culation constitutes the great difference between men and brutes; the latter being unable to articulate, can utter only vocal sounds. The imperfect articulations of the parrot and some other animals form no exception that deserves notice.

I give the name articulation, to the act of joining the organs, and to the character or letter which represents the junction. In the latter sense, the word is equivalent to *consonant;* and articulation may be considered the preferable term, as it expresses the fact of closing the organs.

Human speech then consists of vocal sounds separated and modified by articulations of the organs. We open the mouth, in a particular manner, to utter a vowel; we then close the organs, interrupt that sound, and open the organs to utter a second vowel, and continue this opening and closing, to the end of the word. This process is carried on with surprising rapidity.

Now in passing from an articulation or close position, to an open position for uttering a vowel, it happens often that a very slight sound of *e* is uttered so as to be perceptible to the ear, either before or after the utterance of the proper vowel. This is remarkably the case with the long vowels preceding *r*, for such is the nature of that letter, that *bare, mire, more, parent, apparent*, &c., cannot well be pronounced without a slight sound of *e*, between the long vowel and the consonant. Thus the words above named are pronounced nearly *baer, mier, moer, paerent, appaerent*, and *bare, mire*, really form two syllables, though they are considered to be monosyllables.

A like case, though less obvious, occurs in uttering *u*, particularly after the labial and palatal articulations. In passing from the articulations, *eb, eg, em, ep*, or *pe*, to the sound of *u*, as in *mute* and *pure*, we are apt insensibly to utter a slight sound of *e;* and this utterance, which proceeds from the particular situation of the organs, has been mistaken for the first component sound of the diphthongal *u*. The same cause has given rise to the pronunciation of *e* before the vowel in such words as *guide, guard, kind, guise*. This is precisely similar to the vulgar pronunciation of *cow, gown, county, town*, &c., that is, *keow, geown, keounty, teown;* a pronunciation formerly common in New England, and not yet wholly extinct. This vicious pronunciation, in all words of this kind, whether countenanced by men of low life or of fashionable life, ought to be carefully avoided; as the slender sound of *e*, in such cases, gives a feebleness to the words utterly inconsistent with that full, open and manly enunciation which is essential to eloquence.

The genuine sound of *u* long, detached from the influence of consonants, is the same in all the words above specified; and the reason why it has been made a distinct vowel after *r*, as in *rude* [rood,] is, that the organs are open, before the sound commences; whereas when it follows most of our consonants, the sound is commenced immediately after an articulation, or close position of the organs, as in *mutable* and *infusion*. For this reason, *u* has more distinctly its diphthongal sound after labials and palatals, than after *r;* but this accidental circumstance should not be the ground of radical distinctions, equivalent to the sounds of different letters.

There is, in Walker's analysis of the alphabet, an error peculiar to himself. This is, in making a distinction between the short *i* when it is followed by a consonant, and when it is not; as in *ability*. In this case, he calls the first *i*, in *abil*, short; but the second he calls open, and equivalent to *e* in *equal*. See principles 107, 544. He also makes the unaccented *y* at the end of a syllable precisely like the first sound of *e*, in *me, meter*. *Ability* then written, according to his principles would be *abileetee*. Never was a grosser mistake. The sound of *i* and *y* in unaccented syllables, whether followed by an articulation or not, is always the short sound of *e* long, that is, *e* shortened; the same sound in quality or kind, but not in quantity. To prove this fact, nothing is necessary but an attention to the manner in which the words *little* and *tiny*, are pronounced, when they are made emphatical by utterance. They are then pronounced *leetle, teeny*—and this we hear every day, not only among children, but often among adults. In this change of pronunciation, there is nothing more than a prolongation of the sound of *i*, which, in the syllables, *lit, tin*, is short, in *leetle, teeny*, is long.

In consequence of this mistake, Walker has uniformly made a different notation of *i* when accented, and followed by a consonant in the same syllable, and when it stands alone in the syllable and unaccented. Thus to the first *i* in *ability* he assigns a different sound from that of the second; and in *article*, he gives to *i* the sound of *e* long, *arteecle;* but in *articular, articulate*, he gives it the short sound, *tik*. It is in consequence of this mistake, that he has throughout his Dictionary assigned to *i* and *y* unaccented and to *y* unaccented terminating words, the sound of *e* long; an error, which it is ascertained by actual enumeration, extends to more than *eleven thousand vowels* or syllables; an error, which, if carried to the full extent of his principles, would subvert all the rules of English versification. Jones and Perry have corrected this error in their notations, throughout the language.

If it should be said, that Walker did not intend to direct *y* in this case, to be pronounced as *e* long, but that his notation is intended only to mark the *quality* of the sound; it may be replied, he either intended the sound to be that of *e* long, according to his express direction, or he did not. If he did, his notation is not according to any good practice, either in England or the U. States, and by changing a short vowel into a long one, his notation would subvert the rules of metrical composition. If he did not, his notation is adapted to mislead the learner, and it does mislead learners, wherever his book is strictly followed. In truth, this notation is generally condemned in England, and universally rejected in practice.*

In the notation of sounds, there is a mistake and inconsistency in all the orthoepists, which deserves notice, not on account of its practical importance, so much, as to expose an error in syllabication or the division of words into syllables, which has been maintained by all writers in Great Britain, from time immemorial. The rule is that "a single consonant between two vowels, must be joined to the latter syllable." According to this rule, habit, baron, tenet, are to be divided thus, ha-bit, ba-ron, te-net.

This rule is wholly arbitrary, and has for ages, retarded and rendered difficult, the acquisition of the language by children. How is it possible that men of discernment should support a rule that, in thousands of words, makes it necessary, to break a syllable, detaching one of the letters essential to it, and giving it a place in the next? In the words above mentioned, *hab, bar, ten*, are distinct syllables, which cannot be divided without violence. In many words, as in these, this syllable is the radix of the word; the other syllable being formative or adventitious. But where this is not the case, convenience requires that syllables should, if possible, be kept entire; and in all cases, the division of syllables should, as far as possible, be such as to lead the learner to a just pronunciation.

As in our language the long and short vowels are not distinguished by differences of character, when we see a single consonant between vowels, we cannot determine, from the preceding vowel character, whether the sound is long or short. A stranger to the language knows not whether to pronounce habit, *ha-bit* or *hab-it*, till he is instructed in the customary pronunciation. It was probably to avoid this inconvenience that our ancestors wrote two consonants instead of one in a great number of words, as in *banner, dinner*. In this respect however there is no uniformity in English; as we have generally retained the orthography of the languages from which we have received the words, as in *tutor, rigor, silent*, and the like.

Now it should be observed that although we often see the consonant doubled, as in *banner*, yet no more than one articulation in these cases is ever used in speaking. We close the organs but once between the first and second syllable, nor is it possible to use both the letters *n*, without pronouncing *ban*, then intermitting the voice entirely, opening the organs and closing them a second time. Hence in all cases, when the same consonant is written twice between vowels, as in *banner, dinner, better*, one of them only is represented by an articulation of the organs, the other is useless, except that it prevents any mistake, as to the sound of the preceding vowel.

In the notation of all the orthoepists, there is inconsistency, at least, if not error. If they intend to express the true pronunciation by using the precise letters necessary for the purpose, they all err. For instance, they write *bar'run* for *bar'on*, when one articulation only is, or possibly can be, used; so also *ballance, biggot, biggamy, mellon, mettaphor, mellody*. This is not only useless, for the use of the accent after the consonant, as *bar'on, bal'ance, big'ot, mel'on*, &c. completely answers the purpose of determining the pronunciation; but it is contradictory to their own practice in a vast number of cases. Thus they write one consonant only in *civil, civic, rivet;* and Walker writes *kollonade*, doubling *l*, but *kolony, kolonise*, with a single *l*. This want of system is observable in all the books which are offered to to the public as standards of orthoepy.

A still greater fault, because it may lead to innumerable practical errors, consists in the notation of unaccented syllables. In this particular, there is error and discrepancy in the schemes of the orthoepists, which shows the utter impossibility of carrying them into effect. The final *y* unaccented, Walker makes to be *e* long, as I have before observed; while Sheridan, Jones, and Perry, make it equivalent to short *i*, or at least, give it a short sound, according to universal practice. Walker pronounces the last vowel in *natural* and *national*, as *a* short; Sheridan, as *e* short, *naturel;* Jones, as *u* short, *naturul*. Sheridan's notation may be a mistake, for he gives to *al* in *national*, the sound of *ul*. In the adjective *deliberate*, Walker and Jones give *a* in the last syllable its proper long sound; and Sheridan, the sound of *e* short, *deliberet*. *Dignitary* is pronounced by Sheridan *dignitery*, and Walker and Jones give to *a* its short sound, as in *at*. The terminating syllable *ness* is pronounced by Walker and Jones *nes*, by Sheridan *nis*, as *blessednes, blessednis*. The same difference exists in their notation of *less;* Sheridan, pronouncing it *lis*, as in *blamelis*, and Walker and Jones,

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* From the fact, which Walker relates of himself, Prin. 246, that he made a distinction between the sound of *ee* in *flee* and in *meet*, until he had consulted good speakers and particularly Mr. Garrick, who could find no difference in the sound, it might be inferred that his ear was not very accurate. But his mistake evidently arose from not attending to the effect of the articulation in the latter word, which stops the sound suddenly, but does not vary it. It is the same mistake which he made in the sound of *i* in the second syllable of *ability*, which he calls short, while the sound of the second *i* and of *y* is that of long *e*. The celebrity of Walker as a teacher of elocution, and his key to the pronunciation of ancient names, which, with a few exceptions, is a good standard work, have led many persons to put more confidence in his English Orthoepy than a close examination of its principles will support.