession, and by passing the organs of speech from the position for Italian *a* to the position for *i*, a new sound is produced *during* the glide of the organs from one position to the other. This new sound is that of *i* (as in *ice*.) It is not a union of two other sounds, but a separate and distinct sound made *during* a glide of the organs.

In the same way, the difthong *ou* or *ow* has been produced from broad *a* (as in *all*) and long *oo*.

It has been customary to class the so-called difthong *oi* or *oy* (as in *oil* or *boy*), as a distinct element; but this so-called difthong is the broad sound of *a* (as in *all*), followed by *i* (as in *it*); and these are not even pronounced in the same syllable, since it is impossible to utter two vowel sounds by one emission of the voice.—*J. G. Gholson in the Lodestair*.

The difthong in *out* appears to have *o* (as in *ox*) for first position, and *u* (as in *put*) for second, instead of *e* and *u* respectively, as taught above. With this exception, we believe the above doctrines correct in the main; and, so far as we know, Mr G. is entitled to full credit for propounding them. The difthongs

or glides are single sounds, the vocal organs changing position *during* the emission of breath. The change is very quick from *a* to *i* in *i* (as in *ice*), slower in *ou* (as in *out*), and still slower from *e* to *i* in *oi* (as in *oil*.) The difference as to slowness or quickness of change is one of *degree* merely, not one of *kind*. In a very slow pronunciation of *boy* they would become two vowels necessarily. This will reduce Mr G.'s contention that *oi* in *oil* is not a difthong, but two separate vowels to the fine point of how slowly they are uttered—so a matter of opinion, depending on habit of speech, or varying with emotion, etc., and so covered by the "personal equation."

In producing *i* [as in *ice*], so quick is the change from one position to the other that the ear does not so readily detect the positions as in the other two difthongs. Hence the propriety, apart from expediency, of representing it by a single letter. In *ou*, the movement is slower, each position is dwelt on, and so is more apparent; represent it by two letters. Similarly and *a fortiori*, we should have two letters for *oi* [as in *oil*].

Let the reader consult the order of the vowels as given on page 18, where they are arranged from high to low. The first position for *oi* is 5th on the scale, the second is 2nd, so that the oral vocal apparatus has to change through six positions—a possible explanation of the slowness of change.

If subscribers send us their orthoepic "ultis," we will try to resolve them.

"I hold that a man has just as much right to spell a word as it is pronounced as he has to pronounce it the way it aint spelt."—*Josh Billings*.

**GERMANY** is cursed with two sets of shapes for each letter - relic of the middle ages. So we had our old 'black letter' - it died out in the Tudor period with us but is more prevalent in Germany still than the Roman characters so generally used by other nations. Adoption of Roman shapes only (*Nur Lateinschrift*) is one of two rallying cries among those who favor Revised Orthography there - the other being a demand for omission of unnecessary or superfluous letters (*Keine ueberfluessigen buchstaben mehr.*) Germans begin every noun with a capital letter. Besides the two points specified they now advocate a use of capitals as by other nations. Altho German orthography needs Revision not one fourth as much as ours, yet they are both more active and more advanced than we. There are two principal societies. 'The German S. R. A.' (*Deutscher Orthografie-Reform Verein*), of which Dr W. Vieter, professor of English philology in the University of Marburg, is the head, supports a journal of high rank (*Zeitschrift fur Orthografie, Orthoepie, und Sprachphysiologie.*) which is edited by Dr W. Vieter, with the co-operation of many eminent scholars. It devotes itself to the scientific side of the problems within its scope. The "General Assoc for Simplified German Spelling" (*Allgemeiner Verein fur einfache deutsche Rechtschreibung*), is in its tenth year. Its organ, *Reform*, which is devoted mainly to the practical or popular side of the movement, is edited by the President, Dr F. W. Fricke, of Wiesbaden. It is noteworthy that *a* is chosen for flat or Italian *a* as in *arm*, a vowel of frequent occurrence in German. It is rare in English. If *th* occur in German, the *th* is sounded *t* only and *h* quite silent. By authority of the Education Department, omission of the *h* is not only allowed but favored. They appear to retain *h* in words from Greek *theta*. General omission of this superfluous *h* is made by newspapers. We are indebted to Mr C. Doebler of this town for papers from Berlin, Prussia, two or three years ago, which exemplified this. Privat letters tell him that the Prussian minister of education would go much farther and faster but the death or political fall of Bismarck might bring in a new ministry who would undo such advances. Meantime they go so far as

no reasonable man can "go back on" - so should we. Mr D. has a correspondent named Rudolph who now signs *Rudolf*. Most English-speaking nations have so much arrogant conceit and supercilious self-sufficiency as to look on all foreigners as gentiles, heathens and barbarians. It would be better if we 'took a leaf out of their book' - several of them for that matter. In some respects the old world countries are more progressive than 'Free America!' Our newspapers could easily, and should forthwith, make the general change of *ph* to *f* and frequent dropping of the more manifestly useless silent letters. Our Bureaus of Education and colleges should insist on sound methods of teaching Orthoepy of our own and all other Modern Languages. This would stop the present reckless pronunciation not only permitted but taught in colleges and schools. The sooner the Department and our teachers wake up to this *fact* the better for themselves and pupils.

**FRANCE.** - In Paris, they have an Association of Teachers of English by Phonetic Methods. Prof. Paul Passy is treasurer and a moving spirit. Prof. P. has the chair of Modern Languages in *l'Ecole Normale* and is thoroughly versed in such. They have found that the best way to teach pronunciation of English is by the *eye* having a printed shape for each distinctly marked sound. Pupils acquire a better pronunciation than by *ear* alone. Success at the August examinations was quite marked. So far a twelve-vowel alphabet has been employed. Primers in French and German have been published by the same indefatigable worker. The germ thus planted appears to have sprouted and to be growing with vigor. Our Normal Schools and colleges should not be behind foreigners in adopting improved methods of teaching accurate pronunciation of our own and of other tongues, but especially of our own.

**NOVA SCOTIA** has an active worker in Principal McKay who contributes a close two-column article to the *Halifax Herald* indicating lines of advance in several educational methods one being Rectification of Spelling on a *sound* basis. We shall insert the latter part at an early day. Follow his example.

## NEW PUBLICATIONS.

THE NUMBER AND NATURE OF VOWEL SOUNDS. By M. L. Rouse. Rowsel & Hutchinson, King St. East, Toronto. 1885. Price, 25 cents.

This pamphlet of 16 pages is an essay read before the Canadian Institute recently. The author has taken the four principal languages of western Europe (English, French, German and Italian) giving an analytical comparison of their vowel sounds including diphthongs. He finds 8 pairs of vowels in these tongues and they are put in tabular comparison on p. 8. German has the whole 3 pairs, while English, according to Mr Rouse, has but  $6\frac{1}{2}$  pairs. How far he means his pairs to be exact pairs is not plain. By an exact pair we mean two vowels which differ in *quantity* only. If different in *quality*, they are not exact pairs. To a, the vowel in *father*, he denies the short half to make a pair, therein agreeing with or confirming the statement made by Max Mueller (*Science of Language*, volume ii, page 131, note.) He teaches that vowel in *pare* is a and that it is diphthongal owing to "the subtle *r* after it. He hears the obscure vowel *e* between the *a* proper and the *r*—a probable confounding of what has been called the "vanish" of this and other vowels. (*e* appears to vanish with an *i* (as in *it*) sound represented often in our current spelling by *y* (as in *pay*), also vanishing with the obscure vowel or neutral escape of tones of breath, rather, differing but slightly from *u* (as in *bun*.) One pair of Mr R's vowels are those in *burn* and *bun* whose equivalent he finds in French *œ* and in final *e* of Ger. *liebe* with nothing to correspond in Italian. The truth is that no European tongue except English uses the sound in *burn* or *bun* as a main vowel as we do, altho it is so in certain Oriental tongues (as Afghan, Persian, Indian.) Vietor's sign for vowel in *but* is *æ*. He uses *æ* for that in *hurt* also and very properly, as we think, since they differ in quality alone. *V*. does not use *æ* in representing either Fr. or Ger., at any rate, we have not found it in looking over his examples of Fr. and Ger. The final *e* in *liebe* he gives as *æ*; the obscure vowel in Eng. *better* or *drama* as *a*: but says that

*æ* is very nearly equal to *a*. His *æ* has to our ear a faint *e* (as *pet*, quality (*e* in some cases and speakers.) Languages with accent have necessarily an obscure vowel. It is represented by *e* in our words *the*, *better*, etc.; by *o* in *doctor*, *editor*, etc.; by *a* in *drama* *idea*, etc.; but often without sign when occurring before the so-called liquids *l*, *m*, *n*, *r* as in *bottle*, *criticism*, *sceptre*, etc. It is but an escape of breath (unintended as it were) occurring in changing position of vocal apparatus from that for preceding to that for following sound. During escape, the vocal cords do not vibrate, are not tens. They are more or less tens and always vibrate with every regular vowel including that in *but* or *burn*. Vibration is essential to every vocal note. A blast from the organ belows gives no note but a mere puff unless it sets a reed in vibrational motion. In the human organ, vocal cords correspond to the reed of the organ pipe. Altho inclined to question our author's treatment of another pair of vowels, those in *dawn* and *don*, space forbids discussing it. His farther treatment of the vowels is commendable in general, showing a masterly grasp of subject. The pamphlet contains a comparison of vowel sounds with the notes of music. The vowels used as interjections, as the scale runs from below up, express the different emotions anger, surprise, wonder, sorrow, disgust, inquiry, contempt, pain—so our author claims. Mr R.'s residence on the continent of Europe and his knowledge of languages entitle him to be heard in this very important matter. We commend thoro study of the subject and pamphlet to all interested in Phonics, Comparative Orthoepy, or in Alphabetic.

ELEMENTARBUCH DES GESPROCHENEN ENGLISCHEN. Von Henry Sweet. Clarendon Press. 1885.

This book Prof. Sweet has written for Germans to acquire English Pronunciation. It is too abstruse goes too far for popular use. It is valuable to the scientific as a contribution to Orthoepy. Colloquial pronunciation is given—deliberate pronunciation appears to be a basis for purposes of Revision. Mr S. professes to represent London dialect.

## PRONUNSIQSHUN.

Salisbury Solz'ber i  
 Beaconsfield Bec' 'nz feld  
 Osman Digna Os man Digna  
 Soudan Sudan  
 Chamouni Shamune

In most oriental tungs ther is no accent, or almost none, in the sens that we understand and uze the term. A stres is laid about equally on evry sylabl. The genius of our speech is to place accentual stres on or toards the first part of a word. The habit so aquired leads to giving undue stres to an erly sylabl in oriental words which belongs not there. Besides the oriental generally this is true of French and Hungarian. Teachers of such tungs comonly inculcate placing an accent or the last sylabl. This, altho untrue in *fact*, is true in *effect*: it cheks an English speaking pupil in folowing the accentual habits his own language has givn him and so givs a *resultant* orthoepy not far astray. Worcester says: "In French, ther is no recognized accented sylabl, evry vowel (mute or obscure *e* only excepted) receiving a ful and distinct uterance, but in English representations of the pronunciation of French words, the last sylabl is generally markt as having an accent." See unaccented words above.

Obsev that the same word changes sound in inflection sometimes, as  
 youth youths oath oaths  
 yuth yuthz oth othz

as also in cognate words:  
 cloth clothes breath breathes  
 cleth clothz breth brethz

Fahrenheit Fa ren hit'  
 Italian It al'yan *not* It al'yan  
 Colquhoun Co hun'

Aryan Blount Jena  
 Ar'yan Blunt Ye'na

*J* in a German word has always the force of *y*. We hav but a singl word, *hallelujah*, in which this occurs.

*WHY* dubl *l* in *shall*, singl *l* in *shalt*?  
 Compare *touch* with *much*; *wonder* with *one*; *laugh* with *half*; *folks* with *coax*.

*TO ARMS!*—In a circular calling a winter meeting of S. R. A. for devising a program of *action* we read: "The preliminary work is done. The time has come for more definit plans of advance. The public has been convinst that our speling ought to be and can be simplified, oposition has almost entirely disappeared except the occasional muterings of deep seated prejudice: the scolars of the world having agreed, the public has accept-d the verdict. The question now is "What shal we *do*?" This meeting is to prepare the an:; so that thoz who believ in simplifying speling may be told just how they can put such time and money and interest as they can giv where it wil realy do most good. Large numbers say that when a definit plan of action is provided they ar redy to *do*. Til then we hav no time merely to hear each other say what all new or believd before. When the time for concerted *action* has come we ar redy. Has not that time come?"

## A GUD TIM CUMING.

Ther 'z a gud tim cumin, beiz,

A gud tim cumin;

Let us ad it el wē can,

Evri wumaa, evri man,

The gud tim cumin.

Smolest helps, if ritlly givn,

Mek the impuls strengger;

'Twil be streḡ enuf wun de;

Wet a litl longer.

CHAS. MCKAY.

## KEY TO SPELING BY SOUND.

Sound a a e e i i e o o u u  
 az in art at ale ell eel it l or ox no up put do  
 th th ch sh ŋ or ng  
 az in thine thin chin shin sing

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