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THOMAS SHERIDAN: PIONEER IN BRITISH SPEECH
TECHNOLOGY.

The Ohio State University, Ph.D., 1966
Speech

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THOMAS SHERIDAN: PIONEER IN BRITISH SPEECH TECHNOLOGY

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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* * * * * * *

The Ohio State University
1966

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Adviser
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PREFACE

But when he [the author] adds, that he is the first who ever laid open the principles upon which our language is founded, and the rules by which it is regulated, he hopes the claim he has laid in to the office he has undertaken, will not be considered either vain or presumptuous.

Thomas Sheridan
Dictionary, Preface, p. xi.

Probably everyone would like to discover, or be the first to do something. It is only a vicarious thrill that this author has. This is a study in the evaluation and comparison of one who pioneered. Thomas Sheridan may not have thought of himself as having pioneered in three aspects of the speaking situation. He may not have thought of himself as having pioneered in three phases of British speech technology. But this is the way the present author looks upon one man that history has overlooked.

Evaluation is made easy by the passing of time. Comparison is made easy and is abetted by the possession of knowledge about two or more things. The evaluation and comparison of Thomas Sheridan has not been attempted previously due to oversight. Sheridan felt a moral obligation to expose the vagaries of the British educational system. This author feels obliged to present Thomas Sheridan.
In 1955, when this study first came into focus, the first idea was to present Thomas Sheridan as a man who was two hundred years ahead of his time as a speech teacher. But as time and evidence accumulated it was found that he was not only more general in his worldly knowledge, but he was more specific in the application of his idea to the speech situation. That results in a three-fold treatment which will be shown as (1) Sheridan the Pioneer in Education, (2) Sheridan the Pioneer in Elocution, and (3) Sheridan the Pioneer in Lexicography. These do not describe the whole man for the theatre is hardly touched, his additional successes as a lecturer are merely noted, and his penchant for orthoepy scarcely mentioned.

This division into three parts is a natural division that treats Thomas Sheridan chronologically and subjectively at the same time.

The title of this dissertation does not imply that Thomas Sheridan set out to write concerning British speech technology. In his day this expression had not come into use. It is therefore strictly a twentieth-century term applied to an eighteenth-century action.

Sheridan began his writing in much the same way as others in the eighteenth century, by way of the pamphlet. Thus the Golden Age of English Literature provided
writers whose driving urge was to broadcast their ideas by way of the corner printer. Since they seldom wrote about each other (except perhaps Boswell) no one read what any other writer was having printed. The pamphlets of John Locke, John Milton, Thomas Paine, and, later, the Reverend Thomas Malthus are well known for their content. Boswell is known for his "in depth" treatment of Samuel Johnson. Few know that the famed Boswell knew and studied under Thomas Sheridan before coming to London. In the two-volume account of Boswell's trip to Holland there are no fewer than twenty-seven references to Thomas Sheridan, his activities, or his writings. These include a reference to the house of the Sheridans on Bedford Street where Johnson and other literary figures of the day came to afternoon tea. Sheridan's managership of the Drury Lane Theatre, his Course of Lectures on Elocution, his Dictionary, and the fact that the Irish Parliament paid Sheridan a compliment are mentioned. Boswell referred to Sheridan as his instructor in pronunciation, tells of Sheridan's threatening to go to America, and of Sheridan's lament that Handel was a foreigner who wrote good music but ill-fitting English words. Despite all of these comments, Boswell said Sheridan was "dull naturally."
Not always is a task like this one so easy. In the tradition of debate, Sheridan set out, first, through pamphlets as noted, to show that there was a need for change. These he later expanded into his first book, *British Education; or, the Source of the Disorders of Great Britain, etc.*, which was published in 1756. In order to produce income, as well as to inform the world, his next book was a compilation of his *Lectures on Elocution* (1762). Then, bearing out the analogy of the debate Sheridan advanced his case by publishing *A Plan of Education for the Young Nobility, etc.* in 1769. Then, in 1775 he added to his income by furthering his ideas on the delivery of a speech, *The Art of Reading*. Sheridan had, by this time, stated that there was a need to change the present system; had had described the situation and its weaknesses, proposed his plan and shown how it would work.

The most ambitious work of Sheridan was his *General Dictionary of the English Language*, the first pronouncing dictionary of any comprehension. He borrowed the spellings of Johnson, borrowed some of Kendrick's ideas, but was able to produce a dictionary that changed lexicography for all time. This two-volume work, to which was prefixed a "Rhetorical Grammar," is the summation of the work of a lifetime. This was the zenith of the man who was constantly
on the offensive to show that his language was the best in the world and that his own people should study it more closely to keep it the best. Indeed, he wrote a play and altered two. His *Life of Dean Swift* was not of the same caliber as his other feats of authorship. Thus it was that the *Dictionary* could be pointed out as being the first comprehensive phonetic contribution to the world. Johnson had done the quantity study in philology.

... as perhaps there never was a language, which required, or merited cultivation more; and certainly there never was a people upon earth, to whom a perfect use of the powers of speech were so essentially necessary, to support their rights, privileges, and all the blessings arising from the noblest constitution that ever was formed.

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THOMAS SHERIDAN: PIONEER IN
BRITISH SPEECH TECHNOLOGY

Introduction

I must be so plain as to tell your Lordship, that if you will not take some care to settle our language, and put it into a state of continuance, I can not promise that your memory shall be preserved above an hundred years.1

No English speaking zealot has ever been so intense upon perfecting his language as has Thomas Sheridan, M.A. In his thorough treatment of English he has handed down many things that are used daily by students of speech. Little known as he is in America these days, he was one man who pursued his lifetime dream just short of fanaticism. He was one man who stood tall in his criticism of his fellowmen while backing himself all the way with solutions to his proposals. Generally he was alone, but part of the time he worked with others. In his scholarship, he remained alone. In the matter of obtaining a livelihood, he made many lectures, successfully acted with the greatest of his day, and enjoyed the company of brilliant men. But who was Thomas Sheridan?

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The first Sheridan (or rather O'Sheridan) to whom we owe notice is the Reverend Doctor Thomas Sheridan of Dublin. He was a close friend of Jonathan Swift and a member of the Anglican clergy in Ireland. It is his son, Thomas Sheridan, M.A., about whom this paper is concerned. But the world today will know Thomas Sheridan, M.A., better if he is pointed out as being the father of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, dramatist, orator, and confidant of the court. There was a third Thomas Sheridan, the son of Richard Brinsley, and grandson of Thomas Sheridan, M.A. These, then, are the Thomas Sheridans.

Others who have written of Thomas Sheridan have classified him as teacher, elocutionist, lexicographer, orthoepist, and actor. Disparagers have noted that he belonged to a family whose men were egotistical, interesting, attractive, unsuccessful, English gentlemen. Unsaid by critics has been his fervor to improve the English language. From his writing it can be found that he was a crusader in education. He turned out to be a militant pursuer of an education aimed at making the English people more proud of their language as well as better users of it. The things that he did, he did well, even to being continuously in debt and a constant irritant to slovenly speakers in and out of public life.
Thomas Sheridan was married to a talented woman who wrote novels and plays at a time when few women were educated, let alone being successful in these arts.

It was the contention of Thomas Sheridan that the education of his day was hopelessly out of date and actually the source of the country's ills. He said that their present educational method had been formulated while England was under the influence "of the popery," and had remained unchanged in the succeeding two hundred years. He felt that the system did not train young gentlemen for any sort of specialization. Everyone received the same education. This system was static and not like the English constitution or their government, both of which had changed. Their system trained Greek and Latin scholars. Sheridan questioned the practicality of this. If a young man planned to be a legislator, why should he not study the constitution? If he wished to enter the church, he received no training in religion after his catechism as a young boy. He received no training in speaking, and for a clergyman this was an omission of importance. On the bases of his ideas Sheridan was forced to write pamphlets and books presenting his ideas, repeating his criticism of the present methods and presenting his plans for changes. He felt that the method in use was not producing the "proper end" to education.
Pamphlets written by Thomas Sheridan are unavailable. But the first book that he wrote, published in 1756, was critical of the customs of his day. He called it British Education: or The Source of the Disorders of Great Britain. This book bears out the promise of its title, but was not popular at the time it was written, nor has it ever been widely quoted. His next published work was a collection of lectures that he had been giving up and down the British Isles. These Lectures on Elocution, brought out in 1762, led to Sheridan's being incorporated with the degree of Master of the Arts at both Cambridge and Oxford. This compilation of lectures was published in several editions and gained much favorable comment.

In 1769 he picked up the theme of education again and published A Plan of Education, in which his criticism of the present system was augmented by a complete plan of a course of study that would produce better subjects for the Crown. This was followed in 1775 by The Art of Reading, which was a follow-up of his lectures on elocution. All of these lectures had been a great source of revenue to Sheridan from the very beginning.

Probably the work that had had the most widespread use was his Pronouncing Dictionary of the English Language that he published in 1780. In this he brought together some borrowed ideas, and some original ideas. Most of the
dictionaries that have been put together since his time use some of his ideas; yet, it stood completely on its own as the best of its kind for eleven years.

A collection of works and *The Life of Jonathan Swift* were published posthumously in 1782. Collecting these works and the writing of the life of his beloved friend had been the last active labor of Sheridan. According to critics this work was not the best treatment of Swift, but Sheridan had been the first to make the effort.

Upon making a study of Thomas Sheridan, M.A., one feels that the Pronouncing Dictionary is his climactic work. All of his other writing and lecturing point toward its coming and great use. This was to have been the repository of all of his great ideas. This compendium of words, syllabified and spelled in a simple form, was so marked that a reasonably educated Englishman could pronounce his own language correctly. Many years of preparation had gone into it. When the ordinary individual followed its leadership he could pronounce correctly and be understood by all. By speaking clearly and naturally as advocated in the lectures on elocution, he could communicate. Sheridan felt the youth of England should be furnished an education that first offered spoken English. With a basic understanding of his mother tongue a young
man could be taught various ways of fruitful citizenship. Sheridan's goal was to establish correct use of English language through national pride.

Sheridan had grown to manhood during the reign of George I, George II, and George III. These kings from Hanover had each spoken German in their personal dealings while the language of the court was officially designated as French. These three kings had very little in common with the users of English, their own subjects. George III was a phonetic refugee from the everyday reality of the ordinary Englishman. Sheridan felt that his country was slipping behind its neighbors because its language prevented his countrymen from being lucid and articulate. He tried to stimulate pride into an alliance that would overhaul the entire educational system. He wanted to have the educational system make the use of oral language an important part of early education. He noticed that the church was lax when the bishops were not more strict with the performance of the clergy. Sermons lacked drive and direction. The listener received nothing from the church service. He felt that people did not have access to the best knowledge available when they did not hear their language well used.

From what has been so far noted, it can be seen that Thomas Sheridan was a pioneer in several aspects of
British speech technology. He pioneered in ideas pertaining to the education of the young. He was the first person to recommend publicly that all education be based upon a thorough training in oral English. He pioneered in the field of elocution by concentrating upon the natural way of speaking from the heart, the correct and clear use of language, and the exact use of the voice in delivery. These elements of rhetoric were furthered and his reputation in lexicography established by his Pronouncing Dictionary. Any one of these pioneering activities would be considered a valuable contribution to speech technology. These are but three taken from a man who lived a full life. He was a fine actor, and his theatre contribution was not confined to acting. He was a theatre manager on several occasions. As a lecturer he made considerable amounts of money by lecturing to satisfied audiences. His name is constantly found in writings concerning orthoepy. These, then, were parts of the life of Thomas Sheridan that go to make up his pioneering contributions to the technology of British speech.
PART I

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THOMAS SHERIDAN TO
BRITISH SPEECH TECHNOLOGY THROUGH
HIS INTERESTS IN EDUCATION

I. The Educational System Had Many Defects and Omissions

II. Defects and Omissions in the Educational System Forced a Need for a Change

III. There Was a List of Good Things That Would Follow the Right Changes

IV. These Things Must Be Changed

V. Changes Will Result in Many Good Things for the Worship of God, Strength for the Country, and Success for Individuals
BRITISH EDUCATION:
Or, The Source of the
Disorders of Great Britain.

BEING
An Essay towards proving, that the Immorality,
Ignorance, and false Taste, which so generally prevail,
are the natural and necessary Consequences of
the present defective System of Education.

WITH
An Attempt to shew, that a Revival of the Art of Speaking,
and the Study of our own Language, might contribute,
in a great measure, to the Cure of those Evils.

IN THREE PARTS.

I. Of the Use of these Studies to Religion, and Morality; as also,
to the Support of the British Constitution.

II. Their absolute Necessity in order to refine, ascertain, and fix the
English Language.

III. Their Use in the Cultivation of the Imitative Arts: shewing,
that were the Study of Oratory
made a necessary Branch of the,
Education of Youth; Poetry,
Music, Painting, and Sculpture,
might arrive at as high a
Pitch of Perfection in England, as
ever they did in Athens or Rome.

By THOMAS SHERIDAN, A.M.

Hoc opus, hoc studium, parvi properamus, et ampli,
Si volumus patrue, si nobis vivere chari. H. O. R.

LONDON: 1750
Printed for R. and J. Dodsley in Pall-mall.
PART I

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THOMAS SHERIDAN TO
BRITISH SPEECH TECHNOLOGY THROUGH
HIS INTERESTS IN EDUCATION

British Education: or, The Source of
the Disorders of Great Britain

This book is quite rare today, but through modern methods it has been specially reproduced for this work. The book contains 536 pages. There is a preface of thirty-two pages and a Table of Contents. This is the only book written by Thomas Sheridan to have a Table of Contents. The title page contains a brief resume of the book; the Table of Contents goes further by showing each of the three parts, the number and title of each of the forty chapters, as well as the page numbers. No other book by Sheridan was so well laid out. Some spellings in this book have been corrected, or modernized, since his previous work. But he did not improve every phase of his writing.

Sheridan began this critique of the British educational system by first assessing the power of education:

Amidst the general outcry against the enormity of the times, the endeavors of our best writers
and preachers, to reform them, the attention of the legislators, so often roused of late by his majesty's paternal care, and the number of penal laws made to check the progress of vice, the torrent is still too strong to be resisted, and these weak dams are borne away: irreligion, immortality, and corruption are visibly increased, and daily gather new strength.

If a physician should find his patient still growing worse under the regimen he prescribed he will not obstinately persist in the same course, but will try new remedies. Yet, if he be not acquainted with the source of the disorder, he may go through the whole materia medica to no purpose. The first step towards a cure, is to know the cause of the disease, and when that is removed the effect will cease of course.1

Thus, Sheridan revealed himself as the one person capable of the job he was about to undertake. In the preface he had said that no person, up to his time, had attempted the task he was about to begin. To each of his books he adds this humble apology: i.e., he was attempting what no one else dared. Since those qualified to write such a book would not do so, he felt forced to write as a matter of his own conscience.

In assessing the condition of the times in respect to the results of neglect of education, Sheridan began with law enforcement. In his time there was a flagrant violation of law due to a lack of "notions and opinions" for "our notions and opinions are the result of education."2 This, and this alone, was the source of all of

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1Sheridan, British Education, pp. 1 and 2.
2Ibid., p. 4.
the disorders of his time. Here, then, is the theme of his book. There was a real need for reform of education. Sheridan felt that most education should be reformed to fit the time. He implied that it was out of date and that it was concentrated upon written communication rather than spoken communication. Over and over Sheridan stressed that wisdom and knowledge were the parents of religion and virtue. On the other hand he felt that folly and ignorance spawned vice and impiety. To him, a nation in which there was a lack of virtue and religion was a place in which there was a need for wisdom and knowledge. Vice and impiety could triumph in a nation that lacked education. A nation of people who were wise and good was a nation with a high regard for education. Sheridan felt that the legislature should do something about improving the educational system. Accusingly, on page eleven of this book, he pointed his finger at it and said, "Education hath never once claimed the attention of the legislature since its first institution." This serious charge surely must have been true, for it was not contested. The seriousness of this was indeed grave, for the system had been in vogue for over two hundred years. Sheridan makes mention of how the educational system was installed by the Roman Catholics in each of his books. He merely stated that since they had been powerful in one phase of English history,
the system that they had installed for the education of their clergy was not practical in his day of constitutional government.

Sheridan was in step with some other people of his time. He quoted widely from John Milton, John Locke, John Addison of the Spectator, and Bishop Cloyne. According to Sheridan, Milton clearly pointed out the faults and defects of the educational system, but his remedies were too strong "for men of a sickly habit of body, made weak and feeble by long disease." Milton prescribed for the robust. In fact he advocated going right back to Sparta. Mr. Locke would have been satisfied to mend and patch the present system. These were compared in more detail in his Plan for Education.\(^3\)

Sheridan felt that in a well-regulated state there would be two principal points of view in the education of youth. The first would be to help the youth become good men who were good members of the universal society of mankind. The second point would be that the minds of these youth would be so trained that they would be good members of society by shaping their talents to be serviceable in the support of their government.

Sheridan was in agreement with Locke concerning the place to begin the educational reform. Both felt that

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 17.
by educating gentlemen to be virtuous, useful and able men, "they will quickly bring all the rest into order." 4

Examining the present system of education with candor and impartiality, Sheridan found,

I am much deceived if it will be calculated to promote knowledge and virtue; on the contrary I believe, it will be found to be the true source of all our follies, vices, ignorance and false taste. 5

"Our Present System of Education Considered" is the title of the second chapter of this book. Sheridan began by describing the conditions of the time. The average English boy could read with fluency at the age of seven or eight. He was put in school to learn Latin and Greek, remaining there about seven years while acquiring a moderate skill in them. From the Latin school he could pass to a university where he would become more competent in Greek and Latin. In addition to these he would study some of the rudiments of logic, natural philosophy, astronomy, metaphysics, and "the heathen morality." By about the age of nineteen or twenty a degree in Arts would be conferred as the terminus of the education of a gentleman. Both Milton and Sheridan agreed with Locke who was quoted as saying, "We learn not to live, but to dispute; and our education fits us rather for the universities than the world. . . ." All three felt that the present method

4Ibid., p. 15. 5Ibid., p. 17.
of education produced evil and mischief for mankind instead of the good and benefit for which they crusaded.

Sheridan said that when the youth were thus thrust upon the world, the experiences in school would serve no practical purpose. These new graduates would find that to succeed in life they must begin a new series of studies while having to double their labor at unlearning useless things acquired. Those who went through the studies at the universities would find no place for Greek, Latin, logic and metaphysics in their daily lives. Sheridan felt it lamentable that fine young men, in the prime of their lives, were thusly treated. He said that the education of a gentleman was not at all provided for. He prescribed a middle-of-the-road means to secure himself between Milton and Locke. Milton had advocated a return to the Spartan life. Locke had suggested a means of private education.

Sheridan deplored the system that touched the arts without connecting them with life. "The rudiments of the Arts are taught, as if they were desirable only for their own sakes, but their uses for the purposes of life are never pointed out." A boy would be taught the rules of grammar but had to go unassisted through the classics of English literature. Young men were not guided through advanced learning. English boys could not become polished

\[6^{\text{Tbid.}, \text{ p. 27.}}\]
gentlemen in England, so they were forced to go to the continent. At the age of twenty it was a strain on these young gentlemen. Religion, government and customs were different. Too many young men were leaving for an education never to return.

On this Sheridan again quoted Locke:

This is the season of all his life that most requires the eye and authority of his parents and friends to govern it. The flexibleness of the former part of a man's age, not yet grown up to be headstrong, makes it more governable and safe; and in the after-part, reason and foresight begin a little to take place; and mind a man of his safety and improvement.  

No greater evil existed than that of sending English youth abroad at this improper and dangerous age. The alternative was to have the youth enter business at too early an age. This immaturity in the ways of business was to be deplored. But Sheridan felt that there was a solution.

The system was defective by omission. It was from those things not taught that brought on the defects of the system. It was not that there were things improper or unbecoming to a gentleman taught to the youth. Omission and neglect of some subjects were the source of England's plight.

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7John Locke, quoted by Sheridan in British Education, p. 32.
Then Sheridan set about to relate the principles upon which an educational system should be founded. He started by saying that the laws of education are the first impressions we receive. He reasoned that if people in general have a principle, each segment of the population will have one also. He felt that the fundamental maxim should be that the education of youth should be particularly shaped and adapted to the nature and end of its government. Secondly, the principle by which the whole community is supported ought to be the most strongly inculcated in the minds of every individual. No state could flourish if these two rules were not observed. No other principles could bring a better education.

The question evolved then, Sheridan said, as to whether there is a principle that is forceful to the end, and if the principle be sufficiently inculcated by education.

Recapitulating, Sheridan wrote that the English government was partly monarchial, partly republican, and partly absolute. All three had their uses and could be used to advantage. The monarchial part would lead people to fear the law; the republican or legislative part should have virtue as its object; the executive or royal authority should foster the principle of honor. But this is incomplete. To these three Sheridan would add religion.
Now that the shortcomings of the defective educational system had been shown by Sheridan, he began to build his constructive case. As this unfolded, the reader is told that the study of oratory is just as necessary and useful as it had been to the ancients. Sheridan was very familiar with the writings of Cicero and quoted him extensively throughout this, as well as his other books. He used Cicero to demonstrate his point of view:

Nothing seems to me to be more truly excellent, than to abide by the powers of oratory to engage the attention of public assemblies, to win their good opinion; to drive their passions where they like, and to bring them back to pleasure. This art alone has ever flourished, and bore the greatest sway in all free states, especially in times of peace and tranquility.  

Ideas such as these brought forth opposition.

Several detractors have taken a critical stand toward Thomas Sheridan. It seems that they have read the complicated title of this book, scanned the Table of Contents, and become authorities. One recent book, written by Kenelm Foss in 1940, called Here Lies Richard Brinsley Sheridan, is outstanding in its name calling and tangential misdirection. Writing of the father of R. B. Sheridan, Foss said that even though he had studied at three universities, his strange "monomania" ruined his career.

... his emphasis on caste and scholarship proved effective in attracting a fashionable

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^Cicero, De Oratore, Bk. I. 
and influential clientele and things at least were going well with him when he conceived a grandiose new scheme of education with Oratory as the pivotal essential. The importance in the scheme of existence became an idee fixe with him. . . . He lectured on the subject, wrote pamphlets on it, and alienated the politicians who came to him for elocution lessons . . . pestering them about his hare-brained scheme, the establishment of a university with him as principal, founded upon the rock of Oratory.9

It is not as though Foss were entirely wrong. He was just almost right at times. It is evident from Sheridan's own writings that he was sincere and dedicated. Life was a serious matter. At no place in history can one point to a pioneer who did not have a single driving purpose. Foss agreed grudgingly that the economic system and morality could be improved by fostering a change in the educational system beginning with oral English. It is easier to believe Thomas Sheridan who was writing about what he knew than to go along with Foss who wrote two hundred years later to rationalize that R. B. Sheridan was the son of a fanatical genius. As Lancelot said in the first act of the play "Camelot," "All fanatics are bores."

Thomas Sheridan had titled his book British Education . . ., and was in the act of attacking education in order to bring it up to date and turn out fine Christian citizens. In his estimation he felt a place to start was with oral eloquence or, as it was known, elocution. The

9Kenelm Foss, Here Lies Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1940), p. 29.
ancients had perfected their free governments through eloquent oratory. Why would it not be true with Sheridan's England? Since the system was wrong, the place to start was to achieve clear oral communication. Foss was content to disparage the elder Sheridan in order to build up, or blame him, as paternal sire of R. B. Sheridan. To further this, Foss writes that Sheridan was possessed of a complete absence of common sense in regard to money and practical things. Thomas Sheridan was pompous, voluble and diffuse when concentrating on the wild scheme of education. He was sanguine, in a pipedreamer's castle in Spain, and cloud-cuckooland . . . a visionary. On page forty Thomas Sheridan earned these comments: "Pigheadedness was second nature with him, and opposition was his Irish birthright." On the next page he was "Old Sheridan the perverse." Perhaps Foss thought he was erasing his name-calling when he spoke of the end of Thomas Sheridan, when on page 347 he became "Britain's greatest tragedian."

Sheridan was not out of step with his times. He consistently agreed with those who were thinking and writing about education. He shared ideas with those who had written about ancient oratory. He believed in republican government. He compared the councils, legislatures, and assemblies, of these different eras. Debate was one common factor in both. Eloquence and oratory were a part of
each age. But oratory was gradually yielding ground in Sheridan's day. As a part of his idea to strengthen the educational system, he felt that good speaking was the place to start.

The means of doing this was the main contribution of Sheridan in this book. In rationalizing these ideas his constant models were the Greek and Roman cultures. His primary object was to change the aim of education from glorifying the Greek and Roman languages to one of studying English, especially oral English. He was a practical man; he liked his mother tongue. He wanted others to use it well so that they could understand and be understood. He would start by training gentlemen to speak well. These gentlemen would address large crowds, teach in schools and be used as examples. The common people would copy. The result would guarantee good Christian Englishmen.

Returning again to the ancients, Sheridan said that establishing virtue was one of their great accomplishments. First, boys were taught early in life about virtue, before their minds were capable of judging. Second, these ideas were definitely reinforced throughout their lives as students. Third, as men, they were "allured" and stimulated to reduce these ideas into practice. This benefited themselves as well as society. Sheridan liked this idea and used their idea of giving a
reward. He said that virtue was the first object in education and oratory was the best means of displaying it.

Virtue, vice, law, and punishment precede Sheridan's discussion of a good legislator. He is "... less bent upon punishing than preventing crimes; he is more attentive to inspire good morals than to indict punishments."¹⁰

Even in Sheridan's day some legislators were desirous of reforming evil. He thought of nothing but reformation. This kind of legislator had his eyes open only to reformation; shut to the inconvenience it caused. He quoted Montesquieu:

There are two sorts of corruption; one when the people do not observe the laws; the other, when they are corrupted by laws; an incurable evil because it is in the very remedy itself.¹¹

To Sheridan liberty existed only through the good offices of virtue. Whenever liberty and virtue have been threatened, "watch for selfishness."

One idea that carries through each of the three phases of Sheridan's writing, that is here noted, is his comparison of speaking with writing. Here it is first mentioned as the two ways to defend religion. He revealed that speech is the gift of God, annexed and cultivated by

¹⁰Sheridan, British Education, p. 67.

¹¹Montesquieu, quoted by Sheridan, British Education, p. 67. (Spirit of Laws, Bk. VI, Chap. 12.)
man. Writing, the invention of man, remains a mere work of art containing no natural force. Speech, constantly attended by persuasion, is the master of emotion. Writing preserves words that might otherwise perish as spoken, and holds ideas that might vanish. Writing also assists in bringing knowledge from a distance to the eye, such as cannot be heard. It is to be expected that Sheridan believed speech superior to writing.

Whoever doubts of the truth of this, may soon be convinced by examining into the wonderful effects which have been produced by the wild uncultivated oratory of our methodist preachers.12

Sheridan recounted the general maxim that before you can persuade a man into any opinion, he must first be convinced that you believe it yourself. This cannot happen unless the tone of voice in which you speak comes from the heart, and it be accompanied by looks and gestures which betoken a man who speaks in earnest. This is the idea Sheridan pursued in defining elocution, as will be shown later in Part II of this work. Sheridan did admit that there were those who did not speak from the heart; he assured his reader that their artificiality would be readily found and unmasked.

Sheridan agreed with Cicero that orators and philosophers were the same. Sheridan said that when

12Sheridan, British Education, p. 91.
oratory and philosophy were separated both were destroyed in a short time. Cicero was quoted by Sheridan:

> It would be hard to say whether philosophy or oratory be most necessary as one would be useless without the other: Without knowledge, eloquence would be an empty sound; without eloquence, knowledge can never be shown in its true light.\(^{13}\)

Sheridan wrote that Cicero had laid down as the first requisite for a perfect orator that he should be a good man. He also cited Quintilian. If he referred to Book XII, Chap. I, line 29, Quintilian was quoting Cato who is given credit for first saying this. However, it is possible that he did not have access to the complete texts of these works. Indeed, it is not known what his actual source was. He quoted uninhibitedly. He philosophized that wisdom and knowledge of divine and human affairs were necessary as was the power of persuasion and moving the passions.

Sheridan moved on to those in the service of the church who lacked the power of speaking. He felt that they were sensitive to this defect but lacked a remedy. These bad habits could only be removed by the diligent assistance of skilled persons. But there were none to be found. That is the reason why churchmen resorted to the weaker method of supporting their cause—writing. They did this rather than attempt the powerful assistance of

\(^{13}\)Cicero, *De Oratore*, I, 5.
oratory. Sheridan contended that other professions than
the church held to this practice; citing the practice of
physicians and lawyers. This permitted the rise of
religious and political sects. Since truth was not their
cause, neither was their eloquence sound. Despite their
canting and frantic gestures Sheridan was sure that these
unnatural means were temporary. Here he quoted the Abbe
DuBois, from his Critical Reflections:

   Of all the talents proper for raising man to
a state of empire and command, a superiority of
wit and knowledge is not the most effectual; 'tis
the art of moving men as one pleases; an art that
is acquired principally by persons seeming to be
moved, and penetrated with those very sentiments
he intends to inspire.

Sheridan then quoted from St. Austin, fourth book on
Christian Doctrine:

   Since it is by the art of rhetoric that people
are enabled to establish true and false opinions,
who shall dare to say that truth should be without
arms in the persons of those who are to defend it
against falsehood?

To which Sheridan added:

   . . . if our youth were trained up under mas-
ters equally skilful with the Greek rhetoricians,
in the principles of the art, equally qualified
to instruct them by precept and example, and to
perfect them by practice, shall it be doubted
whether the British oratory would arrive at as
great a pitch of perfection as the Roman?14

To Sheridan the Britons had no need to yield to
Greece and Rome when comparing Walpole, Pulteney,

Chesterfield, Granville, Pitt, Murray, and many others. But he was bothered about the future. Would the youth that were coming on have the desire to go forward? Oratory in both Greece and Rome sprung from need.

As Sheridan ended Book I, he summarized. Some of the greatest evils in England were due to defective education. He held that no state could thrive without a system of education for youth that was suitable to its principle. Religion could not be upheld without oratory. Knowledge of oratory was necessary to those who composed the legislature as guardians of the state. The study of oratory is therefore essential to the very being of the British constitution.

The vehicle that Sheridan used to present his first plan to raise the educational aim to a pragmatic level was Book II of his *British Education*. The system then in effect he declared to be archaic. The oral language of the past was drowned in a pool of two dead languages. The only way to retrieve oral English was to make it a vital part of the schooling of every English school boy. This is exactly Thomas Sheridan's theme. It is repeated in many ways, but it is always the same: make the teaching of oral English the basis of all education. Sheridan felt that Greek and Latin were means to an end but that they were useless as ends in England. No public business was
transacted in these languages. Boys trained in these languages had to forget them and retrain themselves to enjoy English literature. Teachers skilled in persuasive use of oratory were needed first. They would then serve as examples and teach in the various schools. When the English young men were correctly taught, they in turn would see that the people were brought into line.

Sheridan repeated that the first care of an ambitious nation should be to distinguish itself in the world, then cultivate and refine its language by reducing it to a standard. After establishing the basic language so that it would preserve itself, rules and models should perpetuate it for further generations. This was done in Greece and Rome. Language was the chief weapon of the orator.

Language, to Sheridan, was made up of words. Words were to be considered to have sense and sound. Sense was an intellectual faculty that used arbitrary means of enforcing ideas, thereby allowing one mind to communicate with another. Sound, as a faculty of hearing, was the means of conveying sense. Sense, he said, was the soul of words and sound the body. Together they aid in the perfection of man.

Sheridan then wrote that there were two points to consider in regard to the sense of words: precision
and copiousness. Precision would ensure that the same ideas would be stimulated in the listener as the speaker intended. Copiousness dealt with each idea of a speaker so that listeners would get "a perfect transcript."

Elaborating then upon sound, the two chief elements, according to Sheridan were distinction and agreeableness. In order that words not be confused with others of similar sounds, distinctness was necessary. To circumvent weariness and disgust in the listeners, the sounds of words must be pleasing so that a speaker would hold their attention.

This clearness of language is necessary in oral use, but not so necessary in written use. For a reader may stop as he chooses to find out meanings or repeat for his own benefit. But the speaker must be understood in the same space of time as his utterance. Sheridan then supposed that all of the greatest geniuses of Greece necessarily were interested and employed in improving their language. Further, where eloquence and oratory were most studied, there also was spoken the most pure and most correct language.

Sheridan reflected that considering all of these things, the study of their respective languages was carried on throughout the lives of their respective orators.
Even though they had examples to follow, instructors to guide them, rules to study, they continued.

Reverting again to quoting Locke, Sheridan selected ideas that paralleled his. Both men believed that Greek and Latin should be studied. Young men should study them critically. For the young learn to express themselves better by daily exercise in the use of other languages.

There can scarce be a greater defect in a gentleman, than not to express himself well either in writing or speaking. . . . They have been taught rhetoric, but never taught how to express themselves handsomely with their tongues or pens in things of practice, is to be learned not by a few or a great many rules given, but by exercise, and application to good rules, or rather patterns until habits are got, and a facility of doing well.\textsuperscript{15}

In order to justify the criticism he was making of the neglect and omissions of the educational system of his day, Sheridan set about to describe the pathway of the average son of an English gentleman as he progressed through that system. As Sheridan had said repeatedly, the first schools in England were designed to serve only to train for the priesthood. The laity was generally illiterate. Even many of the nobility and gentry could neither read nor write. Language at its best was crude. Few books were written for entertainment, and there were few

\textsuperscript{15}John Locke, quoted by Sheridan, \textit{British Education}, p. 200.
inducements to read. Language changed so fast that what was spoken in one century could not be understood in another. History of this period is defective. Records kept by Latin monks are the only source. Even that language was mangled and deformed. But since all of the liberal arts had risen in the Greek and Latin languages, these languages became the repositories of all of the knowledge and wisdom of antiquity. "It is no wonder," said Sheridan, "that they were made the chief object of education." Translations into English were rare and defective. There were many things that bound the English people to Greek and Latin. But those motives and inducements no longer held true in Sheridan's time.

He said that the writings of Luther and Calvin, as well as all of Europe's religious disputes, were in these languages, because no other existed in a refined permanent form to be of general use. Some language had to be used, so it was Latin, by common consent. Latin had been spoken much as French was in the time of Sheridan. Greek was necessary only because the controversial New Testament was written in it.

Sheridan complained that when religious controversies were the main object of the state, the mode of education pointed to that alone. Then, as education was expanded, everyone was taught in the same way, despite
the profession of his choice. Persons who went into the church, military, senate house, bar, or medicine, studied alike. All began by learning to understand, speak and write Latin. The first time that English was studied in school, it became a part of the system, which occurred during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. This, Sheridan hastened to point out, might clearly be seen by comparing authors of her day with those who preceded them.

To the present writer, the first hint of what was actually on Thomas Sheridan's mind came in the following statement:

Nor was there any society of men either of public or private institution whose office it might be to examine and fix rules of our language.16

together with this chance remark,

The only scheme hitherto proposed for correcting, improving, and ascertaining our language, has been the institution of a society for that purpose.17

This mention twice of "society" became intriguing. Sheridan knew much of the world in which he lived. Where had there ever been a "society" whose office it might be to examine and fix the rules for a language? Where was there a society for the purpose of correcting, improving and ascertaining a language? The Encyclopedia Britannica notes that the French Academy started at about 1635. It had been a small intellectual group of men who gathered

17Ibid., p. 368.
weekly to criticize their own essays. It came to the notice of Richlieu, King Louis XIII, in 1639, who ordered it to be the official "society" to examine and fix rules of Grammar, Pronunciation, and Meaning of the French Language. The Britannica goes on, "But the crowning labor of the Academy began in 1639, was a dictionary of the French language." Later there was a grammar, a treatise on poetry, and one on prose. That dictionary was edited by C. F. de Vaugelas and was published in 1694. It seems very possible that Sheridan, knowing about the French Academy and its accomplishments, set about singlehandedly to accomplish the same end for the English language.

Sheridan said that Queen Elizabeth was wise in encouraging the study of languages, including English. He quoted Jonathan Swift on improvements that occurred during her reign. He did, however, recount that other countries strengthened and enriched their languages with the aid of Greek and Roman. Yet the English people allowed their language to pick up by chance and caprice whatever it would. No competent dictionary had been produced for English until in recent months (1756). (This confirms the present writer's contention concerning the attitude of Sheridan, as well as the fact that Johnson's Dictionary filled a need.)
Sheridan was somewhat ruffled as he irritat edly noted that the English constitution was based upon public debate and thus there were strong inducements for better speech. There was a need to bring together the Scottish, Welsh, and Irish languages. As it was, they spoke different tongues. Nothing would bring them together in unity more than a common language based upon principles taught by rule. He added that there were still dialects to be found "in the shires."

According to Sheridan the first attempt to reform the English language was made in a letter by Jonathan Swift to Queen Anne. It most likely would have been acted upon had it not been for the untimely death of Queen Anne. Since that time no one had attempted to regulate the English language. This idea had lain dormant.

By the time that Sheridan was writing (1756), he said that Latin and Greek were no longer the sole repositories of knowledge. English was becoming a universal language. Translations were now becoming available. Religious disputes were being conducted in English. The language was enlarged and improved. Great quantities of information could be acquired easier and quicker in English. Two centuries had brought about this change. He felt that if there were an easy means of acquiring English
by rule, if it were taught commonly as other languages were, the worth of English could not be doubted.

Sheridan said that there were stronger inducements for the English language to be brought to perfection than had been true of the Romans. Even though the Romans and Greeks had their writings and a good rhetoric, a shorter time would be needed for the Britons.

He said that there should be two things considered in noting the stability of a language: pronunciation and meaning. Speech represents the one; books the other. Words would always be pronounced the same each time they are used and their meaning should be the same. Sheridan said that the more universally a language is spoken, the more likely it is to retain permanent pronunciation. The more authors who agree on the use of words, the more generally they are read, and the greater the likelihood of stability.

If therefore the pronunciation of our language were fixed by certain rules, and were uniformly and invariably observed by all clergy, if they had also an equal power with the orators of old of captivating attention, and charming the ear, is it to be doubted that a general good taste and exactness of speech, would be diffused through the whole people, proportionately superior to the Romans, as our advantages and opportunities would be greater and more frequent?18

18

Ibid., p. 247.
Thus Sheridan said that it does not need much painful proof to show that stability could be achieved with the use of the clergy.

But there was another means of stabilizing English that the Romans did not have. Sheridan, the man least likely of all Englishmen to yield his stand on oral English, said, "The invention of printing has given us an amazing advantage over the ancients." That meant books could be printed more copiously, distributed more widely, as well as cheaper. Thus it was that Sheridan could envision English as becoming more universal. The pulpit and the press could be the means of enlightening the whole of England, and the world.

Regarding the situation, Sheridan recalled that the Latin language for many years had been in a state of disorder and perpetual change, such as English had more recently. Mr. Samuel Johnson was quoted as saying that English had departed somewhat from its Teutonic character "in the last century." Johnson said that if there was fear that changes were irresistible, people should acquiesce in silence. But this was their language. Something could and should be done about it.

It remains that we retard what we can not repel, that we palliate what we can not cure. Life may be lengthened by care, though death can not be ultimately defeated; tongues, like governments, have a natural tendency to
degeneration; we have long preserved our constitution, let us make some struggle for our language.19

Sheridan felt that if the English language were once fixed (standardized) that in all likelihood it would remain that way as long as their present government held. This had been true with Roman speech. When the Republic was banished, oratory perished. Speech then disintegrated.

One great barrier to change of the English language, according to Sheridan, was religion. He concurred with Swift that if it were not for the books perpetually read in churches there would be no kind of standard for the common people. There was more security for the English language than there had been for the Roman.

Noting that the chief glory of a people came from their authors, Sheridan said that there were three main causes for the propagation of language. He listed them as: conquest, commerce, and the number of useful and entertaining books written in the language. Sherican thought conquest ineffectual for it would be almost impossible for a total language to be enforced. A victor could change laws and customs only. The use of native speech would persist for it would be as difficult to conquer their speech as it would be to conquer their thoughts. This would be impracticable and could only be attempted through compromise.

19Samuel Johnson, Dictionary, the Preface.
The propagation of language through commerce also seemed inadequate to Sheridan. Actually he said that it was usually unnecessary to have a complete knowledge of a language in order to do business. A very small knowledge would suffice. It might tend to instigate a new jargon of sorts which would render understanding unsatisfactory. Since English was so little known abroad, French was in use in trade. But the French had regulated and standardized their language in order to accomplish this end.

The great cause of spreading a language is through its useful and entertaining books. Sheridan explained that, "For writings merely of use, when well translated, lose nothing of their intrinsic value." Poetry and elegant prose were different. He felt that part of their beauty was sometimes lost in translation. He said that whatever English authors were on shelves, they were to be found "in the libraries of the curious." This was no reflection on the English authors; rather it was due to the fact that the English language was not widely understood. "The delight in reading the best authors must be diminished in proportion to the difficulty of understanding them."21

21 Ibid., p. 273.
Sheridan prophesied that if the English language were as well and universally known as French, it would soon be preferred. Little did he realize that it would take two hundred years, two World Wars, and its colony, the United States of America, to assist in bringing his prediction to fruition.

Sheridan was not alone in his faith concerning the English language. Samuel Johnson, in the Preface to his Dictionary, had many of the same agonies that Sheridan had. Each felt that the language that they then had was worth trying to standardize. Each realized the position in which he found himself.

When I took the first survey of my undertaking, I found our speech copious without order, and energetic without rules; wherever I turned my view, there was perplexity to be disentangled, and confusion to be regulated. 22

In adding up some of the strong points in favor of English, Sheridan felt that one big advantage was in its construction. In English the different cases, genders, numbers of nouns, moods and tenses of verbs, are all expressed by changes of termination in their words. This was an aid to eliminating many monosyllables; also it assured that since final syllables leave the strongest impression on the ear, it was not left to chance but

established by rule. Being thus constituted by rule, they yield variety and lend agreeableness of sound. English also permits words to be transposed in their order within a sentence. This is a convenient tool for the poet.

Sheridan showed that the Latin hexameter was not suited to English and that it was ill-adapted to English blank verse. Another assertion was that the Latin heroic verse was limited to but two movements: dactyl and spondee. English verse contained seven possible movements: spondee, trochee, iambus, pyrrichius, dactyl, anapoeit, and tribrachus. Sheridan compared the poet who used these two languages to those who ring bells. The Roman poets could use two bells, the English seven. Even though the former might have a bell of finer metal and superior tone, the delight of the various changes would bring a pleasure of sound that would "never, cloy the ear."

These were items about which Sheridan could be proud. His hope for English was unbounded. But one facet of poetry disturbed him deeply. "Nothing has contributed so much to destroy all true taste for poetry as the establishment of rhyme."

There is no rule in poetry whose observance costs so much trouble and produces so few beauties in verse, as that of rhyming. Rhyme frequently maims and almost always enervates the sense of discourse.\(^{23}\)

Sheridan said that the greatest use of rhyme was by barbarians, and that most of them had later become civilized. Rhyme was compared to the red paint used to produce an artificial glow on the face. He claimed its continued poisonous use devoured the natural bloom, shriveled the skin and impaired the constitution. But through accident or poor health one might engage in such wantonness, not through choice but necessity.

Sheridan wrote that when the English language was beginning, there were too many monosyllables and words with dissonant and discordant sounds. As a substitute there was recourse to rhyme. So, from the beginning of English to the time of Sheridan, many changes had been made. They were mostly unplanned and unorganized. Foreign words had been added haphazardly. Many words were compressed. Two-syllable words became one-syllable words. Three-syllable words became two, and so on. He blamed the compressions upon the poets who were seeking means to force words into rhymes. Even Dr. Swift had joked about how the poets maimed words.

Sheridan never ran out of examples, so he included proof of his contention: The third person of the present tense of such verbs as move and prove were formerly moveth and proveth. Words like drudge and grudge, when in past
tense were of two syllables, formerly, *drudg-ed* and *grudg-ed*, had become *drudg'd* and *grudg'd* in one syllable.

Comment on the superfluity of the letter "S" put Sheridan on the defensive, not only in his British Education but also in his Lectures on Elocution, The Art of Reading, and again in his Grammar and Rhetoric. He insisted that English was not "a hissing language." In the words already indicated, move and prove that became moves and proves, he said that was an example of the additional use of the letter "S." Sheridan did not think it serious when "S" or "ES" was added to such words as design, hiss, or dispossess.

Some words looked similar to the eye but were pronounced differently: loves, proves, and groves. Despite the fact that they are not sounded the same, they were used in rhymes. Sheridan said that it was difficult to say how misleading readers would find these deviations. He marked these instances as being reasons why rhyme was the greatest enemy of the English language.

Sheridan then told of some foreign words that had been reduced in syllables: *expendo* became spend; *extraneous* became strange; *debitum* became debt; *dubito* became doubt; *spiritus* became sprite. In behalf of these lost syllables he said, "For in the days of Chaucer, rhyme
was considered in its true light, as the lowest part of poetry."\textsuperscript{24}

From the changes in spelling, compressions of words into fewer syllables, it is easy to see that Sheridan was a true authority on the English language. A student of orthography would find Sheridan's comments of interest. He called them corruptions and claimed that they would not have appeared had the study of oratory not been neglected.

For had the art of speaking been made a necessary branch of education our language would very soon, like the Roman, have been fixed upon stated invariable rules. The care of it in regard to sound and pronunciation would then have belonged to their natural guardians, the public speakers, who were more interested in the proper support of those, as they addressed their words only to the ear; nor would they have suffered this province to have been usurped by the poets whose works are chiefly submitted to the eye.\textsuperscript{25}

He followed this by saying that those absurd and pernicious innovations would not have happened had the teachers of writing ever studied the art of reading and speaking. Consequently a prevailing ignorance and lack of taste held forth.

Sheridan emphatically declared that if English were studied and cultivated to the point where using it was a delight, it would be found to be more fitted for

\textsuperscript{24}Sheridan, \textit{British Education}, p. 300.

\textsuperscript{25}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 303-304.
universal use than any ancient language. He said that if it were reduced to rules it would possess more accuracy, for it was a living language. If it were correctly pronounced, it surely would sound as well as ancient languages had sounded during their days of use. Considering the free press, English had the advantage of being used more in commerce. Nothing but continued neglect could keep English from being the third classical language. It could be far more important than the other two.

In summary of the contributions that Thomas Sheridan made to British speech technology so far as his first book concerning the British educational system, it will be found that he either arrived at the same answers as did John Locke and John Milton, or their writings affected his thinking. He did not believe that Milton was correct in advocating the return to Spartan ideas by accenting the physical life. He differed from Locke for the reason that Locke would have made school a private matter, and it would be accessible to rich sons only. These changes were not enough for Sheridan.

Sheridan believed thoroughly in the liberal arts and advocated teaching the arts. But he felt that the arts should be taught in such a manner that students could see where their study touched living. The study of the
arts could be a means to an end, but should not be the
end.

Sheridan pointed out that some of the neglect in
the system of education lay in omission. The present sys-
tem was the result of neglect by omitting things more than
the possibility of teaching improper or unbecoming things.

Sheridan said that the educational system should
be formed and adapted to the ruling government and that
it should be the aim of all citizens.

He evidently pursued his ideas for education more
than most people have thought. If indeed he did "pester"
the politicians who came to him for elocution lessons,
it had some good effect. It was the action of Sheridan
that made it possible for Dr. Samuel Johnson to receive
a yearly pension of three hundred pounds. It enabled
Sheridan to receive two hundred pounds annual pension for
his Dictionary.

Sheridan passed on his affection for English
by comparing it to the classical languages of Greek and
Latin. He wanted all Englishmen to speak it well.

Sheridan defined the good legislator as one who
would prevent crime rather than punish those who broke
laws. The good legislator would be more attentive to
good morals than to indict punishments.
Sheridan introduced the general maxim that a man can be persuaded when he is convinced that the speaker believes what he says. This was repeated in his Lectures on Elocution.

Sheridan said that if the British youth were to be trained in rhetoric as the Greek youth had been taught, they would be equally competent. Primarily they needed a group of qualified instructors with the correct rules of grammar and rhetoric.

Oratory sprung from need in both Greece and Rome. He felt there was an urgent need presently in England.

One problem of teaching English was that after the basic language was established so that it would preserve itself, rules and models should perpetuate. This was true in both Greece and Rome. It surely would follow in England.

Sheridan said that language was made up of words. Words have sense and sound. Sense is intellectual, sound is aural. Sound as a faculty of hearing was the means of conveying sense. Sense is the soul of words. Together they aid in the perfection of man.

Two points Sheridan considered in regard to the sense of words were precision and copiousness. Precision meant that the same ideas would be stimulated in the mind of the listener as were in the mind of the speaker.
Copiousness meant that each idea of a speaker would be faithfully translated for the listener.

Sound had two elements according to Sheridan. They were distinction and agreeableness. Each word should be distinct so that it would not be confused with other words. Words should fall pleasingly on the ear of the listener.

Clearness is necessary in oral language, but not so for written. Reasons for this were that a reader could look back in the text to repeat a part for himself or to find out meanings. But a speaker must be understood instantly as he speaks.

Where eloquence and oratory were most studied the most pure and correct language was used, said Sheridan.

A young man would do well to learn foreign languages so that he would be more able to express himself.

Sheridan agreed with Locke in saying that a young man should be able to express himself; even though taught rhetoric, young men were not taught how to express themselves in either writing or speaking, nor the use of rules. The correct application of rules would help to build up good habits of expression.

Sheridan called attention to the fact that one of the main reasons that Greek and Latin were taught was that the liberal arts had risen in those languages, and they
had, therefore, become the repositories of all knowledge and wisdom of antiquity. Some language had to be used, so by common consent Latin was the language.

Although Sheridan did not mention the French Academy by name, he referred to the need for a "society" to examine and fix the English language. He held that the only solution to the present problem was such a society.

Since the English constitution was based on public debate there were strong inducements for better speech. This meant bringing the Scotch, Welch, and Irish into using the English language. The first attempt to reform English was made in a letter by Jonathan Swift to Queen Anne. Her early death thwarted exploration of Swift's idea. Sheridan was the second man to propose a language reform.

Sheridan said that two things are to be considered in bringing stability to a language: pronunciation and meaning. Words should always be pronounced the same each time they are used. Their meaning should always be the same.

Sheridan said that if there were rules to fix the English language, and if the language were uniformly used and pronounced by the clergy, English would be proportionately superior to Latin. With the invention of the printing press, English was becoming more widely used for books.
which would be distributed in greater numbers in more places and cheaper.

Johnson was quoted by Sheridan as saying that the English people should put up a struggle for their language.

Sheridan said that it was as difficult to change the language of people as it would be to change their thoughts.

Another reference to the French Academy was that the French had regulated and standardized their language to improve their commerce.

Sheridan prophesied that if the English language were as well and universally known as French it would soon be preferred. The construction of English was an advantage. The fact that words may be transposed within a sentence (syntax) was an advantage.

English was superior to Latin in the matter of poetic movements. Latin had two, English seven. The matter of variety makes English more attractive.

As a pioneer of education Sheridan felt that the training boys received fitted them for the universities and left the non-university oriented boy with a useless knowledge of Latin and Greek.

Sheridan was actually saying the thing that is heard many times today, namely, that there is a breakdown in communication. He pinpointed the trouble on the lack
of study of oral English. His remedy was oratory, the only study of speech that he knew. Since it is easier to teach oral language, he believed that it should be taught first. He suggested that this be followed by the study of spelling, constructing sentences, vocabulary training, reading, and be topped off with Latin, Greek, or even French or Italian if there was a need. A lasting language would result from the use of proper rules and the standardization of English.

Sheridan should live long in our hearts as the one person who has showed us the evolution of several polysyllabic words that have become one syllable words. This he blamed upon versifiers who would rhyme poetry. His loathing of rhyme is worthy of great thought. His light on this subject is highly appreciated by this writer.

Sheridan has now shown that he had a consistent case against the educational system of his time. It just had not kept up with the advances in government. Education was not contributing to the everyday life of the ordinary Englishman. It was not leading in one facet of life. Seeing the present state, and knowing the great advantages of education, this criticism was well taken. He was indeed a pioneer in finding fault and publicly revealing it. He was not bitter nor vituperative. He
stated the case. But this was not enough. He must go on and tell how to relieve the situation.

His second book on education was titled *A Plan of Education for the Young Nobility and Gentry of Great Britain*. A title like this might upset some readers, but at that time the only people who were educated were born to be educated. This book, as will be shown on the following pages, goes into minute detail on how the correct school should be conducted. Interesting, too, is the information furnished by his daughter to the effect that many of his ideas were used without credit being given to him. Sheridan, a pioneer with originality and vision, now is given the opportunity of sharing his plan.

**Sheridan's Plan**

Thomas Sheridan opened his study by saying the inhabitants of the British dominions have three distinct advantages over all nations, past and present. These are:

1. The purity of their religion.
2. The excellent frame of their constitution.
3. The freedom of the press.

But they do not make use of these benefits; they pervert their nature. They have made them the very source of all our evils.
A PLAN OF EDUCATION FOR THE Young Nobility, and Gentry OF GREAT BRITAIN.

Most humbly addressed to

The Father of his People.

By THOMAS SHERIDAN, A.M.

LONDON:
Printed for E. and C. DILLY, in the Poultry.

MDCCCLXIX.
1. Our religion has become inundated with infidelity and immorality which almost deluges the land.

2. Our constitution, instead of producing true liberty, has produced licentiousness in the many, and desire of governing in the few.

3. Our free press has become the source of impiety, vice, vain knowledge and false taste.

If we are to believe the best and wisest men of our time, this has been going on for a great while, and if it continues, nothing but a reformation can possibly ensue.

Bishop Cloyne has said:

At first glance one would think the people are all politicians. Nowhere have politicians been more talked of and understood less. There is no reverence for law, little attention to consequence, and great stress laid on trifles. There is much idle talk about religion and government as though they may pick and choose. There is a general contempt for all authority, divine and human. There is indifference to prevailing opinion. These things are symptomatic of a neglect of religion. Due to this our future is in jeopardy. Children who grow up under these conditions must ripen into monsters, and the age of monsters is not far off. . . .

He concludes:

. . . considering the corrupt age in which we live there is little hope. Even though I know it is folly to make peevish complaints of the

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times, and charge it to human nature, on a particular age. . . . We are headed towards catastrophe. It has grown reputable by degrees for infidels to pass as gentlemen, and traitors for men of sense. We have made a jest of public spirit and ceased to respect laws and sacred religion. That old English modesty is gone, and instead of blushing for our crimes we are ashamed only of our piety and virtue. Other nations have been wicked but we are the first who have been wicked upon principle.27

The symptoms were so bad that it was feared they were in the final period of their existence.

Strong constitutions, whether politic or natural, do not feel light disorders. . . . It seems probable that as industry produces wealth, so wealth produces vice, and vice ruin.28

Sheridan quoted these and further gloomy remarks to show the desperate conditions that he saw. But he felt that just mentioning them was not pertinent unless he could put forth adequate remedies. He said that these proposals should point to a sure way of avoiding destruction.

Sheridan pointed out the fact that Bishop Cloyne had made the same error that modern reformers made. His was a proposal to amend the incorrigible. He raised the rhetorical question: Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? He said that instances of reformation were rare. Reform that existed was not based upon reasoning. To attempt to force an argument upon a

27 Ibid., p. 6. 28 Ibid., p. 7.
corrupt state has always and ever will be as vain as preaching to the winds. How often, queried Sheridan, have wise men fruitlessly attempted this in past generations? Instead, they should resign the present incorrigible generation while attempting to find the proper method of education for the oncoming one. Since there were many complaints by Sheridan's forefathers for the lack of care for which they gave their offspring, posterity should not register the same complaint upon his. Sheridan would not agree with Swift who said, "I care not what becomes of posterity, when I consider from what monsters they are to spring." Instead, Sheridan plead, "Let us say, from common benevolence, independent of Christian charity, that the worse the parents are, the more pains ought to be taken with the children, to prevent the contagion of their example."29

Despite the penetrating understanding of most writers of his time, Sheridan found that they had not placed the blame squarely where it belonged concerning education. Only two, Milton and Locke, had made attacks upon the system. Sheridan quoted widely, and summarized concisely, the ideas of both of these writers in his British Education. It will be remembered that Milton had a plan of education that appeared noble in theory, but was

29Sheridan, A Plan of Education . . ., p. 12.
impractical to execute. His ideas were general in nature and traced their examples from early Greek physical education. He did not present ideas for training for the different professions in any specific manner.

Locke, according to Sheridan, seemed to have given up all hope of amending the prevailing course of public education to concentrate upon a plan to educate children in the home. Sheridan agreed that truly these children might be sober, peaceable, inoffensive members of society. But these children would not be able to cope with the problems of the world outside their homes.

Now, as author of a plan for education which was to follow, Sheridan confided that he hoped to steer his course between these two extremes. His plan was designed to take advantage of the strong points of each idea while guarding against the inconveniences of each.

To show the shortcomings of the existing system, Sheridan noted that there was no course of instruction toward qualifying a man for the legislature. A clergyman was one who had taken a bachelor's degree in the arts. A lawyer was one who had eaten meals at the Temple during a stated number of terms. A physician was one who had a certain standing at either English University, obtained a degree upon the observation of certain forms, and paid his fees. An officer of the army or navy was one who had
either purchased a commission or who had obtained it by interest.

The legislator, who made the laws for the good and preservation of the state, was never made acquainted with the constitution of the state while acquiring his education. The clergyman, except for his youthful catechism at Latin school, was never taught one tittle of his profession. And what was worse in the eyes of Sheridan was that he received no instruction in the art of speaking. To him this was the only means of discharging his office with any degree of decency. Coupled with the lack of instruction for the profession of law was the necessity for physicians and soldiers to go abroad for knowledge in their professions. Sheridan felt that the reasons for this should be explained.

In recalling the history of the condition at hand, Sheridan stated that the mode of the educational system was instigated when the Popery was in power. He said that it was well suited for those days. That was good reason for teaching Latin and Greek. All available knowledge was written in those languages. Latin was necessary due to the church service being in Latin. Books of law and medicine were so written. In those days the polite language of the time was Latin, much the same as French was used in his own day. He quoted John Locke, "Tutors made Latin
the fashion without consulting the wishes of pupils."
Sheridan asked, "Why do parents permit this without
question?"

But the power of custom was great. The course of the
present educational system was neither suited to the
end, the nature, nor the principle of the government. If
this was the case, how urgent was the need for change?
Sheridan said that there was no proposition of Euclid that
was more clearly demonstrated than that if the education
of youth was not suited to the constitution, the state
could not thrive. If education is not compatible with
the constitution it cannot subsist long, and a change or
dissolution must inevitably ensue. It could hardly be
expected that the present educational system and the
government be suited to each other for the educational
system had been established antecedent to any ideas of
such a government. It rested upon principles that were
based on an entirely different government.

It had long been a sound idea that the mode of
education should be adapted to the nature of the govern-
ment. Applying this to England, Sheridan said that there
was no constitution on earth whose machinery was so com-
plicated. This meant that there should be various courses
of education to qualify men for their various professions
and employments. He compared the present uniform system
of education with "quack medicine" that would cure all disorders. He said that the English did not learn to live from their schooling. They learned only to dispute.

To Sheridan it was time to try another method. It was time to do as the skillful gardeners. They give up the incorrigible old trees to take care in forming and bending the flexible branches of the young. Prudent engineers would begin at the source, and by diversion would seek to enrich and beautify the land rather than to deluge it. A skillful surgeon probes the sore to the bottom in order to effect a cure.

A Plan of Education

As this plan was very different from any hitherto offered to the public, it was the policy of Thomas Sheridan to first take a short view of errors and defects in the system of education of his day.

Sheridan considered the first error in importance of the schools to be that they pursued the wrong end. The second error was that due to the first, the end was unconstitutional, inadequate, prejudicial to the state, and hurt the individual. The present end was to make good Latin and Greek scholars. The true end of education should, in all Christian countries, be to make good men and good citizens. Thus, tender minds starting out with a wrong bias were wasting the most precious years of their
lives with studies that would not benefit their future or the world's. The things that would contribute most to public and private prosperity—religion, morality, and the English language—were being utterly neglected.

All boys were being trained in one and the same course, despite their chosen profession. They were obliged to read the same books, pursue the same studies, perform the same exercises. Such a course would not qualify them for any profession. They were not trained to be legislators, physicians, clergymen, soldiers, merchants or mechanics.

Most absurd was the case of the written exercises. Sheridan decried the method that allowed young boys to write before they had achieved vocabulary. Before they had acquired a storehouse of memory they must write with invention and judgment. With few words and little understanding, these boys were like the Israelites who were forced to make bricks without straw.

To carry these ridiculous ideas further, Sheridan said that boys had to write poetry as their exercises. As many as four out of five had to be in poetry, and in Latin. All boys in the same class would have to write the same number of verses. He held that these practices were opposite to common sense, and he wondered how they could ever have gained a footing in a civilized country.
Sheridan set about to make comparisons. He said that hunters do not train their greyhounds, their mastiffs, and other dogs, to hunt in packs as they do their hounds. Their neighbors would laugh at them if they did.

I remember a case in point. A cur was raised with hounds, from a puppy. He would go with the hounds on a chase. He put his nose to the ground and pretended to scent. He yelped when the hounds were in cry. He seemed to be busy as the best in the field. He was an excellent mimic of their manners. How many yelping curs in poetry has this mode of education produced? The press has too liberally informed us.\(^\text{30}\)

Another error was pointed out by Sheridan to be that boys were ranked and kept in the same class the same length of time. This produced two bad consequences: either the quick must wait for the slow, which hindered and lost time; or the slowest must keep pace with the quickest, which in learning is impossible. Either way, absolute ignorance must ensue on their parts. Sheridan said that this was just the same as tying all of the horses together with a long rope at a race track. There would be no track records broken. And so with boys. They would have little to emulate under the noted conditions.

Sheridan blamed most of these absurd practices upon the low prices established under the reign of Henry VIII (1509-1547) for the instruction of a boy. Schoolmasters had not raised the price of instruction.

\(^{30}\text{Ibid., p. 46.}\)
But masters of other trades and artists had increased prices in proportion to increases in national wealth.

A schoolmaster, in order to have income, took in a greater number of boys. As this number increased he was less able to give each the proper attention. Also, to save money, they all used the same books and did the same exercises. Since the schoolmaster could not pay particular attention to a particular boy, he would avoid partiality by giving no particular attention to any.

The wretched stipend that parents paid to schoolmasters, according to Sheridan, was hardly a fourth of what they would pay to the master of dancing, fencing, music, or riding. They paid more to the men who would break and train their horses and dogs than they would pay to those who form their children. This complaint was at least two hundred years old and had not been remedied since the days of Henry VIII. Roger Ascham (1515-1568) as Preceptor to Queen Elizabeth was bothered by this. In his book *The Schoolmaster* (1563), he made the first plea in favor of humanities being written in the vulgar tongue and in easy style. *Britannica* says that he wrote about English matters in English for Englishmen. Sheridan quoted Ascham:

*Pity is that commonly more care is had, yea and that among very wise men, to find out rather a cunning man for their horse, than a cunning man for their children. They say nay, in word, but*
they do so in deed. For to one they will gladly give a stipend of two hundred crowns [Britannica says multiply by 20 or $4,000] by the year, and loathe to offer the other two hundred shillings [$800]. God! that sitteth in Heaven laugheth their choice to scorn, and rewardeth their liberality as it should. For he suffereth them to have time and well-ordered horses, but wild and unfortunate children: and therefore in the end they find more pleasure in their horse, than comfort in the child. 31

Although, as Sheridan noted, the same complaints were being made two hundred years later, they met with the same sort of success.

Sheridan was able to report but one change in the practice of this evil. That was that some wealty gentlemen were sending private tutors along with their sons. By doing this they were paying the considerable sum of one hundred pounds per year [in 1965 $8,000]. There were several objections to this procedure: (1) properly qualified tutors were hard to find and an unqualified tutor does more harm than good, (2) a boy doing this receives all of the bad things that are common to both public and private education, and none of the advantages of either, and (3) even if the best effects are produced, there is still a better and cheaper way with more advantages [his plan].

These are not the only threats to a free state. Sheridan added that when the number of boys is out of all

31 Ibid., p. 49.
proportion to the number of masters nothing short of despotism can result. "No principle but fear can support it." It is at this point that the "torturer rod" is introduced, thus renewing tyranny.

Sheridan advanced his plan as his humble contribution to the public, for their consideration: (1) The first contention of Sheridan was that his plan was chiefly calculated for the education of gentlemen, for the subordinate ranks would soon after reap the benefits therefrom. To strengthen his stand he quoted John Locke:

The Gentleman's calling is that which is chiefly to be taken care of: for if those of that rank are by their education once set right, they will quickly bring the rest into order.32

(2) Whereas there are many altercations about the different excellence of public and private education, to the crying up of one and running down the other, Sheridan said that he would endeavor to steer a middle course. By trying to stay between the two extremes he hoped to show that such a method could be established and that it would retain all of the good and none of the bad of each.

Sheridan summarized by saying that he had shown the end, means, and instruments of the existing system. He felt he should indicate the different nature of his proposal for a new plan.

32Locke as quoted in Sherican, A Plan of Education . . ., p. 52.
The first end in view is to make good men, and good Christians. The second aim is to shape their talents in such a way as will best fit them to become good subjects and useful members of our free constitution, by preparing them properly for the discharge of their several duties in the several spheres, professions, and offices of life, into which their lot may cast them, or to which they may be directed by their choice.

The means by which Sheridan proposed to bring about these ends were:

(1) To improve the understanding; (2) to instruct the boys thoroughly in the principles of religion and morality; (3) to have a strict attention to their actions in order to make them comfortable to both; (4) and to employ their time chiefly in such studies as will afterwards prove most beneficial to themselves and useful to the community.

The instruments to render these means effectual to answer the above ends, Sheridan said, are "a sense of honor, a sense of shame, and above all a sense of delight."

A Plan of a Public School to Prepare Boys for the University or Academy

Sheridan said that the English language should be taught the first thing, and taught grammatically. He said that this would be found to be the speediest way of improving understanding. Knowledge can be instilled much...
earlier into the minds of boys in their mother tongue than in a language which takes many years to be well understood.

He said that boys should study their language chiefly in books of religion and morality. Books of a more airy and entertaining nature may be admitted to unbend their minds and improve their taste. They should also be set to read some of the purest and most elegant passages extracted from the best English writers, according to their capacities and age. This would be their only exercise for some time.

After the boys had studied their English grammar and had a tolerable idea of the principles of their mother tongue, Sheridan planned that they would enter upon the study of Latin. But Latin was not to be taught for its own sake. Latin was to be taught in such a way that it would assist students toward understanding their own language better. This was to be kept constantly in view and pointed out to them as they progressed.

Throughout the study of Latin there should be comparisons of the two languages and differences shown. Our modes of declining nouns, conjugating verbs should be compared to Latin, with advantages and disadvantages of each pointed out. As the students progress, words derived from Latin should be particularly remarked, and the manner
in which they entered English (either by adding, curtailing, or altering syllables or terminations).

By these means boys would be enticed into the study of foreign languages. In the first place, by comparison, which in itself is a pleasing operation of the mind, an exciter of curiosity and an exerciser of both wit and judgment. Secondly, by constant perception they will adopt during their progress, the advantages will assist them to understand their own language. These enticements assist a novice in the study of an unknown tongue, for there is little present delight for the student since the future use has not appeared to the young.

It was Sheridan's contention that the chief point of view of a course in reading Latin was that it would assist in acquiring a more critical knowledge of English.

Skill in the rules of Latin grammar and prosody are necessary, according to Sheridan, and the need for constant parsing will be useful to the boys for a long time. Scanning poetry, naming the feet and quantity of the syllables, together with the rules would also be helpful to the student. These should be correct and literal at first, and for some time afterwards until they become well settled in grammatical rules. Then they should be given more latitude and encouraged to paraphrase. They
should find out opposite expressions and correspondent phrases in our language rather than literal translations.

After becoming well versed in Latin and being able to identify writing patterns and characteristics of the authors, a further step would be to have the student read aloud passages of some considerable length in the originals, then shut the book and give an account of the substance and main scope of the passages in "unpremeditated" English. This will accustom students to take in one long train of ideas, or even a whole chain of reasoning, and they will be obliged to search their own minds for apt expressions. By this method they will acquire an early habit of delivering themselves with ease and propriety in their own language.

When this degree of perfection has been achieved it is time for written exercises. They will translate from Latin to English only. Translations will be rather paraphrastical than literal. A proper latitude should obtain to retain sense. The opinion of good judges of this is that the perfect translation consists of delivering the sentiments of the ancients in such terms and phrases as they would use, were they now living, and English were their mother tongue.

Sheridan gave as his reason for recommending English exercises that chiefly every subject of the
English realm had need to write English upon every occasion, be it important or common. Few, if any, will ever have the opportunity of displaying their talents in Latin.

Sheridan explained that all passages for translating and declaiming should be such as to inculcate principles of religion and morality. The young and as yet untainted minds should be inspired with heroic ardor, love of virtue, the spirit of liberty such as aroused the ancients to such mighty achievements which still breathe in their writings. This would help to lay an accurate knowledge of their own language. They will acquire a habit of delivering their sentiments with ease in public and private. The principles of religion and morality will be strongly impressed on their memories. But it will not stop memory. It will sink deeply into their hearts and may be repeated energetically later.

Sheridan had by this time given the chief ends, studies, and exercises of his plan. He said that by aiming at them and pursuing them early, it was now time to examine the means by which they may be attained.

Sheridan felt that the best way to proceed was to avoid errors of the present system. He summarized:

First, boys training for different professions should not go in one and the same course.
Second, boys of different quickness or slowness in capacity of learning should not be kept at the same pace.

Sheridan said that the remedy for these errors was easy: increase the number of tutors in proportion to the number of pupils. Be careful that no master is entrusted with more boys than he can with ease attend with respect to morals and learning.

Sheridan prophesied that there would be objections raised by this idea for it would increase the expense of education. But, he reasoned that the present price charged was too little. Of all matters about which parents could scruple, why should they object to higher cost when their very children will benefit? Why begrudge a small addition to the cost of the most essential article they will ever produce?

It was now the aim of Sheridan to provide a better education for all ranks upon terms cheaper than at present.

**Scheme of a School**

Sheridan proceeded to describe the physical aspects of his proposed school. There were to be two large school rooms. One was to be called the "under" school and the other the "upper."

Boys in the under school were to be divided into classes according to their standing. They would all
pursue the same course of study. But upon being removed to the upper school it is proposed that they no longer be divided into classes according to their progress in their studies. Nor shall those studying for different professions be obliged to take the same course. Instead, they shall be classed according to their several spheres, professions, and employments for which they are destined. This is to be the object of the studies and exercises of each class.

The school shall consist of these six classes:

The First Class, according to Sheridan, is to be composed of those born to be legislators and who have reasonable expectations of being elected to that high office.

The Second Class will be made up of those intended for Holy Orders or the profession of medicine.

The Third Class will contain those intended for the profession of law.

The Fourth Class will be made up of those destined for military life.

The Fifth Class will consist of those designed for civil employment or the mercantile profession.

The Sixth Class will have those of independent fortunes who may not be destined to any profession. They most likely will pass their lives on their estates as
country gentlemen. They may live in both town and country, or may pass most of their time in town.

Each of these classes should be further subdivided into smaller classes, to be called removes. These removes should be in proportion to the number of boys in their different advances in their studies. None of these removes shall consist of a greater number of boys than can with ease be instructed and their moral conduct attended by one tutor. There shall be one tutor for each remove whose whole duty should be to take care of that remove.

The sole use of the school (referring to the rooms designated as the "under" school and the "upper" school) should be for examinations and exercises. Other and more convenient places should be appointed for study and preparation.

Sheridan proposed that a master be appointed for each school (upper and lower).

A convenient apartment shall be allotted to each remove for private study, under the eye of the tutor, where the student will receive his instructions five days a week. This apartment shall be one of the chambers belonging to each tutor.

On one day of each week, each class, whatever number of removes it may consist of, shall undergo a general examination in the public schools. The upper master
shall preside over the upper school. The others will be examined by the under master. Boys will give an account of all they have been learning during the week under their respective tutors. The tutors are to be present on these occasions. Judgments are to be given to each boy according to his answering, and these to be read from a rostrum in the common hall on every Saturday in the presence of all boys of both schools and within the hearing of the masters and tutors.

Boys who are quicker and have greater capacities may take the pains to outstrip their fellows. They may at any time gain a remove, and be placed in a higher from a lower one, upon being found qualified for it. They will pass through an examination on one of the repetition days.

Sheridan summarized the advantages of this method. Boys who were enrolled under such a plan would have leisure to study and their attention would not be dissipated by the confused noise, buzz, idleness, or waggery of their schoolfellows. He said that these evils were almost unavoidable in the present day mode of public schools.

The hours set aside for study would have to be used that way for the tutor would be present to restrain attempts toward irregularity. Due to a governable number of boys, idleness, lack of attention, and tricks would be rendered impracticable or be immediately detected.
Nothing is more common in the public schools today than, while the master is busy with one class, the others employ their time with wanton discourse, and waste time in undetected playing, according to Sheridan.

Each boy, he declared, would reap every benefit which might be expected from a private tutor at one fifth the cost, or, in some cases, a tenth of the expense. In the case of the public school there are ten tutors for ten boys, but in his proposed plan there would be one tutor for ten boys.

It is probably easier, Sheridan contended, to procure one good tutor than ten. The greatest precaution would be taken to inquire into the morals and to examine the abilities of each candidate before he is hired. This removes the possibility of error.

Sheridan began his Plan of Education by first adding up the advantages that England had over other nations. He saw them as the purity of their religion, the excellence of the frame of their constitution, and the freedom of the press. Then he noted the perversion of the advantages began with infidelity and immorality, licentiousness in many and their desire to rule, and the impiety, vice, vain knowledge, and false tastes of the free press. He found that the tendency of the times was toward existing ills. Using the same ideas that he had
used in criticizing education in his former book, he plead
for the change to be wrought upon the present generation.

He advised that more pains should be taken with
the children of incompetent parents to prevent contagion.

Sheridan shared the question raised by John Locke
as to why it was that Latin was taught without consulting
the wishes of the pupils. He agreed that it was just
habit or custom. He said again that the state could not
survive so long as the education of the youth was not
compatible with the constitution. Nothing practical was
received by pupils from their schooling to help them to
learn to live. Instead their only accomplishment seemed
to be to learn to dispute.

The concentration upon Latin and Greek were wrong
ends for education so far as Sheridan was concerned. He
called them unconstitutional, inadequate, prejudicial to
the state, and claimed they would harm the individual.
Only Latin and Greek scholars could result from it. To
him the true aims of education should, in all Christian
countries, be to make good men and good citizens.

Outstanding among the wrong practices were those
that permitted schoolmasters to attempt to teach boys when
there was no means of regulating the size of classes or
teacher-pupil ratios. Prices had gone up on all kinds of
services except in education. Prices had remained the
same but enrollments were raised. Sheridan described the fees as "wretched stipends that parents paid to schoolmasters." This ill was of two hundred years standing. He claimed that the only way to handle boys in these numbers was through fear. The alternative was for the wealthy to have a special tutor who went to school with the boy. All of these bad features of this system could be remedied by the plan that Sheridan had ready for the occasion.

Four ways of developing good Christian men and shaping their talents to best fit them in becoming good subjects and useful citizens were:

1. Improve the boy's understanding,
2. Instruct the boy in the principles of religion and morality,
3. Pay attention to their actions to see that they are comfortable in the pursuit of these ideas,
4. Employ their time with studies that will afterward prove beneficial to themselves and their community.\footnote{Ibid., p. 54.}

Add a sense of honor, a sense of shame and a sense of delight and the boy is ready to see exactly what should be taught in preparing him for the university or the academy.

The plan of Sheridan begins with the teaching of English in a grammatical way. It was thought that this could be done through books with an underlying theme of religion and morality. To unbend the young mind less...
serious books could be used. As their accomplishment grew they would read from the purest and most elegant passages extrapolated from English. Upon learning how to write English, they could then take up the study of Latin. Latin would be taught only to assist students toward understanding their own language better. Sheridan opposed literal translations in favor of paraphrasing. This finally came into being in the middle of this century in the United States. All written exercises were potential oral exercises and might be used to demonstrate their method of delivery as well as their English grammar and composition.

In attacking the problem, Sheridan said that in order not to make the same mistakes as the old system fostered, he would train boys who would follow different professions in different courses. Further, he would take notice of those whose rate of learning was quicker or slower, being careful not to expect them to proceed at the same rate.

Basically the remedy was simple. Increase the number of tutors. No master should be entrusted with more boys than he could handle with ease both in morals and learning. Realizing that the biggest objection to this would be the increase in cost per pupil, Sheridan said that the present cost was too little. Why could parents
object when it was their own children who would benefit? Would they begrudge this small addition to the cost of the most essential article they could ever produce?

Sheridan promised that if the reader went on he would find that education for all would be better and cheaper under his plan.

Boys would be kept busy and would be closely supervised under the plan. Boys who were quicker to learn would be allowed to progress faster. One tutor would work with a definite number of boys, studying the same things at a time. Sheridan stated that the number would be ten per tutor. This would make the cost one-fifth that of a private tutor, but that the cost to the parent would be one-tenth. Since it would be easier to procure one tutor for ten boys, there would also be a higher level of tutor.

Each pupil would probably make greater progress in the proposed method than in the present method: first, from the probable superiority of the tutor; second, from the length of time passed with him; and, third, from the certain advantages resulting from the method itself, that could be gained in no other way. The first is proved because of the superiority of the tutor. This is due to the fact that study time, as well as all day excepting meal time, is spent entirely with the tutor. Some may object to this. But the group will occupy all of his
time, even if the individuals do have less of his instruction. When it is considered that a tutor teaches the same lessons to ten boys together, he cannot instruct one without informing the rest at the same time! After the boys are confined at school they must have hours of play and recreation in the evening. A private tutor would hardly find it possible to spend but a short while planning the day's lessons with the student and correcting exercises. Sometimes the preparation of the exercises for their pupils is all that tutors can do. Passing so many hours at school with schoolfellows is liable to corrupt the morals. Depending too much upon the tutor diminishes self-reliance. Also, Sheridan looked upon the system then in practice to be infinitely worse than the plan he proposed.

According to Quintilian and Rollin, the great advantage of schools is emulation. A child improves by what is said to him and what is said to others. Every day he will see his master approve one thing and correct another. One boy will be condemned for idleness while one is commended for his diligence. Each student will profit from this. The love of glory will serve as incentive for his pains. He will be ashamed to yield to his equals and attempt to excel the most advanced. A good scholar will do his best to be the first of his form and get the prize.
This gives ardor to young minds. Emulation without malice, envy, or pride is one of the best means of leading boys to exercise the greatest virtues and most arduous undertakings. A master who has many auditors exerts himself more this way than one who has but one scholar.

The tutor with only one pupil can only speak coldly toward him while holding conversations. Sheridan remarked that it is incredible how fire and vivacity grow in a master who explains beautiful passages of an author before a group of boys. He will inspire them with his same tastes. So these advantages would come to the one boy in ten pursuing the same studies under the same tutor. These advantages would be greater than having only one tutor.

Another good consequence of the proposed method would be the strict discipline the tutors would keep upon themselves. Sheridan said that they would see that their boys were well prepared for their weekly review before the masters. That meant that they must find the surest as well as the most expeditious method of instructing those committed to their charge.

Under this double weekly inspection the boys would be doubly diligent and attentive. Since the master has constant supervision over every boy during his entire school career, by means of weekly repetitions, opportunity
arises for rectifying any faults, mistakes, or neglect of the tutor. This opportunity will be an incentive to each boy to apply himself closely to his study.

Besides the weekly repetitions, there were to be quarterly examinations. Parents, relatives and friends of the boys might be allowed to attend these occasions. Premiums should be given to those who excel in oral delivery of their reading as well as their excellence of English composition.

Corporal punishment, the cause of servile fear, was to be done away with. Instead, pleasure would be the guide to allure the ingenious youth through the labyrinths of science, not pain from the driver to goad them ignorantly on the way, unknowing where they are headed. Let the only fear be the fear of shame.

The three instruments to be substituted for fear were a sense of honor, a sense of shame, and a sense of delight. Let the boy feel the honor of being first in the several removes, at the daily lectures and weekly repetitions— the honor of being first and the shame of being last. The best written exercise each week should be recited from the rostrum and bound in a book for the perusal of visitors. When exercises were known to be caused by idleness or inattention, they should be read by the monitor immediately after the best to shame the
writer. This would be entered into a book with the boy's name. One book might be called the book of genius, the other of dullness.

Crimes and vice should be punished by confining the criminals in their rooms. They should take their meals alone or at a side table. Extra tasks should be assigned. Secluding them from any fellowship with the others in play, sports, and exercises should be carried out until thorough penitence is seen, public acknowledgment of the fault made, and a promise to amend.

When these methods have been found to be insufficient the boy should be sent home to his parents or publicly expelled, according to Sheridan's ideas. He felt that crimes and vice should not be confused with idleness and neglect. Crimes and vices were to be treated differently from personal faults.

A boy should be tried by a jury of his peers, not from his own class but from some other, supposing it to be more unprejudiced. A tutor or master should preside, according to the nature of the crime. Council should be assigned for and against him. Sheridan said that if a boy were found guilty, the punishment inflicted would have a stronger effect. He said that there would be less murmuring and reluctance, thereby affording an excellent
opportunity of accustoming the boys to pleading. The pleaders should come from the lawyers' class.

Here is a big item in the plan of Sheridan, for he is implementing his idea of preparing each Englishman to be able to defend himself in court—as did Cato!

The third instrument was delight. Sheridan said that this was the gratifying pleasure which comes with the acquiring of knowledge with ease in the mother tongue. Delight will come from knowing that the study of Latin will greatly contribute to that purpose. Delight will result from knowing that the whole course in reading is calculated to make students shine in their chosen profession. Cicero did not hesitate to say that all of the advantages of power, wealth, and fame, acquired by his skill in oratory, did not afford him the satisfaction of the delight he took in the study and exercise in the art itself. The immediate pleasure arises from the study and practice of the art.

Sheridan turned to the underschool to describe the course of study, arts and exercises.

The faculties of the mind which are chiefly exerted in the attainment of knowledge, arts, and sciences, are Memory, Fancy, and Judgment. By the wise disposition of Providence they follow each other in the above order: Memory is the first that appears, and soonest arrives at maturity; to that succeeds fancy; and judgment is the last and slowest of growth. 37

37 Ibid., p. 85.
To Sheridan's way of thinking, the early years of a boy should be dedicated chiefly to filling the storehouse. The rudiments of every language which may be thought to be necessary ought to be taught then. It is not only easier to do at this time, because of memory, but also the flexible organs of speech will be able to form those sounds without difficulty in correct pronunciation. For this same reason every art and science should have its rudiments established early in the student's life.

Filling the storehouse, according to Sheridan, should be the chief end of the early years. Since the operation of the memory has nothing pleasing to recommend it, and to set it to work by compulsion is painful and disgusting, every method should be used to entice boys to study and to make their tasks agreeable. In following what Sheridan called the way of nature (memory, fancy, judgment), he felt that he would prefer that boys not be taught with books of a severe character, but to let their fancies be delighted and improved by short stories, fables and novels written in the cause of virtue. Some of the best framed romances should be put into new dress and written in an easy, correct style. These would not only prove to be inducements to the reading habit, but also to enlarge the imagination, stir and exercise the nobler
passions. Sheridan said that Milton recommended this procedure and had received considerable benefit from it.

Sheridan further stated that nothing should be taught that is not suited to their understanding. Each lesson should pave the way for more easy comprehension of the next one. Each new lesson should contain some new instruction.

When boys are able to read English with tolerable fluency as well as spell common words with tolerable accuracy, then Sheridan would have them taught to write. When this is accomplished with legibility they may begin Latin. After progress is noted in Latin, then they may be taught French and Italian.

Sheridan suggested that the Latin books to be read by boys in the underschool might be: Phaedrus, some of Erasmus, Florus, Sallust, Paternculus, and part of Virgil. French books recommended by Sheridan could be Telemachus, Cyrus, and some of their familiar Epistles.

Such time as that not taken up by these studies should be used in learning arithmetic, the rudiments of geography with the use of globes, chronology, and some of the principles of geometry. For chronology, John Locke had recommended a small treatise of Strauchuis which could be read with the tables of Tallis or Blair. After some
general knowledge of geography, Locke advised the reading of Justin and Eutropius.

The exercises in the underschool should be chiefly that of reading and repeating aloud select passages from the purest English authors, adapted to the different capacities of the boys. But when these boys enter the upper remove, translating from Latin into English should be the first written exercises.

Sheridan would not have these boys learn to dance but they should be taught to walk, to have a good carriage, to bow properly upon entering or leaving a room. This included the correct manner of meeting people. They should be shown what is ungraceful in the movement of the head and arms in order to avoid bad habits.

The chief accomplishment which Sheridan would recommend to all is that of drawing. He was quick to define what he meant. He did not believe in the practices of the day whereby boys were taught to copy faces, limbs, human figures, animals, flowers, and the like. Instead Sheridan meant that boys should be taught to copy plans of architecture, maps, views of towns, and rural projects. He said that there was no situation in life in which a gentleman might be thrown that he would not find both use and entertainment in the possession of the art of drawing.
Music, in the eyes of Sheridan, had nothing to recommend it as an accomplishment. He said that there was scarcely any benefit which could be derived from it as a performer. He acknowledged that practice upon an easy instrument might assist a boy in acquiring some knowledge of the theory of music. That would depend upon whether or not the boy wished to do so. Beyond that, music was a loss of time at best, according to Sheridan. He felt that boys should not mix with such company and should avoid musicians even in the drawingroom.

Sheridan agreed with Locke that boys should acquire all of the virtues. Their vices should be watched, improved, cultivated, checked and be stubbed out before these bad habits become too deep. No boy should be admitted until he was fully eight years old. If some parent wished for his children to be taught from the very beginning, teaching of the alphabet should be furnished. But a proper place, tutor, and attendants should be specially provided. Also, such boys who had been ill taught and who had acquired bad habits in the first rudiments of English should remain until they are cured, and made fit to enter the underschool.
Description of the Upperschool, the Studies, Arts, Exercises, and Accomplishments

While the boys are in the underschool there will be ample opportunity of discovering their peculiar talents, capacity, and genius. Also their natural fitness or non-fitness for this or that profession may be discovered. Before entering the upperschool it will be within the power of the master and tutors to deliver their opinion and advice to the parents of each boy through the headmaster. Those parents with sense will be regulated by this advice concerning the future of their children. But if parents remain wilful and obstinate by persisting in their first resolution of breeding their sons to a particular profession, however unqualified they may be for it by nature, the school should cooperate. In such case the will of the parent must be law, and all that can be done is to give the boy every possible assistance. All help will be given to him toward this profession that his talents will allow. Then, upon this principle, the upper-school should be divided into six classes according to the plan before mentioned.

Sheridan then proceeds to present his special plan for the upperschool, after admitting that some studies will be necessary or useful to all boys.
Studies for the First Class, in Which
Are Included General Studies
Proper for All

In Religion

Some part of the history of the Bible by Stackhouse, together with select passages from the Old Testament, are included by Sheridan. He proposed that boys study the whole Duty of Man. Other items should be select sermons from Tillotson, Atterbury, Sherlock, and others that would illustrate and explain the chief articles of the religion of England.

In Morality

Sheridan would include Cicero de officiis—de
finibus—Laelius—Cato Major—Somnium Scipionis. He would have them study certain numbers of The Spectator, The Guardian, Adventurers, and Ramblers when these publications treat upon the same subject.

In History

Sheridan believed that after boys had made sufficient progress in geography and chronology, and having been shown the use of Potter and Mt. Faucon, their next step should be a general idea of ancient history. He said that this could be done in the works of Rollin. Later, in order to imprint more strongly upon the mind with names, facts, places, and times, the boy should read
abridgements. This should be done always with the use of maps and chronological tables. At this time a minute inquiry into the specific history of each country would be a waste of effort. Such study should be reserved for more mature judgment. Biography ought to be the only history at this time. They may delight in studying the lives of great men. In this way the young and uncorrupted hearts will glow with emulation. They will want to imitate these worthy men.

After studying ancient history, the same method is to be used in studying modern history. Sheridan advised that there were at present no good abridgements, but he felt that someone would write one. Present day Europe could be studied through the works of Chalon, History of France, Voltaire's Age of Louis the Fourteenth, Vertot's Revolutions of Sweden and Portugal.

Sheridan said that no one could read Hume's History of England too often, nor with too much attention, not only because it was the clearest and most impartial, but its style would improve the taste of the boys in English composition. After having read it with care, each boy should make an abstract of it. To do this Sheridan suggested that boys start at the time of the conquest, then without entering into parties, policies, or intrigues, each reign should be surveyed. This effort should be
finished with an account of the laws made during that reign. The results would give insight into the reason for statutes passed and the importance they should have. Above all, Sheridan stated that all of the remarkable era when the cornerstone of English liberties were laid should be closely studied. Sheridan would have boys actually know about the Magna Charta, rather than just talk of it. He would have them study the old Gothic government so that they could see parallels in the derivation of the English government.

Sheridan outlined the background studies for those in the profession of civil law. He outlined the studies for those choosing classical learning. He would be careful about presenting Latin in too great quantities, too soon. Until they had made considerable progress, he would not allow them to touch upon any English poet. Before such study, boys should have access to some good abstract of the best critical rules about the various species of poetry. This might instruct them in the different laws of epic, dramatic, lyric, pastoral, and elegiac poetry. Above all they should be taught what decorum is and to observe what the chief excellence of it is. Only a very few of the English poets should be read. Milton's "Paradise Lost" and "L'Allegro and Penseroso" could not be repeated too often. Some of Shakespeare's tragedies might be read.
But Sheridan said that lest they grow enamored of his faults, his beauties should be pointed out. His gross irregularities should be exposed. The only other recommendations for their reading would be Philip's "Cyder," Thomson's "Seasons," Mason's "Elfrida," and Armstrong's "Art of Preserving Health." He was very much against any inclusion of rhymes. Despite their name or reputation, he wanted them kept from sight. He did not want the youth to learn to admire something he deemed unfit.

Let not the youthful fancy be led astray by an admiration of that false ornament. Let not the as yet uncorrupted ear, be debauched by tinkling sounds at the ends of verses, like packhorses following one another in the same pace, to the regular jingle of their bells. Let not the unripe judgment be perverted from sense to sound. 38

Sheridan now approached the last "and one of the most important of all their studies." Let it be noted that here, again, Sheridan called oratory "one of the most important studies." His efforts have been confused by other writers because of his one driving idea to better the language of the common people through the study of oratory.

To acquire knowledge in which such parts of Cicero's rhetorical works, and Quintilian's, as are most easy and suited to their capacities ought to be read by them. As also part of Rollin's "Belles Lettres," and Cambray on Eloquence. For practice some of Cicero's Orations in Latin, and some of the best speeches,

38 Ibid., p. 102.
extracted from the Parliamentary Debates, will be sufficient at that age.

Sheridan felt that this was the summation of the studies and arts proposed for the first class, and generally that which was to be taught to all the others. He said that the school exercises should be first and principally, declaiming and reciting various pieces both in prose and poetry from the rostrum. Secondly, he suggested the translating of passages from the best authors into English. Thirdly, he recommended that they write "epistles" to each other upon any subject of their choosing, or criticism of authors that the boys were presently studying. "But no poetical exercises should ever be imposed on any one."

Sheridan said that there would be some who would think he should include the study of Greek at this time. He countered that of all the absurdities of the present system, the study of Greek was the greatest. He said that no one ever opened a Greek book after school days unless they were of the clergy or medicine. Everyone forgot his Greek shortly after school because of lack of use.

Studies for those going into the church or into the profession of medicine would start with the Greek Testament. Then would follow Clarke's Paraphrase on the Gospel, Fell's Epistles of St. Paul, Nelson's Feasts and

39 Ibid., p. 103. 40 Ibid.

The exercises for this class should begin with the reading and repeating of selected passages from the Scriptures. Sheridan designated those in the first remove of this class to take turns reading prayers daily to the two schools. Also at stated times they were to deliver short discourses from the rostrum. Since their knowledge of Latin was more necessary to them than to the others, they should alternate their written exercises between English and Latin. Above all, these boys should enter early into the office of peace-making. All arbitrators of private differences, and disputes among the other boys, were to be chosen from this class.

Sheridan would have these students know Greek in order that they may translate the New Testament from the original. He would have them study prose writers rather than writers of verse. They should study Xenophon, Plato and Demosthenes. They could overlook Homer, Sophocles, or Euripides.

To those who would study medicine (physic) Sheridan found there were two reasons to study Greek. One reason
was to enable them to read Hippocrates and other medical writers in the original. The other was so that they might easier learn the terms of anatomy and botany, for the reason that that knowledge was written in Greek.

For those destined to the study of law, Sheridan made these suggestions for "their peculiar studies": Justinian's Institutes, State Trials, Parliamentary Debates. Besides these the prospective attorney needed to know how to draw up legal forms such as bills, answers, pleadings, and the like, in the approved manner. If there were any criminal actions taken against any of the boys, their representatives should come from this class (before noted).

In Sheridan's plan, the fourth class consisted of those destined to the military life. Their first study should be in classical learning. These books should be written in English or French. Translations should be used of other texts. Lives of military heroes, foreign and domestic in translation, should be included. Rudiments of gunnery, fortification, navigation, geography, and geometry would give them sufficient work and perspective.

The fifth class would be made up of those who would follow civil employment or the mercantile profession. Many of the general studies would be dropped by Sheridan from the studies of this class. But some items would need
concentrated study. Writing, merchant's bookkeeping, mathematics, geography, history, French, and Italian are most important. Specialized study might be Huet's History of Commerce, Trade by Child, Decker, Gee, and Tucker, Colbert's Plan for the Improvement of the Trade of France, and others. Study of the ancient and modern states and the study of natural history should be a part of this class. Drawing, and other exercises that can best be practiced indoors, would complete the course.

Gentlemen of independent fortunes who may not choose to apply for any profession make up the sixth class. Some of these may live in town or country or both. For those who preferred the country life, Sheridan suggested that they study Virgil's Georgics, Columella, Cicero's Cato Major, Forest Trees by Evely, Gardening by Sir William Temple, Husbandry and Gardening by Bradley, Lawrence, and Lisle, Spectacle de la Nature by Rapid de Hortis. Sheridan would have them study the way to inoculate, graft and prune trees. They should know the management of bees and flowers. They would need instruction on the keeping of accounts. They, too, needed instruction in drawing. Sheridan agreed with Locke that these students should learn some manual trade. For those following the professions this advice may not be so good. For gentlemen there is the advantage of their having something to do with
their hands when time hangs heavily upon them. Sheridan suggested that they may want to work in wood, carpentry, as a joiner, or turner. If the gentleman would follow one of these manual arts, he could make models, tools, machines, and instruments to be used in his work. Also, he would never need waste time on inclement days. This would be healthful and efficient.

It was Sheridan's sentiment that a country gentleman thus trained might be one of the happiest of human beings. His days would be useful to himself and to his fellow man. Time would not be a source of misery. Dreary December days would hold no menace. He would not be tempted to kill his deadly foe, time, with the bottle or gambling. There would be no need to plunge himself into promiscuous company at hunting or the horse races. Every hour of every day could be both pleasurable and profitable to him.

For the gentleman who whiled away his time in town, Sheridan said that he should pursue books that inculcated the true principles of the politer arts. They, too, would find use of a knowledge of accounts. Such things as painting, varnishing, engraving, wood turning, carving ivory, cutting and setting precious stones, or grinding optical glass might help to fill up the idle hours. Thus it would be better to learn a means of
utilizing time rather than to engage in the extravagancies of riot, debauchery, and gambling.

**General Exercises and Diet**

Sheridan had mentioned some of the exercises that might be used, previously. To these means of gaining agility he added the back sword, the quarter staff, wrestling, swimming, jumping (both on foot and horseback), and the use of firearms. But above all Sheridan insisted that all classes of the upperschool be constantly trained and practised in the approved military exercises.

Sheridan had ideas about the diet of school boys. Food should be plain but good, sufficient, and regular. Boys should dine together in one hall the same as in college, except that each remove should have a separate table with the tutor to preside at it. Much could be saved by way of expenses to the parents by this method. Boys may be fed cheaper this way than at a boarding house.

Sheridan said that if he were asked how long this plan of education would take he would answer that due to the very nature of the idea it would depend upon the capacities of the boys. There could be no positive answer. He would agree, however, that for the quicker boys, it would be six years. Even the "uncommonly slow" should complete it in eight. That would mean that a boy would be from fourteen to sixteen by the time that he might be
looked upon as being ready to go to the university or academy.

Sheridan now looked at the elements that made his plan superior to the plan then in use. He confided that for the time spent his proposed plan was worth at least three to one. In the first place, one half of the time spent in the present system was utterly lost by wasting it on the useless and unnecessary exercises in poetry, languages, and others. His plan of private study under a tutor would make the work of one hour worth more than two in the present system. Lastly, the fruits of voluntary application, resulting from the delight they would take in his system, must be infinitely more plenteous than those produced from work occasioned by compulsion and fear.

Plan of an Academy for Finishing the Education of Noblemen and Gentlemen of Independent Fortunes

Sheridan had previously commented that many young gentlemen did not wish to pursue lives of professional people, but preferred to pursue some sort of education. His plan of an academy was for those young men who had taken the usual courses at one of the universities and did not wish to take up a profession. They had learned the useful or ornamental arts, sciences and accomplishments, or were not seeking specialized training.
These young men would be between the ages of eighteen and twenty. At this time they are confronted with three alternatives. First, they may plan to finish their studies at some foreign academy. Second, they may take what was then known as "the Tour of Europe." Thirdly, they could prepare to enter immediately into life at home. Since they were of a premature age, Sheridan said that they were utterly unqualified to discharge an office. He proposed to form an academy that he proposed would be superior to any in Europe and would produce the greatest good and benefit to all.

Sheridan said that this depended upon but two things. It would be the first consideration to procure the best masters available. England could well afford this and could outdo those abroad. Secondly, instruct the youth and have them established in their arts, studies, and exercises of things that will afterwards prove more beneficial and ornamental than any under the sun. These cannot possibly be acquired in foreign academies.

As Sheridan looked at the offerings of foreign academies he found them to be bodily exercise, such as riding, fencing and dancing; some of the ornamental arts such as music and drawing; and modern languages. He said that in some of these the English masters were as well or better prepared as any in Europe. But there was also,
with better pay now available under Sheridan's plan, an inducement for foreign masters to come to England, since the object of his academy was to

render the youth perfect masters of all the several studies, arts, exercises and accomplishments, whose rudiments they had learned, and in which they had made some progress at school. ⁴¹

Sheridan proposed that his academy be composed of four schools.

The first school of the academy would be for oratory and the English language. This he described at length in his book British Education. In this book he told of the benefits to individuals and communities where such a school might be located.

The second school for the academy would be for history and politics. Sheridan said that it was obvious how useful such an institution would be to those who would be legislators or concerned with the management of public affairs. The main study of history would be that of England, or those countries whose interests coincided with England's. The study of politics would include the nature of the British constitution; the present state of trade; naval and military force; the finances of government; number, extent, and power of the colonies; the present state of Ireland; the political interests of Great Britain in

⁴¹Ibid., p. 121.
regard to European nations; treaties; and other affairs of the grand national council.

The third school of Sheridan's academy would be for the study of agriculture. He assured his readers that agriculture is one of the surest means of increasing the population and wealth, and consequently the power of Great Britain. To restore the balance to the landed people, who were then outweighed by the monied interests, making them more useful members of society would help to eradicate many problems. Knowledge of agriculture would improve one of the most noxious groups of society.

Sheridan said that since the chief part of the wealth of Britain must ultimately depend upon the produce of the land, the best means of increasing that wealth would be to improve agriculture. The best way to do this would be to increase the skill of the landowners. The present low state of affairs was directly traceable to the extreme ignorance of those who occupied the land. The customs now are those of their forefathers, and however absurd, they hold to them obstinately. These occupiers of the land could not be reasoned out of their holding to outmoded ideas. Sheridan said that it would be much better if those who owned the land had skill in agriculture, and demonstrated experimentally on their own grounds. Their example would be followed by tenants and neighbors.
There is no one so void of common sense who should see the adjoining fields in a more flourishing condition than his own, without inquiring into the means by which this was effected; and without endeavoring to procure the same advantage to himself, by using the same means. There is no man so regardless of self-interest as when he should see his neighbor bring home double the crops from the same quantity of ground, as not to try to equal him by following the same method. With these people example is infinitely more prevalent than precept; and one experiment shown to the senses outweighs a thousand arguments offered to the understanding.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 126.}

Sheridan continued that nothing had contributed to throwing discredit upon all innovations in agriculture as the example of some landed men, who, from either whim or choice, commence being what is called "gentlemen farmers" without the least knowledge or true principle to guide them. These landowners have had fantastic notions that always fail. Whatever they undertake not only is a disappointment to them but it is generally attended by knavery on the part of those entrusted with the management, who never fail to take advantage of the ignorance of their employers. Baffled by their fruitless pursuits, and after having been the laughingstock of their neighbors, they bid eternal adieu to the country, and hide themselves in town for the rest of their lives. Thus the obstinate old farmers perpetuate their ways for they have seen the new ideas fail.
Sheridan told the story of a friend of his who had inherited a parcel of land. He had a strong taste for agriculture and applied himself to the study and practice of the art until he mastered it. He set about improving his estate. He returned his profits into the land and land purchases. In thirty years he increased his holdings to the place that they yielded sixteen thousand pounds per year. His neighbors followed his leadership and the whole countryside had increased property value due to the trees and verdure of the land which had formerly been barren.

Sheridan then added a bit of whimsy. He said that every man yearns for a little place in the country. Shop owners, traders, merchants, and others want a little place to retire upon, or to spend a day or two of the week. It was his wish that those men have a thorough knowledge of country affairs. And especially he wished that those who were born to estates would receive early instruction in the proper management of their estates. To induce them to do this there would have to be found many motives of the most powerful nature. First, rural life must be made into the most pleasurable in the world for those who qualify. Agriculture and tending animals of the farm would furnish and be delightful employment for those who understand them. The most pleasing relaxation from serious work are
the sports of the countryside, such as hunting, shooting, fishing, etc. They would be in a perpetual state of delight from doing natural and social things that are taboo in the business world. In short, Sheridan said that they would lead a life of the true, rational, natural happiness that was meant for man. And to those who have tasted the sweetness of this life, it would be impossible to ever change them.

Furthermore, gentlemen who followed this kind of life would find that there was material profit. Their skill and management in the daily improvement of their estates would cause a rise in value. This Sheridan contrasted with those who did the opposite. Those who spent money foolishly in hunting, gaming, and the like beggared themselves and their posterity.

Lastly, Sheridan said that a gentleman who lived his life on his land, building up its production, spreading his benefits throughout the community, could become a prospect for the parliament. He would be a better representative than those absentee owners, or wealthy people, who thought that a visit every seven years was enough to keep them elected. The gentleman who lived upon his land and was a success would be the preferred representative.

Sheridan knew politics and people:
Candidates in general being for the most part equally strangers to the electors, and much upon
a par in point of merit; the latter, having no motives of preference, naturally are prompted by self-interest, to give their votes to those who pay best.\textsuperscript{43}

Sheridan said that he had dealt longer on this section than he had intended. The reason he gave was that no one else had ever thought of it before.

The fourth school of Sheridan's academy was that of the military art. He said that since it was necessary those days that Great Britain keep an army, why not have one that was trained and ready? His ideas on this qualify him to be considered the father of R.O.T.C. (Reserved Officers' Training Corps).

The key to this situation, as Sheridan saw it, was to have well-trained officers. To get them it would be necessary to study theories and instruments of war, under competent masters, under practical conditions. He said that it was well known that upon the outbreak of war, the English forces were generally beaten temporarily. He said that England was purchasing knowledge at a dear rate, with the loss of life and reputation. Why not establish military schools to cope with this situation? Even if France and Germany did the same, the superior bravery and bodily strength of the British would be too much for the enemy. England would do well to investigate the French and

\textsuperscript{43}Ibid., p. 134.
Prussian schools to produce their own officers that would offset the humiliation of having to hire foreign generals to command British troops.

In Sheridan's academy everyone would participate in the practice of military art. But such of the nobility and gentlemen who chose might have greater opportunity in the military school. His idea was that everybody would profit and be rendered more perfect by studying the military, but those destined for careers in the military would become expert.

Sheridan again felt that he had found something that others had not considered. He said that his idea was the most effectual way of ensuring safety to England against an invader and that it would not incur expense to the public. For this would set the example for all schools and places of education. So, if all boys were so educated, trained in the use of firearms at the same time, there would be available constantly a formidable militia. He brought up the previous times that panic seized them when uprisings of the mountain people brought terror to England. He recalled the hurry and confusion of all ranks to learn about firearms. Again he caused them to recall that it was necessary to bring in an army of foreigners to fight for hearth and home with an invader. Have they forgotten those terrors? Would any friend of the British
constitution wish these things to remain? It would be easy to defend all that is dear and valuable by adopting Sheridan's idea. If the nobility, clergy, and those who owned property were to be taught the use of arms, they could upon any emergency soon discipline the common people who would readily follow them and agreeably receive instructions from such officers. It would be easy for a landlord to train his tenants. A clergyman could perform no greater earthly service than to prepare his parishioners to defend the church if it were attacked. Those trained in the military who were also skilled in oratory could inflame their hearers before an engagement.

"In all cases, to prevent is better than to remedy; to avoid, than to encounter dangers." Sheridan said that a house without arms invites the robber, but those properly prepared may sleep secure. He said that if England had the reputation of having available the trained youth of the nation, the invader would never make an attempt.

Sheridan said that what he proposed was not new. It had already been the practice in two of the greatest nations of the world. Greece and Rome had done this. Each citizen of twenty-one was an expert soldier whether or not he had studied any other discipline. Many of them

\[4\] Ibid., p. 140.
proved capable on the battlefield. Their training made them invincible as they preserved their liberty. He said all England had to do was to follow their example.

Good God! how long shall the blindness of pedantry, and supineness of philosophy, chain down the vigorous minds of our youth, to their scholastic benches, where they sit in a stupid admiration of the excellent writings, and heroic actions of the ancients, without once attempting, by adopting their wiser institutions, to rival them in those points? As if we were of an inferior class of beings, a race of pigmies, of a capacity to comprehend the history and actions of giants, but utterly unable to perform the like.\(^48\)

Yet, said Sheridan, in other facets of education the English had far outdone them. Such contemplative studies as philosophy were showing greater achievements to the moderns. It was now up to them to do more in the preparation of men for active life. And he appended that the country would also be saved from the expense of a militia. There would always be a better and more numerous one ready for service.

With this, Sheridan prepared to conclude his book. He had just concluded his ideas for an academy. He felt that the studies of divinity, law, and medicine should be within the province of the universities. There need be no further appropriations for them to do their continued instruction. Care should be taken in the establishing of

\(^{45}\)Ibid., p. 142.
new schools based upon wiser principles and under better regulations.

After the youth had passed through such an academy as Sheridan proposed, they may wish to do different things. Some may choose to travel. They could now do this with great benefit to themselves and advantage to their country. Their first travel should be the homeland. This would provide them with a means of comparison, furnish them with topics for conversations, and would be a social strength.

Others may wish to enter into life immediately. They may wish to take up their professions or offices for which they trained. But despite their several actions, the plans for education as Sheridan saw it remained the same.

First, to adapt as much as possible, the education of the youth, to the constitution of the country, and the several exigencies of the state. Secondly, to make the same course which should be most conducive to the public good, contribute most to the private benefit and interest of each individual.\(^\text{46}\)

Sheridan reverted to quoting Homer:

Train up a child in the way that he shall go, and when he is old he will not depart from the same.

Sheridan ended his book with a Milton quotation, part of which goes:

I call therefore a complete and generous education, that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously, all the offices both private and public, of peace and war.\(^\text{47}\)

\(^\text{46}\) Ibid., p. 145. \(^\text{47}\) Ibid., p. 147.
PART II

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THOMAS SHERIDAN THROUGH
HIS WRITINGS ON ELOCUTION
AND READING
A COURSE of LECTURES ON
ELOCUTION:
TOGETHER WITH
Two DISSERTATIONS on LANGUAGE;
AND
Some other TRACTS relative to those SUBJECTS.

By THOMAS SHERIDAN, A.M.

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PART II

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THOMAS SHERIDAN THROUGH HIS WRITINGS ON ELOCUTION AND READING

Twentieth century writers of the historical background of American public address are unanimous in calling Thomas Sheridan, A.M., a pioneer in elocution.

Waldo Braden in his Speech Methods and Resources, in writing first of the rhetoricians, notes, "Another significant group in England were the elocutionists: John Mason, Thomas Sheridan, Joshua Steele, John Walker and Gilbert Austin."¹

Thonssen and Baird in their Speech Criticism write of the elocutionary movement, saying, "By far the most influential individuals in this movement which gave delivery a position of prominence were the so-called "elocutionists" including, among others, Thomas Sheridan, James Burgh, Joshua Steele, John Walker, and Gilbert Austin."²


William P. Sandford, in his *English Theories of Public Address 1530-1828* in speaking of the elocutionary movement writes that the elocutionists emphasized *pronuntiatio* (delivery), thereby distinguishing this movement from every other school of thought in the history of the teaching of public speaking. He refers to "... how Sheridan and the other pioneer elocutionists developed their theories of voice and gesture..."³

The *History of Speech Education in America* contains a section on "English Sources of American Elocution" by Frederick W. Haberman who says, speaking of the characteristics of the elocutionary movement, that "Sheridan gave elocution its broadest definition, one that comprehended the work of the elocutionists for over a hundred years."⁴

Thomas Sheridan, in his first lecture on elocution described what good delivery is, but in starting out his second lecture he took his own advice and "defines his terms." Sheridan wrote: "Elocution is the just and

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graceful management of the voice, countenance, and gesture in speaking."5

Sheridan defined good delivery as:

A just delivery consists in a distinct articulation of words, pronounced in proper tones, suitably varied to the sense, and the emotions of the mind; with due observation of accent; of emphasis, in its several gradations; of rests or pauses of the voice, in proper places and well measured degrees of time; and the whole accompanied with expressive looks and significant gesture.6

The first eighteen pages of Sheridan's A Course of Lectures on Elocution (1762) is called "Introductory Discourse" and serves as a rationale for the book. It starts with the author musing to himself about how most errors in thinking are the result of the abuse of words. This idea was expressed by the semanticists in this century by Alfred Korzybski in Science and Sanity (1933), and became the theme of Wendell Johnson's People in Quandaries to demonstrate "General Semantics" (1946).

Sheridan felt that every child should be taught early in life to have clear and precise ideas associated with words. He would have had each new generation using words with uniform knowledge of their communicative value. He claimed that one-fourth of the time spent on "dead

6Ibid., p. 10.
languages" would remedy the situation. He thereupon made a declaration that is today a part of the education of each of us. "The problem is that the study of the mother-tongue should be a distinct branch of education." He said that the schoolmasters should incorporate this into the curriculum. 7

Reaching out into the void that surrounded him, Sheridan wrote of the complexity of the human mind and how little it was understood. He saw the mind in two parts. One was the seat of the passions, or emotions. The other was the seat of fancy, or imagination. Both are necessary to communication. He said that it is worthwhile to define terms. But it is a common delusion to believe that words alone can communicate all that passes through the mind. Emotions have a language of their own which operates independently of words. If language is ignored, one cannot communicate properly. Language in its present defective state is handicapped in trying to treat the emotions fairly. This was a problem facing the England of Sheridan.

Going further in his rationale, he said that language is the great instrument by which all of the faculties of the mind are brought forward. He said that we have two languages: the spoken is the gift of God, while the written is the invention of man. He asked the .

7Ibid., p. viii.
question: "Which of these will best display the faculties of the human mind?"

It was Sheridan's idea that eighteenth century England's greatest blessing was its "science." He contended that the best wish that he could have come true would be to have a fusion of the arts of the ancient Greeks and Romans with the science of modern England. The result would at least in part consist in a cultural language of nature, yielding living speech.

As a matter of preface, Sheridan said that his present book was designed to establish a successful method of teaching the art of delivery in England. As testimonial to its living up to its author's opinion he said that there were over seventeen hundred subscribers waiting for it to come off the press. It is a matter of historical record that he received the degree of A.M. from both Oxford and Cambridge by being "incorporated" without having matriculated. His literary competence was repaid, thusly. The reason for his incorporation was that he presented his course of lectures on elocution at both universities.

In beginning the ambitious series of lectures, Sheridan assailed the present poor manner of oral presentations in church, in the courts, and in all public life. He said that good reading or speaking "is one of the

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8Frances Sheridan, p. 111.
rarest qualities to be found." This incompetence hurt him because it existed "in this country where there is more reading and speaking done than anywhere else." He lamented that throughout history were inscribed the names of men who had worked and sacrificed to gain the admiration of others by learning to master the talent of elocution (delivery).

The analogy of what makes good speech is such a common one that it could be overlooked. Sheridan said that there were very few people who do not deliver their sentiments with propriety and force when they speak privately. This was general with everyone. Speech in public should be similar to the speech of a private conversation.

There can be no stronger proof given, than if upon trial it were found, that after a person had delivered his extemporaneous thoughts upon a point in which he was interested, with due force of emphasis, properly varied tones, just cadences and pauses, accompanied with suitable gesture, and expressive looks, the same individual words which he uttered were written down and given him to read; if in that case, I say, it should be found that he would change his whole manner; so that neither emphasis, tones or cadences should be the same; but in their room, he should substitute such as he was taught to read with; and that all gesture and expression of countenance should vanish.

Sheridan reasons that if a person does this with his own words, what of the fate of the words of others? He

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9T. Sheridan, Lectures on Elocution, p. 4.
pauses then to say that in general no one reads aloud worse than authors.

The main fault with oral communication as then in use was that students were taught to read with different tones and cadences from those used in speaking. But, if the end of public speaking is persuasion, how can one impress his hearers that he is in earnest? He speaks in artificial tones that are easily detected by any listener. His method of delivery is unnatural. Can the words of truth be delivered as intended when such artifice obtains? Sheridan designed these lectures to counteract this tendency first. Next, he would show how to subvert them so that future generations may not be so affected.

The beginning of the twentieth century was a period of the awakening of interest in psychology. One famous writer of the time was Will James. Did he know about Sheridan's ideas of habit?

To get rid of any bad habit, it is necessary in the first place that the person be conscious that he is so. He should know how and by what means this bad habit grew upon him so that he may avoid these means so that he may unlearn what was faulty. And lastly he should be made acquainted with the method of attaining what is right in order that good habit may succeed a bad one. For, as only habit can get the better of habit and a man when he has parted one manner, must necessarily acquire another. Unless he knows what is right he may only change one bad manner for another, or perhaps for one which is worse.10

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10 Ibid., p. 6.
Sheridan evidently had had teachers who impressed him. He praised his own, but never missed an opportunity to castigate others. He never missed a chance to say something nasty about the alphabet, and spelling, and the current abuses. He defended the mother tongue at every opportunity, saying that it should be studied more and earlier in people's lives.

Our errors and faults in the art of reading arise partly because of teachers and partly from defects and imperfections in writing.\textsuperscript{11}

To show weaknesses and difference between oral and written language, Sheridan used the comparison of the persons born blind and those born deaf. Blind persons can and do become masters of the spoken language. But the deaf are limited to the written language. Then he says that neither of these classes of people can understand how the other communicates by using different sensory organs. They cannot communicate with each other. Then, he says that wholly illiterate persons are like the blind. They have no conception of words independent of sounds. They cannot comprehend how it is possible for sounds to be made visible to the eye. He says that in its infancy reading had been regarded as a supernatural gift.

But the illiterate man who learns language entirely through the ear will always use a variety of tones

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 7.
while speaking. He will speak the emotions of his mind. When the deaf are taught to speak (and he says that many have been) they always use one uniform tone without any variation. There is an intermediate state between these. They are the readers. It is according to how the proportion of one kind of language is more used than the other. It can be neither the monotony of the deaf nor the variety of the illiterate. Sheridan alleged that most bookish men are generally guilty of the worst delivery.

He said that reading from the printed page yields probably three purposes. It is done to (1) acquire knowledge, (2) assist the memory, and (3) it is a universal way of communicating knowledge to others. The first two purposes may be carried out silently, the last aloud. Writing and printing present practically the same purposes.

The Greeks and Romans used writing in two ways: first for silent reading, and second as assistance to the memory. To apply a third reason, such as an aid to reading aloud could not be guaranteed, for this would not conform to the definition of good delivery (see page 114).

After alleging that reading from the printed page interferes with communication, Sheridan proceeded to point out spelling deficiencies: "If words are pronounced as they are written they would not be recognized as English."\(^\text{12}\)

\(^{12}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p.} \ 10.\)
The only things one gets from a printed page are spelling and the derivation of words, and pauses. The means of showing pauses is ineffective. They do not show accent, tone, emphasis, or gesture. The essential indicators of good delivery have been left out. The means of impressing the minds of listeners such as capturing the attention or rousing the emotions are absent from the graphic arts.

Theoretically when a reader looks at a written sentence his mind should be so excited by the ideas therein that he will give meaning to the written words. But it is shown every day that even good readers cannot sight read. It takes many repetitions.

This can easily be seen by observing a person who attempts to perform something that has been inadequately memorized. As he proceeds he becomes less effective, for he cannot recite and recall at one time. Yet, those who use extemporaneous speaking find fluency of expression and have an easy command of words. Their advantages in delivery are proportionately greater than those who have to hesitate, stop and suspend their discourse.

According to Sheridan, it is easily shown that reading cannot be a good substitute for extemporaneous speaking. A reader cannot read, comprehend the full meaning and importance of what he reads, have his ideas excited to the point where he makes the correct delivery, in the
same time that he would speak the words. Any good reader improves his performance by fixing the words in his mind by rehearsal so that he can adopt the writer's sentiments.

Some good examples of this are comedians who perform the material of others. They do this as though they were speaking their own feelings. But this does not happen after one, two, three, or even twenty readings of the parts. Repeated trials and constant practice in rehearsals are necessary to get the right tones, looks, and gestures. An easy way to demonstrate this is to hand the average man a scene from a comedy to read. He probably knows and uses many of the tactics of a comedian, but he finds it difficult to command them to appear at his pleasure. He will then concede that it is one thing to conceive and another to execute. "One must practise in order to execute comedy lines, or any reading."\(^{13}\)

This difficulty in correct reading arises from the need for sufficient signs or marks in writing to make it possible. Music for singers does this. Since it will probably never come in writing, the problem is to improve the art of reading with writing unchanged. Sheridan explained that the present four signs are not enough.

Due to this, schoolmasters taught a short cut in reading. They taught the use of artificial tones. These

\(^{13}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 13.}\)
tones do not correspond to the stops. They were called "reading tones" and are in opposition to "speaking tones." There are two reading tones. One indicates that the sentence is not completed, the other that it has ended. The former are the comma, semicolon, and colon, and are executed the same way. They differ only in a time ratio which may be two or three to one. The full stop has a different tone.

The disagreeable monotony which usually accompanies reading is due to the uniform elevations and depressions of the voice. Thus, those who would use "book delivery" disgust the educated listener, and either weary or destroy the others. And unless a person knows of this unnatural manner of reading he can never amend his error.

While these artificial laws remain this evil seems incurable. For the only way to have good reading would be to have competent teachers do so with a well-digested system of rules. Even as Quintilian had complained that a weakness of the early training of boys was that they were entrusted to old women, so did Sheridan. He said that the teaching of reading by old women and the lowest and most ignorant of mankind was the rule. This was the case with most grammar schools. It is here that most boys are beset by either false rules, or, in the absense of
rules, take up bad mannerisms of their own or are influenced by bad examples.

Sheridan closed Lecture I by saying that up to now he had written of things that would benefit oncoming generations. So he would now do something in his next lecture to guide adults in a just and natural delivery.

Elocution; Articulation; Pronunciation

Some terms were defined. "Elocution is the just and graceful management of the voice, countenance and gesture in speaking." Then Lecture II is outlined here to answer what is necessary for good delivery. Voice and gesture are to be considered separately, with countenance being included with gesture.

Good delivery depends upon due attention to articulation, pronunciation, accent, emphasis, tones or notes of the speaking voice, pauses or stops, key or pitch, and management of the voice.

Sheridan defined articulation as

A good articulation consists in giving every letter in a syllable its due proportion of sound according to the most approved custom of pronouncing it; and in making such a distinction between syllables, of which words are composed, that the ear shall without difficulty acknowledge their number; and perceive at once, to which syllable each letter belongs.\(^{15}\)

\(^{14}\text{Ibid, p. 11.}\) \(^{15}\text{Ibid., pp. 19-20.}\)
Where these points are not observed, the articulation is proportionately defective.

Further he said that good articulation is to the ear in speaking what a fair and regular hand is to the eye in writing. The exactness of pronouncing words correctly corresponds to the accuracy of spelling. In either case, understanding is enhanced when the offering is assimilated with ease and speed.

Again, since it is so difficult to read and interpret from the existing works of Sheridan, he is postulating. The present author would like to have any reader feel he is being one half of a conversation with a pioneer of elocution, the father of speech science.

Teachers of writing and clerks are expected to be able to write. A gentleman is not expected to write well. It is no disgrace for him to write illegibly. Since writing is of a permanent nature, other people must take pains to read his writing, and this takes time.

But it is different with oral articulation. Spoken words vanish as they are spoken. For this reason articulation should be so distinct that any hearer may go along at the speaker's pace with ease. It is more necessary that a speaker have a clear and distinct articulation than a writer should be the master of a good hand.
It is a disgrace for a gentleman to be guilty of poor spelling. If he omits, alters, or adds letters contrary to custom it is bad. But it is no disgrace for him to omit letters or syllables in speaking. Neither is it a disgrace for him to huddle his words together thus rendering them unintelligible.

Surely correctness in speech is more important than correctness in writing. In writing there is only one reader at a time. In public speaking the audience may consist of hundreds. These listeners either lose or benefit in proportion to the distinctness of the pronunciation.

The reason for this inequality of judgment is that written language is taught by rule. To transgress the rules of an art is a shame. Speaking is left to chance, imitation or early habit. Like things left to habit, or with unsettled principles, there is the probability of innumerable irregularities and defects.

To the ancient Greeks and Romans, speaking was regularly taught. The smallest error in pronunciation was equally disgraceful in men as poor spelling is with us. But in Sheridan's day, since so many were in error, improper articulation was the indulgence of each with the other.

Faults in articulation contracted early in life gain strength by habit. They grow to be incurable. This
is partly due to inattention in early years and partly through the need for skillful persons to remedy the evil after it has been allowed to start.

Parents did not think it necessary to assist their infants in their first attempts to articulate words. Nor did they assist them by planning that they attempt the easier sounds first and progress to the more difficult ones. Instead, they urged them to pronounce difficult words. This may affect the speech organs while they are still young and tender in such a way that they may never be set right. From this comes stuttering, lisping, and a total inability to pronounce certain sounds.

A child that is urged to utter a sound that is either too difficult or impossible will hesitate. He will substitute another sound that is easier to pronounce, wholly omit the sound and pronounce the rest of the word (which becomes habitual) or alter the pronunciation to one that he finds easy for himself.

Students of speech correction will see the similarity to modern writers such as Charles Van Riper who has catalogued articulation defects into substitutions, omissions, and distortions.16

Parents, being accustomed to the speech of a child, understand perfectly the child's meaning. Rather than correct this faulty pronunciation, parents encourage their child to speak in his own way. Parents acquire a fondness of this way of speech from their child and feel that this blemish is pretty.

In Sheridan's day a child's first teacher (who was generally an old woman) was utterly ignorant of all rules of reading with regard to the art of speaking or pronunciation. They professed to teach the alphabet by putting letters and syllables together as they are written. But if a boy had any sort of speech impediment such as stuttering, lisping, or defective articulation, these teachers acknowledged that they did not know how to cope with it. To conceal their ignorance they called them natural impediments or defects in the organs of speech. The child was permitted to go on in his own way as incurable.

Then when the child went on to the Latin school the master did not teach him to articulate for the child should have accomplished that before entrance. He felt that he was doing his duty when the child understood Latin and wrote it correctly. The art of delivery was not considered, for it was highly possible that the master was not only unskilled in the art, but perhaps defective himself.
A nurse or favorite servant may thus infect a man's articulation for life.

Examples of lisping and stammering are frequent. The inability to pronounce correctly certain letters is more frequent. Smaller defects in articulation were so general that they passed unnoticed.

I dare boldly affirm that of the multitude of instances there are of vitiated articulation, there is not one in a thousand caused by natural defect or impediment.17

The school that Sheridan first attended had a master who made pronunciation a chief object of his attention. There was not a single instance of his failure to cure such boys as had speech defects. There were lispers and those who stuttered to a great degree when they entered his school. Some were unable to pronounce some letters while others spoke very indistinctly.

In the northern counties of England it is said that few people pronounce the letter "R." When Demosthenes first spoke in public he could not pronounce the letter "R." People said that his was a natural defect. History tells us that he got the better of the defect. So why do the people of the northern counties blame this distinguishing mark upon a defect of their speech organs when it is plainly a matter of imitation and habit?

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17T. Sheridan, Lectures on Elocution, p. 23.
Good articulation is the foundation of good delivery. The sounding of simple notes in music with exactness is the foundation of good singing.

The grosser faults of articulation, such as stuttering, hesitation, lisping, and inability to pronounce certain letters, can never be cured by precept alone. These faults require the constant aid of a person skilled in the causes of these faults. Then, by teaching each individual how to use the organs of speech rightly, by showing him the proper position of the tongue, lips, etc., may gradually bring him to a just articulation.\textsuperscript{18}

Confining himself to the more general faults, Sheridan said that the first point to consider in articulation is indistinctness. To a certain degree, indistinctness renders the speaker unintelligible, or demands more attention from his listener. The chief cause of indistinctness is too great precipitance of speech. This haste was rife in England due to the bad method of teaching boys then.

As a boy begins to read he becomes familiar with written words so that he may recognize them upon sight, thereby being able to say them. Boys are slow at first in knowing the words, then in saying them. As he advances in knowledge he quickens his pace, and not being taught the true beauty of words and the proper way to read, he thinks that all excellence lies in quickness and rapidity of performance. To boys the prize for proficiency in

\textsuperscript{18}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 24.
reading goes to the swift. Regardless of the number of letters or syllables dropped on the way, or how many words are slurred into one another, the aim is speed. This habit of reading is often transferred into their discourse. In the Latin school scholars repeat their lessons by heart. The masters did not stress meaning or understanding, nor how hastily their exercises were done. Actually, in order to get through with the daily lessons, it would be impossible otherwise. This habit grows and gathers strength because the boys are neither conscious of their own defects nor do they receive any intimation from others of them.

Sheridan mentioned parental apathy before he found that there was no penalty or disadvantage arising from imperfect utterance. Schoolmasters, companions, and relatives, being used to their manner, understand them perfectly, so the boys continue. In the same way the parents overlooked the very young child in their prattling, the older one does not need to write clearly, nor speak articulately. These blemishes and defects are obvious only to strangers. Strangers being of good manners will not mention these defects. Thus the evil remains irremediable through life. Realizing this, he said:

It must be evident that the putting any constraint on the organs of speech, or urging them to a more rapid action than they can easily
perform in their tender state, must be productive of indistinctness in utterance; for in that case, the children must either drop some letters, or give them fainter sounds than they should have. And as some letters are in their own nature more difficult of pronunciation than others, and still more so in their different combinations, when they form syllables, it is in those chiefly the imperfection will show itself. 19

Explaining this further, he remarked that hasty delivery is of several kinds. There is the matter of dropping letters or sounds. Some pronounce words too faintly. This runs syllables together, and clusters of words together. Hasty delivery may be a sort of thick mumbling or cluttering utterance, of which there are many examples. The greatest orator of all time, Demosthenes, was thus afflicted when he first spoke. The cause, too, of his deficiencies was that he had not been trained in the art of speaking.

To cure such imperfections in speech that arise from too quick an utterance would be to lay aside an hour every morning to be used in the practice of reading aloud in a manner which is much more flowery than necessary. This should be done in the presence of some person or friend whose duty it should be to keep the reader holding his slow pace. The reader should sound all of his syllables without particular attention to the sense of the words. If the reader pays attention to making sense he

will revert to his speedy delivery. It would be good for
the reader to read vocabulary words that are in alphabeti-
cal order so that he will find out which ones he pronounces
faintly or slurs. The reader should make a list of these
words and use them as a basis of his morning practice.
Remind the reader to continue this slow manner of delivery
when alone. Not only will this bring him more distinct
utterance, but it will produce an ease of expression in
which silent thinkers are generally defective.

Another cause of indistinct articulation is that
the word of more than one syllable lacks an accented syl-
lable. This is a general fault. People do not differen-
tiate between syllables that are accented. To correct
this a person should pronounce the unaccented syllable
more fully. This forces the actual accent to be more
forceful.

_Pronunciation (the Fifth
Canon of Rhetoric)_

Sheridan said that to the ancients, pronunciation
had broad meaning, that of all delivery, even to look and
gesture. It now has a more narrow meaning; it refers only
to the way in which we sound our individual words.

The reason for this seems to be that in most of
the other points in elocution, all men are apt to have the
same problems regardless of national origin. This means
that university graduates, mechanics, courtiers, or rustics, anywhere, may be stammerers, lispers, or mumblers. They may not manage their voices well, nor pitch their voices effectively. They may speak too loudly or too softly. Their tones may be discordant or have false cadence. But, in the matter of pronunciation, there is no way of teaching the current manner of speech.

At present there are two main divisions of pronunciation, the language of the court and the cockney. There is nowhere that the language of the court is taught. To learn it one must converse with those who are knowledgeable in it. The worse disgrace is to use provincial, rustic, pedantic, or mechanic dialects.

Here Sheridan set down rules for eliminating a dialect. His therapy is still used, but no one has ever given him credit, even if he just acted as a reflector of others' work. Since this is the earliest time of its being printed, he has credit for originating it.

The difficulties of those who possess a dialect that they do not want are three:

1. The want of knowing exactly where the fault lies.
2. Want of method in removing it, and of due application.
3. Want of consciousness of their defects in this point.20

20Ibid., p. 31.
Most persons with a provincial dialect find there are many deviations in every sentence they utter. They feel that their whole speech is infected so they feel that it is too big a task to attempt. If they will only look at the sources of their deviation, they will probably find that the difference lies in just a different manner of sounding some of the vowels. These occur in every sentence and seem to be more numerous than they really are.

People from Ireland generally differ from those in England in two sounds: the vowels ā and ē. They sound them ā and ē, but not in every instance of their occurrence. In such words as matron and patron they will pronounce the first syllable as the first syllable of father. Even words such as fever, sea, and please, become favor, say, and plays. These Irish soon become conscious of this diversity of sound and not knowing exactly when to use a given pronunciation, they pronounce words with a double ē for ā (hate). Thus days will become dees.

All of this is due to a need for a method of demonstrating the existing differences. If the now existing interchangeability of the Irish in making these two sounds were pointed out, and a competent method of practice adopted, they would have good pronunciation, for any other exceptions are slight.
The failure to get rid of a provincial dialect is often due to the lack of serious application. But since there is probably no method ready at his fingertips, he must attack his problem alone.

Sheridan then describes a method of self therapy. Let him in the first place employ his attention in discovering the particular vowels in the sounding of which the provincial manner differs from that of polite pronunciation. Let him by the help of dictionaries and vocabularies, make out a list of the words, in which those vowels are to be found; and get some friend to attend him whilst he reads those words over, and mark their particular sounds, distinguishing those which differ from the general rule. When by these means he is able to sound them all right, let him practice them daily over by himself, and let him select such words as he finds most difficult of pronunciation, and form them into sentences, verses, or anagrams; which he may get by heart and frequently repeat. Tho' this may seem laborious at first, the task in the progress will be found easier than is imagined, and he who makes use of this method will be encouraged to proceed from the certainty of success which will attend every step of his progress. Whereas, they who attempt to alter their pronunciation without method, only plunge from one error into another, and soon grow weary of fruitless pains.21

This indeed is the basis of all speech therapy today. First the problem is noted, the particular deviation is found, and a method of coping with it follows. This is one time in the educational process in which there is a real need for a method. Sheridan wrote of this first, so far as is presently known.

21Ibid., p. 32.
Sheridan observed that there are scarcely any gentlemen in England who had not picked up some mispronunciations of certain words while at their schools. The method of ridding these from daily shame is the same. Collect the words, even if they are numerous. Having collected them, repeat them daily in the correct manner until the tongue gets into the habit of pronouncing the new sounds with ease. They will soon replace the poor pronunciations. "And surely every gentleman will think it worth while, to take some pains, to get rid of such evident marks of rusticity." 22

Cockney would be easy to change by using the proper method. The chief difference lies in the manner of pronouncing the ve or u consonant, and the w. These are what are heard: weal for veal, vinegar for vinegar, winter becomes vinter and well is well. If the person goes to the dictionary and extrapolates words beginning with these sounds he has substance for his study. This matter can be prevented in children through the correct manner of being taught to spell.

Another part of the cockney dialect is their habit of changing the last sounds in words ending in ow. Words such as fellow, bellow, hollow, follow and window are pronounced as though they were feller, beller, holler,

22 Ibid., p. 33.
'foller and winder. This applies to proper names such as Belinda or Dorinda too. But the list of these words is small enough that the vicious habit can be overcome by this method.

Rustic pronunciation prevails in several counties. Probably the present pronunciation is the continuation of old customs. The old way of saying words is more prevalent the farther the county is from London. These customs number probably in proportion to their distance from the center of national activity, the court. Since these too are not numerous, a suitable list may be made and followed.

There is one defect of the polite language of the court that has been picked up from the counties. It is the omission of the aspirate in many words. Since some words rely upon this for their strength, the force of the word is lost when the aspirate is omitted. They become ineffective as emotional words in such exclamations as What! When? Why? How! Hark! Hist! Others are hard, harsh heave, hurt, whirl, whisper, and whistle. Today Americans are very critical of the English for not having heeded Sheridan.

Sheridan was not humorous, but he includes one example of what can be said in the dialect of the counties that lacks a feeling of triumph.
Hail ye high ministers of Heav'n! how happy are we in hearing these your heavenly tydings!

Without aspirates this becomes:

ail ye igh ministers of eaven! ow appy we are in earing these your eavenly tydings!

Sheridan said that it was not the shame of people who uttered such sentences and thoughts, but the guilt was also upon those who just occasionally uttered a word without its aspirate. Again he recommended the use of the dictionary to cull out all words beginning with the letter h and those that begin with wh. With all of these references to vocabularies and the dictionary, it is easy to see where Sheridan's mind was pointed. Part III covers Sheridan's Pronouncing Dictionary, so we can now see where these ideas fit into his grand scheme.

Accent

In Sheridan's list of eight articles that composed elocution, Lecture II contained his thoughts concerning the first two articles. After articulation and pronunciation he listed accent as the topic of Lecture III.

Accent in the English language is not the same as the ancient Greeks use of accent. Sheridan said that accent then meant that they were marked by certain inflections of the voice "like musical notes." Writers of that day noted this but did not describe it in such a way that
it could be reconstructed. So it remains a secret, even from Sheridan.

Grammarians in Sheridan's time spoke with great formality about accent. According to them the acute accent is a raising of the voice on certain syllables. To them the grave accent indicated that the voice is depressed at that point. The circumflex meant a rising and falling in one and the same syllable. To Sheridan this was a jargon, for the way they spoke was wholly unlike their rules. He was unhappy with their performance, for he felt that they were "obstinately and pedantically retaining the marks, notwithstanding their evident inanity, to support the practice." They were absurdly determined to apply the marks to a false use rather than not use them. By establishing, then, that there was no connection between the use of accent in ancient Greece and his England, Sheridan then set about to perform his duty of instruction.

Accent to him was not a term in reference to inflections of the voice, or to musical notes, but only a manner of distinguishing one syllable from another. Where the Greeks had talked of accent in the plural, it is really accent in the singular in English.

Accent may be distinguished in two ways. First, one syllable is dwelt upon longer than the rest. A

23 Ibid., p. 40.
second way is to give the syllable "a smarter percussion of the voice in utterance." Examples of the first would be in such words as glo'ry, fa'ther, ho'ly. Examples of the second way are bat'tle, hab'it, bor'row. Accent was shown by Sheridan to be a matter of quantity of sound and not quality. Accent applies to the "more equable or precipitate motion of the voice," and not to pitch or inflection.

Accent being chiefly a quantity parameter of syllables used should not be confused in such a way as to cause a rule to be made saying that accent makes a syllable longer. In the examples given, the first syllables of glory, father and holy are long. The first syllables of battle, habit, and borrow are short. The quantity depends upon where the accent is placed, whether it be on a vowel or consonant.

This idea of Sheridan's is more than passingly interesting. Modern English grammarians do not talk of consonants being accented. Upon consultation with several articles on pronunciation it can be found that accent is the characteristic of a syllable only. This explanation of Sheridan's stands alone in the literature.

Sheridan explained that when the source of the accent is on a vowel the syllable is necessarily long because it makes the vowel long. If the source of the
accent happens on a consonant, the syllable may be either long or short, according to the nature of the consonant or the time taken to dwell upon it. If the consonant is naturally short the syllable will be short. The opposite occurs with a consonant whose sound may be prolonged. Whether they be long or short is based upon the will of the speaker.

At this point he enumerates short consonants that cannot be continued after vowels; k, p, t, in syllables like ak, ap, at. Examples of longer consonants are el, em, en, er, ev.

Sheridan referred to "the seat of the accent" as being either vowel or consonant. He goes on to show that the quantity of sound is variable with the accent as is also the "seat." Taking the same words, he changed the point of syllabification. Glo'ry when changed to glor'y moves the "seat" of the accent from the long vowel sound o to r which shortens the vowel. The same follows when father and holy are made into fath'er and hol'y. The first syllable of habit becomes longer when it is said ha'bit, as does ba'ttle for bat'tle.

Quick to point out the deficiencies of others, Sheridan took several hard punches at compilers of dictionaries, vocabularies, and spelling books. He recounted that they were so little acquainted with the nature of
accent that they thought it necessary only to mark the stress on a syllable. Instead of marking the accented letter of the syllable they just marked the vowel on a syllable. This particular deficiency carries over to today. Of all dictionary makers, Sheridan is the only one to actually mark both vowels and consonants with accent marks. This deficiency was worse, according to Sheridan, than no markings because it would lead to confusion of foreigners. To him there was only one correct way. By placing an accent mark over a consonant, the preceding vowel necessarily has to be short, for no vowel has a long sound in an unaccented syllable. If this were in use today it would simplify pronunciation, phonetics, and the teaching of language to foreigners.

This "palpable and gross mistake" by lexicographers pointed out the fact that grammarians were not dealing with English as a living language. Their consideration, to Sheridan, was based upon language that was to be read silently, not to be read aloud. Grammarians taught how to write. They disregarded the proper delivery of correct speech. For this reason, their method of showing accent would be sufficient to them. Since the chief use of accent was to show meter, they could arrange their words according to the rules of English versification.
Words of more than one syllable always have one syllable stressed. Words of several syllables may have more than one accented. Sheridan showed that ex pos'tu la tor'y has a primary accent on pos and a fainter accent on tor. He explained that the latter accent made the word more agreeable for the ear and prevented indistinct articulation.

Sheridan then made his case decisive by listing one syllable words to prove that when accent falls on a vowel it is long and that when the accent is on the consonant that succeeds a vowel, the vowel is short. Long vowels will be noted in these words: a'11, la'id, bi'de, ro'ad, cu'be. Short vowels precede an accented consonant, thusly: ad'd, led', bid', rod', cub'.

After having explained the smallest quantity of English utterance, the syllable, and the need for accent, Sheridan stated that accent is not confined to quantity, but it is the chief way by which words may be distinguished from mere syllables. "Accent is the very essence of words, which without that, would be so many collections of syllables." To him the essence of a word consists in accent as well as articulation. He said that if the word ar ti cu la tion were pronounced without distinguishing one syllable from another it would not be a word but a

24 Ibid., p. 44.
succession of syllables. When these syllables are pronounced together with the la accented, it constitutes a word by uniting the three preceding syllables to the last one.

Sheridan carried his ideas to the end, saying that all monosyllables which can be called words are accented. Particles are unaccented, but perform their work without accent. The duty of particles is to mark the relation and difference between words and are better fitted for this by being somewhat different from words. Their very name, particles, is a distinction by intention, the exception being that when one of the particles is emphasized it obtains accent, then it becomes a word. Particles are then words in name as well as in fact. They occupy space and discharge the duty of a word.

Of three ways of distinguishing words from syllables, the first discussed had been that of accent. As previously noted, Sheridan said that the second means was by "a certain note or tone," and this was not in use in any place outside of Greece. He then told of a third way of distinguishing words from syllables. It is by making a perceptible pause at the end of each word.

The matter of accent may be established by rule and learned. By accenting the vowel or consonant when used by native Englishmen correctly, others, including
foreigners, may obtain the proper method. But the matter of pause cannot be dealt with in reference to time, when used in irregular discourse, but depends upon the ear of the speaker. Musicians realize how difficult it is for a group to observe the same pause even when assisted by marks. This problem seems to resolve itself then into using as brief time as feasible between words and to place preference in accent. This then is the utility of accent.

To Sheridan, like Cicero, ornament of speech consists of those sounds which give pleasure to the ear.

Based on what he has written concerning accent on vowels and consonants and recommending that pauses between words should be longer than between syllables, unless to make sense, he then attempted to simplify the rules previously set up by him.

Referring again to pause, he observed that there are only four taught, the comma, semicolon, colon, and the full stop (period). The use of these marks to observe pause depends upon the composer.

Sheridan has been shown to be an uncompromising critic of the educational system, particularly in the teaching of oral English. Yet he is at the same time a genuine defender of the English language. He said that it is built upon simple, easy, regular principles. All thoughts are communicated through complete sentences.
Sentences are composed of words and pauses. Words are made up of syllables. Syllables are made of letters.

Sound is the essence of letters, articulation of syllables, accent of words, and collections of words united by emphasis and divided by proper pauses, of sentences. And Accent at the same time that it constitutes words, settles their quantity and prepares the way for due and proportional pauses.25

Sheridan made the analogy that as words are the mark of our ideas, they are like new coins from the mint, and are ready for brisk circulation in the commerce of discourse.

The conclusion to Lecture III disclosed that people always lay their accent correctly, and pronounce correctly in conversation. Yet when they read aloud or speak in public they transgress the rules of accent. People who do this have a mistaken notion that it adds pomp and solemnity to dwell longer on some syllables differently than in conversation. This has been a chief vice of the theatre. It is called theatrical declamation, in opposition to natural style. People who use this method allow themselves to dwell upon unaccented syllables believing this makes words flow stately and uniformly. This was a fault about which Shakespeare complained in his time, and it had not been corrected in Sheridan's day.

Even though there were attempts to take Shakespeare's

25Ibid., p. 53.
advice, Sheridan used this classic example of what each of them meant. Shakespeare had Hamlet advise the actor:

"Speak the speech I pray you as I pronounce it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as some of our actors do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines." By "trippingly on the tongue" he means the bounding from accent to accent, tripping along from word to word, without resting on syllables by the way. And by mouthing is meant, dwelling upon syllables that have no accent, and ought therefore to be uttered as quickly as is consistent with distinct articulation, or prolonging the sounds of the accented syllables beyond their due proportion of time. The least degree of faultiness in this respect gives an artificial air to language; inasmuch as it differs from the usual, and what is commonly called, natural manner of utterance; and is in that account, of all others, to be avoided most by public speakers; whose business it is industriously to conceal art: and chiefly by players, whose office is, in Shakespeare's phrase, "to hold, as it were, a mirror up to nature." It is true this vice does not prevail so much at present. . . . Some indeed may say like the player in Hamlet, "we hope we have reformed that indifferently amongst us," to whom I should reply in Hamlet's words, "0 reform it altogether"; and give the same earnest advice to all public speakers whatsoever; not only on account of the artificial air beforementioned which it gives to the utterance, but also as it changes the very genius of our tongue, and deprives it of that great source of distinctness, and proportion, which I have before explained.\(^\text{26}\)

This very long quotation serves several purposes for this researcher and should be explained. First, it shows exactly what Sheridan meant. The words are his. Second, it shows that his ideas concur with those of other people who have been interested in oral language. Third,

\(^{26}\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 54-55.}\)
it shows that Sheridan knew original sources, and that Shakespeare had stature in that day. Fourth, Sheridan knew his rhetorical background when he said "the business of the public speaker is to conceal his art." This comes directly from Sheridan's study of Cicero.

Even though some speakers erroneously accent all syllables of some multi-syllable words such as fortune and happiness, the only rule to be observed by all public speakers is to lay the accent always on the same syllable, and the same letter of the syllable as in ordinary conversation.

The rule of accent is one of the most regular in the language. Sheridan believed that some words had more than one pronunciation. He disagreed with those who would rule that the accent should be as far back as possible. "Every man is at liberty to choose which he likes best." The sound should be agreeable to the ear.

Words Need Emphasis

In opening Lecture IV Sheridan said that emphasis is to sentences what accent is to words. As accent ties syllables together to form words, emphasis unites words to form sentences, or members of sentences. As accent dignifies and distinguishes the syllable upon which it is laid,

27Ibid., p. 56.
and makes it more apparent to the ear, so emphasis ennobles the word on which it is placed and presents it in a stronger light of understanding.

Accent, is the mark which distinguishes words from each other, as simple types of our ideas, without reference to their agreement or disagreement: Emphasis, is the mark which points out their several degrees of relationship, and the rank which they hold in the mind. Accent addresses itself to the ear only, emphasis thro' the ear, to the understanding. Were there no accents, words would be resolved into their original syllables: were there no emphasis, sentences would resolve into their original words; [hence] . . . the hearer must be at the pains himself of making out words and their meanings.28

Sheridan said that the speaker who observes accent, the pauses of punctuation, and emphasis, saves pain and trouble for the hearer. The listener can accompany the speaker at his pace with clear comprehension. True meaning can only come through the careful use of emphasis. He showed by dialogue how the meaning of a sentence may be changed by shifting the emphasis from word to word. He used the sentence, "Shall you ride to town tomorrow?"

According to Sheridan nothing in his time was as little understood as the Church Service. The reason was that there was little or no marking that would help the one who read aloud. He spoke of clergymen who could not read a single sentence as it should be read. As an example

28Ibid., p. 57.
he gave this sentence: "Enter no t into judgement with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight, shall no man living be justified." To him this emphasis did not convey the meaning. He said the meaning is readily conveyed when it is: "It is not into judgement with thy servant O Lord for in thy sight, shall no man living be justified." He said that, had there been proper marks invented to show emphasis, such errors as shown above could not be committed.

He proceeded to use other quotes from the Church Service, Macbeth, Othello, Anthony and Cleopatra.

Sheridan advised that there are two kinds of emphasis, simple or complex. Simple emphasis points out the simple meaning of any proposition. Complex emphasis, in addition to marking some affection or emotion of the mind, gives meaning to words that would not normally have been without such emphasis. Simple emphasis is a function to a calm composed understanding. Complex emphasis is a function of fancy and the emotions.

Sheridan included an example of emphasis in which a few words may present a picture to the mind that otherwise might require many. From the play All for Love:

To place thee there, where only, Thou, couldn't fail.29

29Ibid., p. 67.
Truth and understanding can be conveyed easily to the listener through simple emphasis. By the use of complex emphasis, the affections and emotions are excited, the fancy agitated, and the attention of the listener delighted by the very act of being present. The mind is for the most part passive when simple emphasis is used. But when complex emphasis is used the mind is aroused to activity. The mind is conscious of this activity, according to Sheridan, without having to struggle. This is an agreeable state for the human mind, which is made up of both restlessness and indolence.

The mind thus constituted, grows equally weary of an inactive state, or of much labour of its own; but delights in being exercised at the expense of the labours of others. And this is one of the chief reasons that dramatic representations, have ever held the first rank amongst the diversions of mankind. 30

This is the same reason that the powers of oratory are among the noblest of human nature. The glorious power of oratory cannot be exerted without the use of emphasis. Complex emphasis in the hands of the orator rouses the listeners' emotions and keeps the listeners interested. Sheridan laments, "What a pity it is that so little care is taken about so important an article in reading." 31

The reason for the generally disgusting public reading and public speaking was that those who practiced

30Ibid., p. 69. 31Ibid.
them had no known method, nor were there rules laid down in their course of education. Actually there is nothing easier than instructing children in either simple or complex emphasis. Sheridan would have it done as they learn to read. Their uncorrupted, flexible organs of speech would be able to receive, distinguish and speak all of the variety of tones, as in singing. This would need to be based upon having qualified teachers who could, by means of rules, give examples through practice.

Returning to the matter of private conversation, Sheridan said that no man fails to emphasize the right word. If he follows this rule when he reads aloud or speaks in public he will be clearly comprehended. This rule is obvious but abused and neglected. The cause is easily explained.

Pupils are taught to read with their eyes and use only such marks as are presented to the eye. Since the two most important parts of reading are accent and emphasis, and there are no visible signs but letters and stops, the eye has no assistance and these blunders result.

Sheridan said that when emphasis is being considered, unless a man first clearly comprehends the meaning of what he is about to read, it is impossible to read without errors. Even the best readers, after long practice and experience, find that sight reading is inaccurately
conceived. If this is so, how can we expect learners, who are either poorly taught, or receive no good instruction, to do creditable reading? To him it is a mistake to assume that anyone can read aloud or speak in public who has not received instruction in oral language. He felt that nothing could be more tedious to the ear or irksome to the mind than to have to listen to "a long succession of mere lifeless words." It was small wonder that no one attended public readings and declamations. Those who performed had received so little instruction. They knew little of their craft.

Sheridan wrote that he would recommend to everyone who has anything to read or recite in public to reflect upon what type of emphasis he should use. He should point out the meaning intended and proceed from the sentiments of his own mind. With this point of view a reader can not fail to find the words on which he would lay emphasis. The reader should mark his script to show the emphasis he wishes to use. Each rehearsal should find him repeating the stress on those words only that are marked.

Directors of plays, teachers of interpretation and radio-television personnel should be using this advice. Many of them practice it, but there are those who do not. Of those who use marked scripts, there are many who have
no idea who first wrote of this method of procedure. Credit for this has not been laid at the Sheridan door.

According to Sheridan there was a mistaken idea that a person might not read the words of another as well as he read his own. He felt that a reader would do about the same but that he might become more emotional in the reading of another's work. Even in extemporaneous speaking, Sheridan said that artificial mannerisms, and imitations of others, would interfere with the natural way of speaking, thus interfering with good delivery. Unless natural delivery breaks through a bad habit, a man will harangue his fellow citizens the same way he was accustomed to recite before his school fellows.

From Sheridan's background in the theatre he recounted that he had seen actors give passage after passage with incorrect emphasis. This would obtain until the actor reached the more animated parts. Emotion would take possession of the speaker and the natural emphasis would be correct. Discerning speech teachers have been witness to this vagary of students.

Sheridan concludes Lecture IV by summing up his discussion. To him delivery, or pronuntiatio to the classical rhetoricians of Greek-Roman tradition, was in sad neglect. In England the stress was upon teaching writing and silent reading. It was his feeling that the
need of the day was for all people to be able to communicate orally with each other. He was ashamed of the poor manner in which church services were given. People did not understand the beautiful Christian rules for life because those who read were not reading or speaking with understanding. To understand is to emphasize that which is important. The real fault, so far as Sheridan was concerned, lay in the fact that since there were no symbols to show accent or emphasis, meaning should be brought about by the speaker. This lecture showed the speaker that he should first understand that which he read. The available symbols for pauses, comma, semicolon, colon, and full stop (period), could be observed as a written symbol for both writing and oral reading. But emphasis to bring out ideas must depend upon the speaker. He must rehearse his oral reading, or speaking, to the point where he definitely conveyed his ideas through emphasis. The speaker should beware of wrong accent, of accenting every syllable, emphasis in the wrong place, pauses at wrong places, or taking too long. A speaker should use his natural tones and emphasis as he does in conversation.

Thus whatever he utters will be done with ease, and appear natural; whereas if he endeavors at any tones to which he is not accustomed, either from fact or fancy or imitation of others, it will be done with difficulty, and carry with it evident marks of affectation, and art, which are ever
disgusting to the hearer, and never fail to defeat the end of the speaker.32

Of Pauses or Stops: Pauses Are for the Speaker and the Hearer

Sheridan defined stops or pauses as "a total cessation of sound during a perceptible and, in numerous compositions, a measurable space of time."33 The speaker must necessarily pause for breath and to relieve the organs of speech that they might rest. So also, the hearer needs relief from a continuity of sound. He also needs time to understand the separate sentences and their parts. These pauses being necessary and useful become ornamental when applied to verse.

But in common conversation and in much prose the delicate use of pause is not needed. Sheridan believed that probably its greatest use was to indicate whether a person was ending a sentence or continuing with another part.

Sheridan said that the listener should be able to follow a speaker without effort and concentrate upon nothing but the speaker's meaning. This means that the speaker and listener may proceed at the same rate, the pauses being correctly used by each. This, he said, also applies to poetry.

32Ibid., p. 74. 33Ibid., p. 75.
When Sheridan described the procedure for marking accent, and simple and complex emphasis, he advocated visible marks to assist in delivery.

I would therefore recommend it to every person who has anything to deliver in public, to make the same rule his guide with regard to the tones belonging to the stops, as was before laid down. . . . and for the same reasons; he will do it with ease; his delivery will seem natural, and free from all marks of affectation. 34

One misconception, according to Sheridan, has been that breath should be inhaled only at the end of a sentence. He said that is false instruction. If a speaker wants or needs breath he can take it at any time so long as he does not indicate one thing, then do another. A short breath may come at a short pause if it is not indicated by tone that it is the end of the sentence. Some people who have been taught incorrectly divide a sentence arbitrarily so they may breathe. Since they have been taught never to breathe except at sentence end, they drop their voices as they breathe.

Sheridan said that nothing was more frustrating than the symbols used by printers and writers. Since the art of punctuation is a modern invention, it suffered from fads and fashions, as has spelling. In the beginning writing was not meant for the present use of it. In his Lecture I on elocution (Part II supra) he is previously

34Ibid., p. 78.
quoted as saying that the ancients used no punctuation and that writing was not meant to be used for reading, except when it enabled a speaker to get words by rote. To him elocution would be far ahead had the art of writing never been found! That would force all speakers either to recite without a book (or notes) or apply themselves closely to the meaning of what he had to convey so that he could deliver it properly. Then there would be no false pauses, rests, or punctuation.

But every one, having no rules to misguide him, would of course follow the obvious one, that of reading words as he would speak them.\textsuperscript{35}

Sheridan felt that there should be some visible mark to indicate even the least susceptible cessation of sound of the voice. But since those who dealt in the teaching of writing did not study oral discourse, the rules of grammar are taught. The general law by which pause may be regulated is that "pauses in general depend upon emphasis." He said that either this law was unknown or that it was intentionally overlooked.

Since accent is the link that connects syllables together to form words, and emphasis is the link that connects words into phrases of sentences, Sheridan said that there should be no mistake about where emphasis belongs.

\textsuperscript{35}Ibid., p. 80.
for there should be a pause at the end of each sentence.

He said that if a question arose about why pause was more necessary to emphasis than to accent, the answer is obvious.

... we are preacquainted with the sounds of the words and cannot mistake them when distinctly pronounced, however rapidly; but we are not pre-acquainted with the meaning of the sentences which must be pointed out to us by the speaker. ... 36

This could only be done by showing which were the emphatic words. Then Sheridan set down the rule of reading with emphasis:

Let him first find out and mark each emphatic work; then let him examine what number of words belong to that emphatic one, and at the last of those let him place a comma or such stop as the sense requires. 37

The best advice Sheridan gave was to the person who reads at sight. He said to pay as little attention as possible to the punctuation marks, but to be chiefly attentive to the meaning of the words. Here he has revealed the core of teaching interpretation, and a basic rule for the actor.

Of the Pitch and Management of the Voice

The speaker should deliver his speech with ease. Sheridan asserted that if the speaker does not know how to pitch his voice properly he never can manage it...

36Ibid., p. 81. 37Ibid., p. 82.
successfully. A mismanaged voice yields pain to the user and irks his listeners.

Sheridan claimed that unless a speaker had been corrupted by bad habits his voice would have three different pitches: high, low, and middle. He said that ordinarily the middle pitch is used and that the pitch rises or falls from there in discourse according to whatever emotions he might have. He gave two reasons for using the middle pitch. First, it is because the organs of voice are stronger and more pliable to this pitch, from constant use. Secondly, middle pitch is used more because it is easier for the voice to rise or fall from that pitch. It should be noted that he refers to "the organs of speech," a plural term, rather than the singular term used by previous writers.

Most twentieth century textbooks refer to middle pitch as optimum pitch, and sometimes a formula is given by which the student may find his specific pitch, either with piano or a capella.

Due to lack of skill or practice, according to Sheridan, most people use an extreme of high or low pitch. He said that through indifference or timidity some use low pitch and they are not heard. Listeners will not listen, and lose attention. If the speaker tries to remedy this he changes to high pitch which is equally bad. At this
point the organs of speech become weary as languor and hoarseness ensue. Monotony also will arise from the use of either low or high pitch.

The use of continued high pitch by a speaker is the result of speaking in a large room. The speaker feels that in order to be heard he has to change, so he pitches his voice higher. The error here, so Sheridan confides, is that the speaker confuses high and low with loud and soft.

Tapping his worldly knowledge, Sheridan goes to the language of music to explain a fundamental fact. He uses the musical vocabulary as other writers use foreign words.

Loud and soft in speaking is like forte and piano in music, it only refers to the different degrees of force used in the same key: whereas high and low imply a change of key. A man may speak louder or softer in the same key; when he speaks higher or lower, he changes his key. So that the business of every one is to proportion the force or loudness of voice, to the room, and number of auditory, in its usual pitch. If it be larger than ordinary, he is to speak louder, not higher; in his usual key, not in a new one. And whoever neglects this, will never be able to manage his voice with ease to himself, or pleasure to his hearers.38

This is excellent advice that Sheridan gives to the beginning speaker. It is succinct, direct, positive, and devoid of ornament. It could well be a part of any good textbook today. .................................

38Ibid., p. 83.
Sheridan felt that when a speaker started his career by using a high pitch it would become a habit and last a lifetime. Since there was no one to advise him he would persist in using this unnatural key. He then included some situations that a speaker might meet and in addition he included rules for the solution of problems which might arise.

To Sheridan the greatest concentration of errors were made in the presentation of the divine service. He said that in all his life he had never heard it read in the proper pitch. The unnatural voice that struck the ear as the clergyman read, and with which he continued, was never powerful enough. Under such conditions a speaker should keep in mind that a good distinct articulation contributes more than power of voice. Even if the voice is weak, if the articulation is good, the audience will be more attentive and not miss what is said. By using moderate pitch and good articulation he will hold his audience. The Sheridan rule for this is to begin a speech in the speaker's usual pitch. If the voice is not strong enough, strengthen it by practice.

If a person finds that after practice he still cannot strengthen his voice sufficiently, through a natural weakness of voice, "you had better give over all thoughts of appearing in" public assemblies. He said that if your
profession demands that you speak in large meetings, your hope of speaking gracefully, agreeably, and intelligibly should be given up. The person who strains his voice to be heard will not articulate well.

This particular advice is seldom made in the present-day classroom. One reason for this has been the rapid advance in electronics. The microphone has abolished this "weakness." Yet most users of the microphone should pay more attention to articulation. This is the point of Sheridan's suggestion. On the other hand, he also noted that there are those whose voice cannot properly articulate due to the loudness of their voice. And so they "bore away with its clustered and uncouth masses of abortive syllables."

Sheridan's rule for the loudness of voice is that one should not use a greater quantity of voice than he can without pain or special effort. The speech organs should always be able to function without strain. Thus the speaker can control his voice. When he does not retain functional ease he loses the management of his voice. He should never extend his voice to the extremes. Sheridan again quotes Shakespere's Hamlet as he advised the actor concerning his voice:

\[\text{39 Ibid., p. 85.}\]
In the very torrent, tempest, and as I may say whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness.  

It was for this reason that Sheridan said that every speaker should be careful in the management of breath. A speaker should always get a fresh supply of breath before he feels the need for it. If a speaker does this, he will have some breath to spare, thus will be able to breathe without his hearers being conscious of his breathing.

If the speaker is short of breath at the start, or becomes so in his speech, he will develop an uneasiness that the audience will feel. He said that the least bit of uneasiness in either the organs of speech or hearing will be immediately perceived by the other.

In closing his fifth lecture, Sheridan contributed two rules. The first was how to give strength and power to the voice when naturally pitched. The second rule was for adjusting the voice to the room. He added a third consideration, that of how to find if the speaker's voice would fill the room. He talked of rooms with good acoustics, and how to overcome echo. Concerning a hall so vast that he cannot be heard, he said:

Whatever speaker has the misfortune to be obliged to deliver himself in one of these, has

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40 Ibid., p. 86.
nothing for it but to submit to necessity, and
to get thro' his work as well as he can.¹¹

Tones

Sheridan began this lecture by saying that elocution was at such a low state that any person who knew just the things he has talked about, and who uses them, is considered to have good delivery. But there is no good reason to stop there if he can improve his delivery by grace and force. He would therefore talk about tones and gesture in the next two lectures. Elocution, if it is to be pleasurable or if it is to affect the hearer, depends upon these two remaining articles.

Sheridan believed in definition, as can be noted earlier (Part II supra). Where some might say that language is composed of words, that is insufficient for him. He defined language as "any way or method whatsoever, by which all that passes in the mind of one man may be manifested to another."¹² This is based on an agreement in the use of certain signs. Regardless of the signs used, there is no natural connection between verbal signs and our ideas. This is borne out by the variety of languages spoken throughout the world.

The preferred means of communication is carried on by the organs of speech. The reason for this,

¹¹Ibid., p. 88. ¹²Ibid., p. 94.
according to Sheridan, was for convenience rather than need. For those who are born deaf can make themselves understood by visible signs. Every one who reads knows that our thoughts may be communicated by visible marks as well as by articulate sounds. Going on, he said that written language is only a copy of spoken language and has constant reference to articulation. The characters on paper are only symbols of articulate sounds.

Going deeper into a psychological investigation of language, Sheridan said that people who are blessed with normal speech associate the ideas of articulate sounds to the symbols they see on paper. They get to imagining that there is a definite connection between them. In truth they are independent of each other as can be shown by the fact that those born deaf can read and understand written language and write with accuracy.

Going on, Sheridan declared that by nature words are not an essential part of language but became so by custom. He said that words are the symbols of ideas by agreement. Sheridan repeats this contention that in order to have written symbols, there must be agreement between the communicating individuals.

Sheridan reflected that there are other things that pass through the mind of man besides ideas. He called them "passions and fancy." In order to feel what
another feels, to communicate the emotions from the mind of one man to the mind of another, there must be an exact transcript of these ideas by some system of marks.

But Sheridan felt that these "sensible marks" could not be mere words. For emotions are sometimes strong, other times remarkable, or unusual. Some had names, but most emotions in his day were nameless. He charged his readers and listeners not to let the name be the emotion, but only a sign to indicate the emotion. By the use of the names they may be distinguished and treated severally. Further, by being cool and objective, their thoughts could appraise the situation more capably.

In this vein, Sheridan wrote that the terms anger, fear, love, hate, pity, and grief, do not make the person who reads or uses them angry, afraid, compassionate, nor grieved. It is also doubtful, he said, that if a person who was overcome by emotions, thus named, would sway his listeners if he merely uttered the words. If a person did this he would impress his listeners as merely jesting, or being absurd. Either would cause laughter. Why? Words are only signs of emotions, and as such cannot represent the emotion. The true signs of passion to Sheridan are tones, looks and gestures.

All this pointed out to Sheridan that words are not emotions, and vice versa. The arbitrary marks that
make up language can only describe the passions. This showed him that it is not necessary that all men should feel much. Men should have a mutual sympathy in whatsoever affects their fellow creatures. All emotions that belong to man in his animal state are distinctive and cannot be mistaken. They are God given. Regardless of the nation in which he lives or in which he may live, his emotions are similar or corresponding to the men of other nations.

The tones that express sorrow, mirth, joy, hate, anger, love and others are the same in all nations. The words that accompany the tones may not be understood. Yet, Sheridan said, that the very tones, independent of the words, will produce the same effects. He said this had been proved by musical imitations. Whether or not he was referring to opera is not noted. But with the vast inter-cultural exchange of vocal and non-vocal units today the evidence is with Sheridan. An emotion is difficult to hide by words. He said that the tones reflect the emotion. Certain inarticulate sounds cause the words to yield to a superior force. He cites sighs, murmuring of love, sobs, groans, and cries of grief. They may be the only language heard. The experience of mankind yields to these tones and excites sympathy more than can be done by mere words.
Sheridan said that man is not the only animal that responds thusly. All animals that are not mute express their passions by certain tones. These have a corresponding effect upon the auditory nerves of those of the same species. Sheridan then wrote of how each animal of the field apparently communicates to its own species. He said that their hearing is tuned to the sounds of their own. He further stated that there are two chief ends to this exchange; the propagation and preservation of the species. Other sounds produce indifference.

Even so, all of the passions and emotions of all of the animals are found in man. That means that man's hearing is so constructed that he hears not only his own species, but all others. Thus man does share their pleasure, pain, sympathy or antipathy. Man is sensitive to the voices of animals. He hears their calls of distress and his heart is moved. This faculty is necessary to man, as master of the animal race, that he might minister to their wants.

The extensive power of the human voice and ear become man. Sheridan said that man can thereby utter almost any tone and comprehend almost any tone. By understanding various tribes of animals he also is understood by them.
Despite this extensive power that man has of being able to produce tones so extensively and to be able to observe correspondingly the passions and emotions of animals, there may be a resulting enmity. Therefore, man should have more sympathy and antipathy, for other animals have limited quantities of it. Sheridan takes considerable wordage to show that the basic language of man is the language of the emotions. It is natural. It is something that other animals have, but humans need more language because of their superiority.

Still building his case, Sheridan said that man finds there is need, in the unfolding and exerting of his nobler faculties, for a social state for man. Nature gave man only the power and the means. She did not give man language. This language was left to the industry of man to devise. This meant that he must agree upon articulate sounds with suitable symbols to represent them.

Sheridan brought Lecture VI to a close with a summary. To him words have limits. Tones have no limit. They not only express the emotions but sometimes are used in the place of words. He said that tones seldom apply to a single word, but to sentences. He also noted that only a very ignorant person would not know that many different tones are used to achieve emphasis. By using this variety, even dull and abstract philosophical discourse
may be made worthy of attention. He felt that pause used with tones made a contribution that would link sentences together for emphasis.

As other speakers and writers have done before and since, Sheridan mentions a point in closing that had not heretofore been mentioned in his lectures. He spoke of the quality that man possesses that other animals do not have. It is risibility. Then he catalogs: a laugh of joy, a laugh of ridicule, a laugh of anger, and a laugh of contempt. He said that those are just a few of many. To each of these there is a tone that plays an extensive part in this language of fancy.

Sheridan repeated that we are grossly mistaken when we contend that nothing is essentially necessary to language but words. The use of language is not confined to merely the communication of ideas. Language communicates all of the internal operations, emotions, and exertions of the intellectual, sensitive, and imaginative faculties of man.

Since it must be allowed that from the frame of our language, our very ideas can not be communicated, nor consequently understood without the right use of tones; as many of our ideas are marked and distinguished from each other by tones, and not words; and since it must be allowed that the connection or repugnance of our ideas, their relationship or disagreement, and various dependence on each other in sentences,
are chiefly pointed out by tones belonging to the several pauses.\textsuperscript{43}

It was hard for Sheridan to realize that the greatest aid to distinct comprehension of the sense of things was wholly neglected in England. Worse yet, it was not being taught in the schools. He said, "All the noble ends which might be answered in a free state, by a clear, lively and affecting public elocution are in a measure lost to us."\textsuperscript{44}

The lecture ends by Sheridan saying that the last lecture will discuss another branch of language which can be seen, the expression of the countenance and gesture.

\textbf{Gesture}

Sheridan started Lecture VII by noting that up to now he had considered language only as it was audible to the ear. There is another means of communicating. This may be done by sight. Since nature has associated tones with emotions, through the ear, she has associated looks and gestures to communicate through the eyes. He called the one speech, the other the handwriting of nature.

And her handwriting, like her speech, carries evident marks with it, of its divine original; as it corresponds exactly to its archetype, and is therefore universally legible, without pain or study; and as it contains in itself a power, of exciting familiar, or analogous emotions. Not

\textsuperscript{43}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 110. \textsuperscript{44}\textit{Ibid.}
like the writing of man, which having no affinity with its archetype, can be understood only by pains and labour; and containing no virtue of its own, can of itself, communicate no emotion.  

This should definitely put to rest any connection between Sheridan and the *mechanistic* school of elocution. When something is "universally legible without pain or study" it is certainly not a thing planned, rehearsed, and memorized to conform to man-made rule.

Sheridan said that in all history only the Greeks and Romans have regularly practiced and studied the language of nature. Since it was based on nature the whole delivery "form'd the completed harmony." Words, tones, looks, and gestures complemented each other so as to enforce and adorn each other. By careful combination the result was one of full proportion and beauty. He said that the moderns do not do this. To them, words, tones, look and gesture are founded upon fancy and caprice. This was especially true in England. Each follows his own fancy.

Lamenting again, Sheridan said that there are no general rules set down by which to be guided. The reason for this was that there were no general practices from which to extract a rule. There were no models to copy. In other countries there have been and are patterns of

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imitation. That left the only alternative, by way of advice to be given to individuals, that they may avoid the common faults in speaking.

Sheridan said that if a person wished to find an example to follow he had two choices. He may follow someone else or follow himself. If he will follow himself he will have a plan which will be comfortable to him. The very ease of this is natural. It is absurd to constrain his nature by forcing his organs to imitate another. Here again is no comfort for the mechanistic school which advocated the teaching and learning of gesture by rule.

To Sheridan the rule by which public speakers should guide themselves is obvious and easy:

In the first place he should avoid all imitation of others; give up all pretensions of art being certain that to having none is better than having not enough; a good speaker conceals his art (this comes only from the best plans, instructions, and constant practice). The speaker should forget that he ever learned to read, at least he should forget his reading tones. Let him speak entirely from his feelings; and they will find much truer signs to manifest themselves by than he could find for them. Let him always have in view what the chief aim of speaking is; and he will see the necessity of the means proposed to answer the end. The chief end of all public speakers is to persuade; and in order to persuade, it is above all things necessary, that the speaker, should at least himself believe what he utters; but this can never be the case where there are any evident marks of affectation or art. On the contrary, when a man delivers himself in his usual manner, and with the same tones and gesture, that he is accustomed to use, when he speaks from his heart; however awkward that manner may be, however ill-regulated the tones, he will still have
the advantage of being thought sincere; which of all others', is the most necessary article, towards securing attention and belief as affectation of any kind, is the surest way to destroy it.\footnote{Ibid., p. 121.}

Sheridan recounted that the two great articles of elocution were force and grace. The foundation of force is chiefly from nature, while the source of grace is in art. When united they mutually support each other. But when separated their powers become very different. He said that nature can do much without art, but art can do little without nature. "Nature, assaults the heart; art, plays upon the fancy."\footnote{Ibid.} Further, force of speaking will produce emotion and conviction while grace only excites pleasure and admiration. Since force is a primary end of speech and grace a secondary end, if only one or the other may take place, force should have preference. To Sheridan, the state of elocution at his time made grace hardly possible to obtain. When using force, the speaker regulates his manner by his feelings and conceptions, as the result of a clear head and a warm heart.

Sheridan confided that laying down a system of comprehensive rules to teach tones and gesture would be an ostentatious work rather than a useful enterprise. He could only see a use for rules if there were enough qualified teachers from whom to lay down a method of teaching.
That is why he lectured to individuals, to tell them how they might help themselves.

Sheridan felt that the prevailing condition of the artificial manner used by public speakers was due either to some early teaching or by imitation of another speaker. This artificial manner supplanted the one thing that is most natural in speaking. It contained "evident marks of art and affectation" to the extent that to restore natural delivery would bring about an entire revolution of the essentials.

He who speaks from his heart, can never fall into any absurdity in his manner; this is what they only are liable to, who adopt the manner of another, or are governed by imperfect or ill-founded rules of art. . . . Each man, has in a great measure, a language of his own, by which he expresses his emotions.48

The language of ideas must be based upon agreement of the users for the meaning of its sign and words. But no agreement is necessary in the language of the emotions, when associated with words. This idea is borne out, so far as Sheridan was concerned, by those who speak different languages. For the former an interpreter is needed. The latter are universally understood. Sheridan knew the possible argument that might be used against his idea that a person will be able to speak his own ideas better and more naturally. With one anecdote he stopped the scoffers.

The Bishop of London asked the actor Betterton why it was that actors could move whole audiences to tears when the clergy used the same words to no avail. Actors used the words of others and took audiences through the whole gamut of emotion. But the same discourse from the pulpit to the congregation found it unmoved. To the query Betterton answered, "My Lord, it is because we are in earnest." To which Sheridan added that whoever is earnest when he speaks in public will pass for an excellent speaker if he has the fundamentals that Sheridan had furnished in these lectures. Many persons owed their success to these very articles.

Sheridan said that this is the very way that the Methodists were "seducing so many of their flocks from them." He added that if these same Methodist teachers read their "nonsense in the same cold artificial manner" that the clergy used there were few who would become followers. He further said that "excepting these wild orators" (he meant the Methodists) there were but few public speakers for whom people would have admiration.

Returning again to the anecdote to prove his ideas he told of a mild, unassuming Vice Chancellor at Oxford who had been called upon to welcome the newly elected Chancellor. He was not known for his elocution. His position did not require that he speak much. When his
friends heard he was to welcome the new Chancellor, they "were in pain for him." Sheridan recounts that "all were pleasingly disappointed." The Vice Chancellor had no art and used none. He received the Chancellor as though he were "a long wished for guest."

His tones were such, as a result from a glad heart; his eyes sparkled with pleasure, and his whole countenance and gesture were in exact union. No one was at leisure to examine whether any part of his elocution might have been more graceful; it was just, it was forcible, it moved everyone. His easy natural, and unaffected manner, which perhaps was scarcely ever seen before by any of his auditors, in a public speaker, excited bursts of universal applause; not from prostituted hands, in support of party-opinions; but from hearts, that felt themselves agitated, by a participation of kindred feelings, resulting from his manner, independent of his matter.49

This quote should be adequate to demonstrate the position that Sheridan took regarding natural delivery. It also seems to be, by modern standards, over-punctuated. But if one observes Sheridan's rules, his writing is quite easily read by sight.

In preparing to conclude his seventh lecture, Sheridan repeated that every person could win a reputation for speaking if he is natural. Each of us is natural in conversation. He said this natural manner is one of ease and should be maintained over any artificial or bad habits.

49 Ibid., p. 129.
Another fault not previously touched upon by Sheridan was that had by speakers in the pulpit, senate-house, and lawcourt. That is the over-use of phrases and mannerisms peculiar to their mode of life.

They have each their particular idioms and abound with expletives and repletives, accompanied with motions, equally unimportant, and insignificant.50

People acquire this fault in imitation of some admired speaker. And not being trained to discriminate good delivery, proceed at their own uninformed risk. Sheridan advised that he who avoided these faults was to be commended and was sure he would later distinguish himself.

But, in line with help for the individual, Sheridan was ready with advice for the person who had already acquired bad habits in speaking. He said that if a speaker had disgusting and disagreeable discourse, awkward and extravagant gestures, and uttered strange and discordant tones when speaking in public, he should not try to reform his public appearance (image?).

My answer is, that if he thinks of reforming this [appearance] in public, he begins at the wrong end and will never be able to effect what he desires. His business is, to set out a reformation of all such faults, first in private life; if by his own attention to it and the constant information of his friends, he should get the

50Ibid., p. 130.
better of them there. of course he will be without them also in public.51

Sheridan's advice to the speaker with faults is consistent with his other suggestions. To this erring speaker he said that he should utterly forget his faults while in public even when he has little time to change his private habits.

Faults which from constant habit appear natural to a man, have an ease with them which takes away their disagreeableness, when one is a little used to them; but faults from affectation or imitating the manners of others, are forever disgusting, because they are apparently artificial. To contract bad habits of one's own is rather the fault of the times, than the man. . . . Few, or none are without them. . . .52

To imitate or adopt the faults of others is a voluntary act, done with the eyes open, that Sheridan said betrays an error in judgment. People of any discernment will not allow this type of indulgence. This will be detected and not accepted.

Harking back to the two kinds of language used in public speaking, Sheridan recapitulated that the language of ideas is composed chiefly of words properly arranged to show the ideas that pass through the mind of man. The language of emotions shows the effects those thoughts have upon the mind of the speaker as he attempts to excite the passions and affections of others through tones, looks and gestures. He said that it takes a proper use of both.

51Ibid. 52Ibid., p. 132.
Sheridan said that the office of a public speaker is to instruct, to please, and to move.

If he does not instruct, his discourse is impertinent; and if he does not please, he will not have it in his power to instruct, for he will not gain attention; and if he does not move, he will not please, for where there is no emotion, there can be no pleasure. To move therefore, should be the first great object of every public speaker; and for his purpose, he must use the language of emotions, not that of ideas alone, which of itself has not power of moving.53

Hence, the speaker, who properly used the language of emotions while he himself was moved, used tones that were of delightful harmony to the ear, and by looks and gesture pleased the eye, must be called a master.

In this case, the united endeavours of art and nature, produce that degree of perfection, which is no other way to be obtained, in any thing that is the workmanship of man.54

Thus Sheridan described the first-class speaker. The next in rank was the speaker who gave way to emotionalism without attempting to regulate it. He trusted to nature. The worst speaker is he who used the tones and gestures borrowed from others. Since they are not his own they lack propriety, are likely to be misapplied and lack force and grace. The speaker without emotion is not to be classed as a public speaker. He just utters words. A total suppression of emotion is unnatural.

53 Ibid., p. 133. 54 Ibid.
And this, it is to be feared, is too much the state of pulpit elocution in general in the Church of England. On which account, there never was perhaps a religious sect upon earth, whose hearts were so little engaged in the act of public worship as the members of that church. To be pleased, we must feel; and we are pleased with feeling. The Presbyterians are moved; the Methodists are moved; they go to their meetings and tabernacles with delight. The very Quakers are moved. Fanatical, and extravagant as the language is, yet still they are moved by it, and they love their form of worship for that reason. Whilst much the greater part of the members of the English church are either banished from it thro' disgust, or reluctantly attend the services as a disagreeable duty. 55

Dissertation One

The seven lectures on elocution are followed by two dissertations "On the State of Language in Different Nations." The first was delivered as the eighth lecture and closed the course on elocution. The second was designed by Sheridan to introduce another series of lectures on the "English Language Not Yet Delivered." Both are contained, with other dissertation, in this volume called Lectures on Elocution.

Sheridan told his listeners that he was going to trace the progress of elocution from its birth to its maturity. He said that in the early Greek State free men were not governed by force. They were governed by persuasion. The power of persuasion was the greatest

55Ibid., p. 134.
possession of any citizen. They found that it was necessary to please and move in order to persuade. This use of language was operable only when properly expressed in conjunction with tones, looks, and gestures.

Three things were necessary in order to bring this language of perfection, according to Sheridan. They were:

(1) All use of language was oral. There was very little writing, and printing had not been invented. (2) Since the chief object of the Greeks was to move the human heart, the guide was nature, herself. (3) The living language that these free minds used contained both visual and audible signs. He added that by nature, pronunciation was first stressed.

The Greek language, as Sheridan saw it, was in a continual state of improvement. Parents taught their sons early and study of the native language continued under competent instruction.

Thus accustomed from their childhood to nothing but what was pure, just and natural; the knowledge of all that was right or wrong in delivery, grew up with them, and became as it were a part of their frame.56

Sheridan was pleased to note that an outward appearance and show of wisdom was of no avail. It was necessary that a man produce all the wealth of his mind

56 Ibid., p. 148.
to view, and was thusly rated. This made the quest for knowledge unbounded. Consequently, the power to communicate knowledge in the readiest, clearest, and most forcible manner was the aim. "For without knowledge, speech would have but little weight; without power of speech, knowledge would have little value."57

How far the communication by the living voice, and the consequential use and improvement of the language of nature, as well as that of art, contributed to produce this perfection, every man may determine for himself from what has been laid before on that subject.58

Dissertation II was more concerned with the English language of Sheridan's day.

The Art of Reading Prose

Thomas Sheridan's Lectures on the Art of Reading was first only a volume on the reading of prose, and was published in 1775. Later his Art of Reading Verse was added. At hand is the fourth edition, in which they are both bound. There is no preface or introduction. The first part concerns Sheridan's lectures on the Art of Reading Prose. These four lectures are followed by the four lectures on the Art of Reading Verse.

In Britain the most general art that was taught was reading. Even the peasant children were taught to

LECTURES ON THE
ART OF READING;
FIRST PART;
CONTAINING
The Art of Reading Prose.

BY
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read. Sheridan thought it paradoxical that some people arrive at a great degree of perfection in some arts but few "succeed even tolerably" in reading. He could think of but two reasons for this. Either reading was just naturally more difficult than anything else or the method of teaching it was erroneous and defective.

Sheridan traced this lack of the art of reading back to the period when Greek and Latin were revived for study in England. The study of this outside language (which he said was artificial and unnatural) led to the neglect of the natural language (English). Study was concentrated upon letters instead of sounds; writing, not speech, was the goal.

Teachers of reading felt that they had met their requirement when a student could read fluently and observe "their stops" or end of sentence punctuation. Sheridan repeated the same idea that Quintilian had previously mentioned, that reading was taught by old women or servant men. These people could not teach beyond their learning, which was meager. If a child stuttered, or had poor articulation, it was beyond these servants to provide a remedy. Any defect was judged to be natural and a boy would take his defect on to Latin school. Even here there was no help or guidance for the deviate. Hence any defect was carried throughout life.
Sheridan contended that since every person would profit, male and female, it was astonishing that no one did anything to create a better method of study. One reason, too, is that the subject is perhaps dull. But in discussing any art,

... the treating of the elements is a dry task, and can have nothing in it very captivating to the mind; therefore the hearers will be under a necessity of exerting more vigorously their own attention, or they may lose much, not only of the fundamentals, but of what is deduced from them.59

But Sheridan felt that his listener may overcome this by curiosity. He said that since people enjoyed exploring "with the microscopic eye of the mind" things that escaped the naked eye, they should enjoy the nature and properties of the simple elements of speech. He promised to make many discoveries equally near and curious that had previously escaped superficial observation. Not only would these satisfy and gratify curiosity but they should turn out to be of the most important use.

At this place in his lecture, Sheridan presented his well-used, oft repeated, charges about the English alphabet. This occurs several times in his writings. A careful chart and list of his ideas are in Part III of this dissertation. It is felt that it belongs properly to the section that discusses pronunciation in connection

59Sheridan, Lectures on the Art of Reading, p. 7.
with lexicography. Sheridan believed in this idea with real devotion. It is a great contribution to eighteenth century phonetics which has been overlooked by scholars.

Other comments by Sheridan, however, do bear a slight amount of repetition. He said that when children are learning to pronounce words they must not be allowed to say them all alike. Each word should be clearly articulated correctly from the beginning. A child should not be urged to pronounce a word in which there is a sound that he cannot produce by itself. By starting with distinct articulation the child has the foundation of good speech. Sheridan quoted Quintilian as saying that a foundation of good articulation is necessary to building a speech "superstructure."

From experience Sheridan knew that this was the proper way to instruct children. But at this time his immediate problem was to find a method that would adapt to adults. Consequently he said that the only way to rid a speaker of bad habits was to revert to the beginning, relearn the alphabet and its pronunciation. One should first use simple sounds and then proceed through the combinations of sounds. This most certainly applied to dialects. This is one of the procedures that is followed today in speech therapy.
Sheridan's first lecture on the art of reading is a combination of his Lecture I on elocution and his rhetorical grammar as in the Pronouncing Dictionary. First he was dissatisfied with the lack of competent readers and the teachers of reading. Second, the reason for this was that writing had been taught, along with the dead languages (Latin and Greek). The living language was not taught because there was no background of source material for this and no one realized the cause for its absence. Sheridan repeated that the church service was dull, the law courts were dull, and the senate house was dull. The reason for this was that the people were ignoring the study of oral, living, English language.

Lecture II

Sheridan moved ahead in the same logical way that he had done in his other writings. From the basic sound of a given letter (or symbol) he moved on to the syllable and then onward to the word.

Sheridan gave these rules for the sounding of consonants:

1. None of them are prolonged except when the accent is upon them, which can only happen when preceded by a short sounding vowel.

2. Their sound is never to be prolonged except in monosyllables or final syllables of other words.
3. Neither consonant, nor vowel, are to be dwelt upon beyond their common quantity when they close a sentence.

4. When consonants begin a word, or a syllable, they must be sounded short; and great care must be taken that before their union with the following letter, they be not preceded by any confused sound of their own. This is very disagreeable to the ear, and is destructive of all proportion of quantity of syllables, and yet is no uncommon fault. The not attending to this in pronouncing the letter S, has been the chief cause of our language being called the Hissing Language, though, in reality, it does not abound so much in that letter as either Greek or Roman.60

This lecture continues parallel to his other writings on accent and emphasis. One item is mentioned that he had not considered elsewhere. He said that the French are taught to read all prose and all poetry in a monotone. But in public elocution the speakers "indulge themselves in the free use of variety." Their preachers delivered their sermons from memory, not notes. This more animated, more varied elocution was proportionally effective upon the listeners. But when they read, they reverted to monotone. Comparing the two, Sheridan said that the English method carried a taint to its root. The artificial, unnatural tones would spread through the branches of elocution, wither the tree, and prevent it from bearing fruit. The French method is inoffensive,

60Ibid., p. 69.
does neither harm nor good and lets nature and custom take their course. The third and best alternative would be to teach the art of reading based upon principles of correct speaking.

As Sheridan wrote in his Lectures on Elocution, one should read and speak to make sense. One should understand what one is uttering. This habit, contracted early in life, will continue.

Lecture III

Sheridan proposed to confirm his theory in this lecture by practical observations, and to illustrate rules by examples. He said that the first comments would concern the church service. Actually, he got no further. The reason for choosing the church service was that it was constantly being read in public and therefore open to the observation of everyone.

Sheridan felt that something that was so readily available would be practiced to the point of perfection. Then he reasoned that this could never be, for the users of the church service were erroneously taught at the beginning. These bad habits could only be dealt with by the aid of skillful teachers. Their friends would be of little use because their skill was but little better.
In showing his listeners how to get rid of their bad habits, Sheridan said that first he would conduct a minute examination of some parts of the service, then he would deliver the rest. Sheridan no doubt gave these examples orally as he went. He had to mark everything he used as examples when he printed the *Lectures on the Art of Reading*. So for all those who read rather than listen, he included, "such marks as will enable the reader, in a short time, and with moderate pains to make himself master..."\(^6\) Even though most of these things applied to the clergy, he felt that the lessons were of benefit to anyone.

Sheridan was not satisfied with the punctuation used, so he proposed that those who read pay no attention to it when reading by sight (sight-reading). It will be recalled that in his *Lectures on Elocution* he suggested that a person re-write the material to be read, marking it in such a manner that he would relate all of the words to the important word to obtain the correct emphasis and meaning. He then offered a set of marks by which one could mark the material one would be reading in public. These marks would assist the reader in communicating the sense of the material read.

... to point out the emphatic words I shall use the grave accent of the Greek[^1]
For the shortest pause marking an incomplete sense a small inclined line thus /
For the second double the time of the former two //
And for the third or full stop three ///
When I would mark a pause, longer than any belonging to the usual stops, it shall be by two horizontal lines, as thus =
When I would point out a syllable that is to be dwelt on some time, I shall use this mark —
or a short horizontal over the syllable
When a syllable should be rapidly uttered, this or a curve turned upwards; the usual marks of long and short quantity in prosody.
The reason for my using new marks for the stops is this. They who have been accustomed to associate reading notes to the stops will, on the sight of them, be apt to fall into their old habit; and as the new marks are free from such association of ideas, they will be more likely to be guided, in all changes of their voice by the sense only. 62

Sheridan started his examples with the following verse, marked as he had heard it performed.

Enter not into judgment with thy servant O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

To this he said that false emphasis takes away the real meaning. He would mark it thusly.

Enter not into judgment with thy servant O Lord for in thy sight shall no man living be justified 63

In this manner the correct intent would be communicated.

Sheridan goes on to describe a situation in which

... we usually find that the clergyman's eye is fixed on the book, and that he utters the words

62 Ibid., p. 122. 63 Ibid., p. 123.
as mere matter of form; but, surely the Christian and affectionate address with which it commences from a pastor to his flock, ought to be made with earnestness, and his eyes looking around the whole congregation.  

Sheridan evidently read examples, not only in the way he often heard them in the church, but then he included his own ideas of how they could be effectually rendered. Then followed excerpts from the church service such as "The Exhortation" and "The Confession." In the printed form he introduced the way he currently heard it from the pulpit. He would point out that the emphasis used either made no meaning or inferred an incorrect meaning. But by the use of his ideas of emphasis achieved by using his recommended marks, the words regained their meaning. Moving on he came to the Lord's Prayer.

Nothing can show the corrupt state of the act of reading or the power of bad habit, in a stronger light, than the manner, in which that short and simple prayer is generally delivered.

Six pages are devoted to how people say the Lord's Prayer, running words and phrases together, using improper emphasis to give misleading interpretation. According to Sheridan, he would mark it this way to obtain the dignity and meaning:

Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven.

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64 Ibid., p. 125.  
65 Ibid., p. 138.
earth' as it is' in Heaven= Give us this day, our daily bread And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever and ever.  

It is interesting to note that this is the same phrasing of The Lord's Prayer as the prevalent singing version for solo voice or chorus.

Sheridan continued step-by-step through the church service, and quotations from the Bible. He marked Te Deum and the Creed (referred to as Apostles' Creed, "I believe in God the Father Almighty maker of heaven and earth...). In this he said that there would be little voice change. It should be pronounced with distinctness and solemnity, duly observing the phrases, pauses, and sentences.

The third lecture continues to its completion with passages of the church service being marked in Sheridan's manner for better understanding to all. Among them the last is found to be "The Benediction."

Lecture IV

The first five and one-half pages of the lecture is "The Litany," marked for correct use... Sheridan's.

Ibid.
comments then lead into "Prayers and Thanksgiving upon several occasions," and the "Communion Service." Sheridan felt that this was enough for him to demonstrate. He was willing to let the rest of the liturgy be investigated by his auditors or readers, such was his faith in his lectures.

Again, Sheridan repeated that the individual who wished to read publicly should re-write his material and mark it as Sheridan suggested. He advised the clergyman to do this. Then it should be committed to memory. He advised that the entire service be memorized. He said that it is impossible for a person to have his eye on the book while his heart is upward in earnest fervent prayer. He said he had many testimonials lauding his ideas.

He admitted that this was hard to do. Sheridan used the analogy of persons learning to swim by using corks. They would feel that they were going to sink when deprived of them. Some timid clergymen that Sheridan had heard of would not repeat the Lord's Prayer without having it written down. He advised practice at first with the family. When it was found that these things might be performed without the book, they will feel emboldened to do it in public worship.

Ending his treatise on the Art of Reading Prose, Sheridan compared the feeling of freedom of communicating
and being effectual to the dull, irksome drudgery and weariness of going over the same service in the usual cold, mechanical way.

On the Art of Reading Verse

The art of reading verse is more difficult, according to Sheridan, than that of reading prose, although it is more pleasing and ornamental. He suggested that an examination of the principles and laws of versification be made. These have either been buried, obscured, or falsely seen through the mist of error, due to a general neglect of the study of the English language. The English had indolently adopted their verse form from the French.

The French measured their verses by the number of syllables which composed them. This resulted in the English heroic line being said to consist of ten syllables.

Based upon his objectives in the reading of prose, Sheridan then went through his ideas again. Throughout this part of his writing he was consistent in his stress upon meaning. The correct was to read verse to him was to give it meaning.
PART III

THOMAS SHERIDAN AS A PIONEER
IN LEXICOGRAPHY
A GENERAL
DICTIONARY
OF THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

One main Object of which, is, to establish a plain and permanent
STANDARD of PRONUNCIATION.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED
A RHETORICAL GRAMMAR.

By THOMAS SHERIDAN, A.M.

QUO MINUS SUNT FERENDI QUI HANC ARTEM UT TENUEM AC JEJUNAM CAVIL-
LANTUR; QUÆ NISI ORATORI FUTURO FUNDAMENTA FIDELITER JECERIT, QUICQUID
SUPERSTRUXERIS, CORRUET. NECESSARIA Pueris, JUCUNDA SENIBUS, DULCIS SECRE-
TORUM COMES; ET QUÆ VEL SOLA, OMNI STUDIORUM GENERE, PLUS HABET OPERIS,
QUAM OSTENTATIONIS.

QUINT. L. I. C. 4.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. DODSLEY, PALL-MALL; C. DILLY, IN THE POULTRY;
AND J. WILKIE, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

MDCCLXXX.
PART III

THOMAS SHERIDAN AS A PIONEER
IN LEXICOGRAPHY

It was evident to Sheridan that if he were to present a grand plan of education it would be necessary to bolster his ideas by a word-by-word explanation. So, by the time that the *Pronouncing Dictionary of the English Language* was published in 1780, Sheridan had spent a quarter of a century of his life on it. In an elaborate introduction, addressed to the Crown, his *A Plan of Education* first made mention of it. His pleas were ornate. He went to great lengths telling Lord Bute, and the King, that he was giving up a brilliant, lucrative life to devise a dictionary that would be of great importance to the waiting world. "Spelling was championed by Johnson's *Dictionary* of 1755, pronunciation by Sheridan's in 1780."¹ In the matter of Johnson's *Dictionary*, Sheridan had been instrumental in influencing Lord Bute to obtain a £300 annual pension for Johnson. The burning

reason for producing his Dictionary was far from selfish. His whole interest seemed to be summed up when he wrote that a good education for gentlemen would develop "good men, good Christians, good subjects and useful members of our constitution." Of course, Sheridan wanted to donate his services in bringing this about. This seemed to bother biographer Kenelm Foss, who wrote Here Lies R. B. Sheridan, for he found himself unable to resist mentioning the fact that "Old Surlyboots" was always offering to be helpful.

In the Preface to the Dictionary, Sheridan talked to his readers, giving many reasons for writing this Dictionary. He praised the English language and said that it needed closer study from the oral aspect. He repeated his charges that the language degeneration was cause for much of England's trouble. Only the written language was emphasized in schools, and there were too few people who could write. The Latin and Greek taught in schools was used only in schools. It had absolutely no use outside of schools. At that time, he alleged, there were but few authors who wrote well because they did not know the language. Inattention to living oral language had made written language the sole object of instruction. The

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2 Sheridan, A Plan of Education, p. 53.
stress on spelling had led to perplexity and confusion.

Nothing had been done to improve the English language since the time of Charles I (1625-1653).

It is by speech that all affairs relative to the nation at large, or particular societies, are carried on. In the conduct of all affairs ecclesiastical and civil, in church, in parliament, courts of justice, county courts, grand and petty juries, vestries and parishes, are the powers of speech essentially requisite.

Speakers consoled themselves that they were no worse than their neighbors.

The first step in correcting these ills, according to Sheridan, was to have each person instructed, from the very beginning, in a grammatical knowledge of English. To do this a standard of pronunciation must be established. This is one reason Sheridan had for writing his Dictionary that contained the "Rhetorical Grammar." Sheridan defined grammar as:

\[ \ldots \text{The science of speaking correctly, the art which teaches the relations of words to each other: propriety or justness of speech; the book that treats of the various relations of words to one another.} \]

In his "Rhetorical Grammar," he laid open a method of teaching everything with regard to sound. He pointed out the principles of pronunciation and the general rules by which they are regulated.

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4 Ibid., definition of "grammar."
In his Dictionary he reduced the pronunciation of each word to a certainty by fixed and visible marks. This he claimed was the only way by which uniformity of sound could be propagated to any distance. His analogy of this situation was that the same thing had been done in the art of music, where notes were made usable in teaching music at any place in the globe where music might be taught. Sheridan believed that a similar uniformity of pronunciation could be used everywhere the English language was taught, if his Grammar and Dictionary were used. Later writers who have worked with languages have transferred this universality of writing speech sounds into the study of phonetics.

The dialects of all England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, as well as the shires, bothered Sheridan. He contended that to alter the language (spelling reform) would be impractical. His idea was to teach people to pronounce the language, then in use, correctly. Harking to the days of Anne (1702-1714) when English was spoken in court, he said that everyone paid attention to proper pronunciation. But one of the "blessings" conferred upon Britons when the throne was occupied by a foreign family (King George, 1714-1727) was that the English language was banished from the court, the official language being French. The English language then began to suffer from
disuse, which led to misuse. Sheridan feared English would deteriorate to jargon. Enough damage had been done. Sheridan had been taught about precise pronunciation by Dean Jonathan Swift, who competently corrected his pronunciation. On this basis Sheridan said that he felt free to correct his friends. It can therefore be assumed that Sheridan used Swift's pronunciation as the basis for his standard as demonstrated in the Dictionary. He said that there were no rules to regulate the principles of pronunciation. Yet, he felt that there seemed to be a secret influence of analogy constantly operating.

And where there were any deviations from the analogy, the anomalies were so sounded upon the best principles by which speech can be regulated, that of preferring the pronunciation which was the most easy to the organs of speech, and consequently most agreeable to the ear.

According to Sheridan, up to his time pronunciation had depended upon custom and fashion for its standards. To this he added that he was the first who ever laid open the principles upon which "our pronunciation" of English is founded, and the rules by which it is regulated. His hope was that he not be considered vain or presumptious for laying claim to this assertion.

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6 Ibid., p. vii.
Since Dr. Samuel Johnson's spelling scarcely deviated from that used in Queen Anne's time, it was implicitly followed. Other writers had attempted changes, but their attempts would not stand up when subjected to the test of a thorough examination. In the explanatory part of his Dictionary, Sheridan followed chiefly the work of Johnson. His changes were only "sometimes making use of a plainer word that was more adaptable to English readers." He closed the Preface with the hope that there were no errors of consequence in the two-volume Dictionary.

John Walker, who wrote a pronouncing dictionary in 1791, said these things about Sheridan, Johnson, and dictionaries.

Few subjects have of late years more employed the pens of every class of critics, than the improvement of the English language. . . . Johnson, whose large mind and just taste made him capable of enriching and adorning the language with original composition, has condescended to the drudgery of disentangling, explaining and arranging it, and left a lasting monument of his ability, labour and patience. . . . Mr. Sheridan, who not only divided the words into syllables, and placed figures over the vowels as Dr. Kenrick had done, but, by spelling these syllables as they are pronounced, seemed to complete the idea of a Pronouncing Dictionary, and to leave but little expectation of future improvement. I must, indeed, be confessed, that Mr. Sheridan's Dictionary is greatly superior to every other that preceded it; and his method of conveying the sound of words as they are pronounced, is highly rational and useful.7

7John Walker, Pronouncing Dictionary, Preface, p. 3.
But Walker felt that there were enough instances of "impropriety, inconsistency, and want of analogies of the Language" that he should write his own Dictionary.

The work that I have to offer on the subject has, I hope, added something to the publick stock... it divides the words into syllables, and marks the sounds of the vowels like Dr. Kenrick, spells the words as they are pronounced like Mr. Sheridan... the general utility of Mr. Sheridan...  

Then Walker proceeded to pay the part of "critic."

And here I must entreat the candid reader to make every reasonable allowance for the freedom with which I have criticized other writers on this subject, and particularly Mr. Sheridan. As a man, a gentleman, and a scholar, I knew Mr. Sheridan and respected him; and think every lover of elocution owes him a tribute of thanks for his unwearied addresses to the Publick, to rouse them to the study of delivery of their native tongue. But this tribute, however just, does not exempt him from examination...  

Walker continued that, even though he also knew Dr. Johnson and admired him, he felt that Johnson was not above fair examination. He added that everyone who wrote a dictionary after Johnson copied from him. Words left out through accident by Johnson were not in Sheridan's Dictionary, as well as others. This plundering did not stop in England. It spread to America.  

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8Ibid.  
9Ibid., Preface, p. 6.  
10Joseph W. Reed, Wesleyan University, wrote an article, "Noah Webster's Debt to Samuel Johnson," published in American Speech, May, 1962. The article opens, "Borrowing—even plagiarism—is no sin to lexicographers." He describes the actual mechanics of Webster's compilation from Johnson and others.
William Kenrick published his Dictionary, marking the vowels by number, in 1773. Sheridan followed, picking up the idea of the numbered vowels, but added the extension of breaking a word into syllables and more of a tendency toward description, in 1780. William Scott in 1786 placed the pronunciation key in one line, for easy reference, on each page. Walker, in 1791, then published his Dictionary combining these three and the work of Johnson. (Kenrick, Sheridan, Scott and Johnson.)

The nineteenth century brought a forthright, and somewhat honest, lexicographer, Stephen Jones. It is believed his first edition was published in 1798. But at hand is his first American edition, published in Philadelphia in 1806. The title of his dictionary is A General Pronouncing Dictionary of the English Language, on the Plan of Mr. Sheridan. The Preface is to the "fifth edition." Stephen Jones incorporated a quotation from Walker on the back of the title page. The quotation gleaned from Walker and found on page 198 of this paper is almost verbatim. He has used this quotation to rationalize his own use of Sheridan. Stephen Jones devotes his preface to one Mr. Salmon who presumed to write what he called an abridgement of Mr. Sheridan's Dictionary. This luckless Mr. Salmon is the butt of a Shakesperean barb hurled by Jones: "What a monstrous fellow art thou, thus to rail on
one that is neither known to thee nor knows thee?" Then Jones tells that the Salmon work was not taken from Sheridan, but from his own "first and very imperfect Edition of the present work."\(^{11}\) Jones makes reference to his own second edition "that is now not available" in which he gave the reasons why he used the Sheridan Dictionary as a model.

I have elsewhere taken occasion to remark that on the useful invention of Mr. Sheridan a valuable Improvement had been made by Mr. Walker, whose Dictionary is a work of much labour and merit. Though entertaining, however, a high respect for the talents of this latter Gentleman, yet I presume to think it will appear in the course of the following pages, that even his work did not establish English Orthoepy beyond the possibilities of still newer approaches to accuracy.\(^{12}\)

Jones points out the reasons why he chose Sheridan's work over Walker's. Mainly it would seem that Sheridan pioneered in sounds, the breaking of words into syllables, and an easy approach through description. Walker failed to expand these things, being content to use them intact. Errors in Sheridan's Dictionary were not corrected by Walker. Jones said that Sheridan's basic work did not get proper treatment from Walker. Jones believed Walker to be wrong about the diphthongal sounds in words like boy, and house. Jones, himself, has gone

\(^{11}\)Stephen Jones, Dictionary, Preface, p. 3.

\(^{12}\)Stephen Jones, Dictionary, Advertisement.
down in history for showing that there was a fourth sound of the letter a. Where Sheridan had used the three sounds of a as in the words "hat, hate, and hall," Jones expanded the use of a to include the "Italian a." His words to demonstrate the four sounds of the letter a were "at, ale, all, and art." History has shown Sheridan either neglectful, or lacking in phonetic discrimination. Jones was correct.

The weaknesses that Sheridan found in the English spelling alphabet seem to have remained to plague us today. He found many faults had crept into it when the Roman alphabet came into general use throughout Europe. He found twenty-six letters, divided into five vowels and twenty-one consonants. His findings were that some sounds were not represented. Further, there were two superfluous letters, 6 and 9. He felt that the letter h was not a letter but merely a mark of aspiration. He also claimed that the letters j and x are compounds. He explained that the former takes the place of dzh, and that the latter is sounded as either ks or ge. He went on in commenting that i and u are pronounced as diphthongs. To recapitulate his problem he subtracted the five consonants and two vowels to find that he had an alphabet of nineteen letters that were made to represent twenty-eight simple sounds. Most
of today's phoneticians show over forty, but disagree on exactitude.

He constructed a chart of vowel sounds that he said dictionary users should get by heart. To do this he footnotes the admonition that they should copy his chart accurately to memorize it. He classified the vowels into three groups of sounds, so that when written or printed, the number of their class would be above the vowel sound intended. This manner of indicating how to pronounce a vowel was original with Kenrick and its use was made practical by Sheridan. This was a giant step toward phonetics as the study is known today.

The word phonetics does not appear in any of Sheridan's works. John Hart (?-1574) is acknowledged by R. W. Albright as probably the first English writer to deal with phonetic problems in a systematic way. He wrote of pronunciation. Robert Robinson wrote The Art of Pronunciation in 1617. John Wilkins (1614-1672) and Wm. Halder (1616-1698) wrote in the seventeenth century. There is no mention of any writer in the area of phonetics in the eighteenth century. Albright skips to the nineteenth century.

The three sounds he heard from the use of the letter $a$ were given the words, hat, hate, and hall. Sheridan heard duplication of sounds. For instance to him the sound of $a$ in hate, and the $e$ in bear were the same, as were the $e$ in beer and the $i$ in field. He found eight duplications of sounds in the above chart. By striking out the extra letters that he deemed to be duplications he came up with nine vowel sounds. These he was able to construct upon a line:

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3 1 2 3 2 3 1 1 1
hall hat hate beer note noose bet fit but
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These are the key words to the vowel sounds that Thomas Sheridan used to assist in the pronunciation of the English language in his Dictionary.
A GENERAL
PRONOUNCING AND EXPLANATORY
DICTIONARY
OF THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE:
FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS, FOREIGNERS LEARNING ENGLISH,
IN WHICH IT HAS BEEN ATTEMPTED TO IMPROVE
ON THE PLAN OF MR. SHERIDAN;
The Discordancies of that celebrated Orthoepist being avoided, and his Improveries corrected.

BY STEPHEN JONES,
Author of the "New Biographical Dictionary" and "The History of Poland."

FIRST PHILADELPHIA EDITION.

"Negligent Speech doth not only discredit the Person of the Speaker, but it discredits the
"Opinion of his Reason and Judgment."

PHILADELPHIA:
PRINTED FOR AND SOLD BY BENNETT AND WALTON,
NO. 31, MARKET-STREET.
J. RICHEN, PRINTER.
1806.
The consonants are given similar treatment. He started with \textit{eb, ed, ef, eg, ek, el, em, en, ep, er, es, et, ev, ez, eth, eth, esh, ezh, ing}. Then he dropped the superfluous \textit{c} and \textit{q}, as well as \textit{h}, the non-letter, and the compounds \textit{\textup{j} and \textup{x}}. He wrote \textit{eth} explaining that he did place a "stroke" through the symbol to show that it was the Greek \textit{theta} sound, as in the word \textit{thin}, the other \textit{eth} being the first sound in the word \textit{then}. He gave \textit{ezh} as usually being represented by \textit{\textup{z}} as in \textit{azure}. His consonant sounds then became nineteen as shown at opening of this paragraph.

Section II "Of the Nature and Formation of the Simple Sounds" further classifies vowel and consonant sounds. His examples of long vowels are in the words \textit{hall, hat, hate, beer, note, and noose}. They are necessarily long, but they have the property to be prolonged, \textit{ad libitum}. Short vowels are exemplified in the words, \textit{bet, fit, and but}. They are incapable of being prolonged, it is difficult to pronounce them separately, and their true sounds can be pointed out only in syllables when they are united to subsequent consonants.

Going further, Sheridan classified consonants as being Mutes or Semivowels. Mutes may not be prolonged and are six in number: \textit{eb, ed, eg, ek, ep, and et}. The Mutes, divided into pure and impure, become classified by their
characteristic of being prolonged or not. Pure mute consonant sounds are \( ek, ep, et \). The impure mutes may be continued, though for a short space. The impure mute consonant sounds are \( eb, ed, eg \).

Semivowels were divided into vocal and aspirated. Those classed as vocal are "formed by voice" and they are \( el, em, en, er, ev, ez, eth, ezh, ing \) (9). These semivowel consonant sounds, like the vowels, are sub-divided into pure and impure for the same reason. The pure semivowel consonant sounds are formed entirely by the voice. They are five in number: \( el, em, en, er, ing \). The impure are \( ev, ez, eth, ezh \), and as such have a mixture of breath with voice. The aspirated semivowels are \( ef, es, eth, esh \).

Sheridan went further in his classification of consonant sounds. This was done according to the location of their source as sounds, and how formed. Whether the sounds were made by the lips, teeth, or formed by the palate or nose, called for him to use the terms: labial, dental, palatine, and nasal.

The labial, four \( eb, ep, ef, ev \)
Dental, eight \( ed, et, eth, eth, ez, ess, esh, ezh \)
Palatine, four \( eg, ek, el, er \)
Nasal, three \( em, en, ing \)

To explain this chart, he compared the above sounds in pairs. Sounds \( eb \) and \( ep \), being formed exactly the same,
but in **eb** the lips touch gently at first so as not to prevent sound from issuing, and then closed until the voice intercepts. With **ep** the lips are forcibly pressed together to prevent issuance of sound. He called these the only genuine labials. The sounds **ef** and **ev** are partially labial, and partially dental. They also are formed alike. The difference again is the addition of voice and breath mixed for **ev** and **ef** by the breath only.

The act of the formation of the dentals is nearest to the lips. While forming **ed** and **et** the tip of the tongue is pressed against the upper gums, almost touching the teeth. Again the difference between **eb** and **ep** is that **eb** can be continued, **ep** can not. In forming **ed** the tongue first only gently touches the gum and is gradually pressed closer till the sound is entirely obstructed. By pressing the tongue forcibly at once and closely pressed to the gum, the sound of **et** is made.

The sounds **eth** and **eth** are both formed in the same manner, that is, by placing the tip of the tongue through the teeth and pressing it against the upper teeth. Again the difference is **eth** is formed by breath only, while **eth** results from breath and voice.

**ESS** and **ez** are formed in the same manner. By turning up the tip of the tongue towards the upper gums, but so as not to touch them; and thus the breath and voice
being cut by the sharp point of the tongue and passing through the narrow chink left between that and the gums, are modified into that hissing sound in ess.\textsuperscript{14} By adding voice to the breath while repeating this act the result is ez.

The related sounds of esh and ezh are formed by protruding the tongue toward the teeth, being careful not to touch them, and thus the voice and breath passing over it through a wider chink, and not being cut by it on account of its flat position and yields a less sharp sound than ess and ez. Breath alone brings esh, breath and voice bring ezh.

Palatine sounds el and er are formed at a point a little behind ed and et. By placing the end of the tongue in the roof of the mouth, gently applying the tongue a little behind the point where ed was produced is el. The pressure must be as soft as possible so as not to intercept the sound. In this position the voice glides gently over the sides of the tongue, which are in a horizontal posture, in a straight line through the mouth. At about the same position, but with the tip of the tongue between the upper and under jaw, without touching either, the same distance from the teeth, the er sound is formed.

By raising the middle of the tongue so as to touch the roof of the mouth, back towards the palate, the sounds eg and ek are formed. The only difference is that in eg the tongue is not so closely pressed at first but that the sound may be continued for a while; then in ek the voice is somewhat as above in ed and et.

The three consonants em, en, and ing make up the final class of consonant sounds. He called it nasal, on account of the sound's issuing through the nose. The sound em is made in the same manner as eb, except that the voice thus stopped at the lips, is permitted to pass through the nose. The sound en is performed similarly to el, only there is more use of the tongue being placed more closely to the roof of the mouth. This stops the issuance of sound by forcing the greater part of it through the nose.

All of this description of the technology of the formation of sounds is probably the greatest contribution Sheridan made to the dictionary through pronunciation. Together with the breaking up of words into syllables, spelling words as they sound, and this, the description of the formation of the vowel and consonant sounds are Sheridan's pioneer contribution to the pronunciation of the English language. In his Dictionary this is followed by a one page summary which he calls "Scheme of the
Alphabet." This same scheme is lifted intact by Stephen Jones in his Philadelphia edition of his Dictionary, printed in 1808. Here, then, lies the foundation for the Dictionary at your elbow.

Sheridan spoke next of diphthongs. He said that two sounds usually passed as simple sounds are in reality diphthongs: \( i \) as in sight, and \( u \) as in blue. He analyzed \( i \) as being composed of the sound \( a \) as in hall and \( e \) as in beer. By close attention to the forming of the sound, it is found that it is really two sounds succeeding each other closely and made together. Actually the sound \( u \) is \( e \) and \( o \) in the same fashion. A third diphthong, \( oi \) or \( oy \) is formed by a union of the sounds \( a \) and \( e \). The fourth diphthong \( ou \) or \( ow \), as in house or how, is a combination of \( a \) and \( o \). All other diphthongs of English are formed by the short sounds of \( o \) and \( e \) marked by the characters \( w \) and \( y \), preceding all other vowels and combining with them.

In comparing the proper pronunciation of English with French, Sheridan showed a similarity in the production of diphthongal sounds. He added, though, that the French never have occasion to stick their tongues through their teeth as they speak. Of a consequence, they must receive special instruction relative to the formation of all th sounds.
A RHETORICAL GRAMMAR.

SCHEME OF THE ALPHABET.

Number of simple Sounds in our Tongue 28.

9 Vowels, a a e i o u

hall hat hate beer note nose bet fit but

w short oo flipart ee

19 Consonants, eb ed ef eg ek el en ep er es et ev ez eth egh ezh ing.

2 Superfluous, c, which has the power of ek or egh;

q, that of ek before u.

2 Compound, js, which stands for egh.

x, for ki or gz.

1 No letter, b, merely a mark of aspiration.

Consonants divided into Mutes and Semivowels.

6 Mutes, eb ed eg ek ep et.

3 Pure Mutes, ek ep et.

3 Impure, eb ed eg.

13 Semivowels, ef el em en cr efs ev ez eth egh ezh ing.

9 Vocal, el em en er ev ez eth ezh ing.

4 Aspirated, ef efs eth egh.

Divided again into

4 Labial, eb ep ev ef.

8 Dental, ed et eth egh ez efs egh ezh.

4 Palatine, eg ek el er.

3 Nasal, em en ing.

SECTION III.

Of Diphthongs.

HAVING examined all the simple sounds in our tongue, I shall now proceed to the double and founds or diphthongs.

There are two of our diphthongs which have usually passed for simple sounds, because they are for the most part marked by single characters, which are i and u, as founded in the words fight, blue;
the sounds given to those vowels in repeating our alphabet. But in reality they are perfect diphthongs. The sound ı is composed of the fullest and flendest of our vowels, ă and ĕ; the first made by the largest, and the latter by the smallest aperture of the mouth. If we attend to the process in forming this sound, we shall find that the mouth is first opened to the same degree of aperture, and is in the same position as if it were going to sound ă; but before the voice can get a passage through the lips, the under jaw is drawn near to the upper in the same position as when the vowel ĕ is formed; and thus the full sound, checked by the slender one, and coalescing with it, produces a third sound, different from both, which is the diphthong ĕ.

The diphthong ĕ of the sounds ĕ and ě; the former so rapidly uttered, and falling so quickly into the sound ě, that its own distinct power is not heard; and thus a third sound or diphthong is formed by the junction of the two vowels.

The diphthong oi or oy is formed by a union of the same vowels as that of ě; that is ě ĕ; with this difference, that the first vowel ě, being dwelt upon, is distinctly heard before its sound is changed by its junction with the latter vowel ĕ; as Ĕi, noise.

The diphthong ou or ow is composed of the sounds ě and ě; and is formed much in the same manner as ě; the mouth being at first in the position of sounding ě, but before that sound is perfected, by a motion of the under jaw and lips to the position of sounding ĕ, the first sound ě is checked and blended with the latter ĕ, from which results the diphthong ou or ow, as in shou, now.

All the other diphthongs of our tongue are formed by the short sounds of ě and ĕ marked by the characters w and y, preceding all the other vowels and combining with them. As thus,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>w or short ě</th>
<th>y or short ĕ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>widt</td>
<td>-yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wéd</td>
<td>ydě</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wlt</td>
<td>yon'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ú</td>
<td>yōke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>word</td>
<td>youth'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SECTION IV.

Of the Manner of forming certain Sounds.

It will be necessary for all who wish to pronounce English properly, to make themselves perfect in all the simple sounds and diphthongs enumerated and explained above, before they proceed any farther. And more particularly foreigners should be constantly exercised in those sounds which are peculiar to the English, and are not found in their own tongues. For which purpose I shall point out such sounds as the French have not, that being a language generally spoken by foreigners.

In the French tongue are to be found the sounds of all our vowels, and all our consonants except eth, ıth, and ing. I have already described the mode of forming the two sounds of ıth and ıth, but as these are the peculiar sounds which scarce any Frenchman or foreigner can conquer, I shall be more full in my directions about them. It must be observed then, that in the French tongue all the articulations are formed within the mouth, and the tongue is never protruded beyond the teeth; consequently, unless they are told to do it, they will never of themselves place the organ in a position that
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that it never had been in before; so that when they are urged to pronounce that new sound, as in the word *then*, without having the mechanism of the organs pointed out to them, they naturally utter the sound that is nearest to it in their own tongue, and call it *den*; in like manner they pronounce *thin*, *tin*; changing *eth* to a *d*, and *eth* to a *t*. And this they continue to do all their lives in all words containing those sounds, for want of being informed of the following plain simple method of necessarily producing those sounds, if it be but readily followed. Suppose then you were desirous of showing a foreigner how he should form the sound *eth* when it begins a word or syllable. Desire him to protrude the tip of his tongue between his teeth and somewhat beyond them; in that position let him press it against the upper teeth without at all touching the under; then let him utter any voice with an intention to sound the word *then*, and draw back the tongue at the same time behind his teeth, and the right sound will necessarily be produced. To pronounce the *eth*, the organs must be exactly in the same position, but previous to the withdrawing of the tongue, instead of any voice, he must emit breath only, which will as certainly produce the word *thin*.

When these sounds end a word or syllable, as in the words *breathe*, *breath*, he must be told, that instantaneously after sounding the preceding letters, he is to finish the word by applying the tip of the tongue to the edge of the upper teeth as before; and in sounding the word *breathe*, the voice is to be continued to the end; whilst in that of *breath*, the voice is cut off at the vowel, and the consonant *th* is formed by the breath only. In both cases it will be of use to continue the tongue in the same position for some time after the formation of the letter, at the same time prolonging the sound of the voice in the former, and of the breath in the latter, till by practice the sounds become familiar.

The consonant marked by *ing*, is perhaps peculiar to the English language. There is a sound in the French nearly approaching to it, to be found in such words as *dent* or *camp*, and in all their nasal vowels. The only difference between them is, that in forming the French sounds, the tongue does not touch the roof of the mouth as in producing the English *ing*, though in other respects it be in a similar position. If therefore a foreigner wants to produce this sound, he has only to raise the middle of his tongue into a gentle contact with the roof of his mouth in pronouncing any of the nasal vowels; and in this way the French nasal vowel founded in the word *dent* will be converted into the English consonant heard in the word *ding-dong*.

With regard to diphthongs, the English have several not to be found in the French tongue. Of this number are the first four enumerated above, viz. *i, ii, ei or ey, and eu or eu*. There is a sound in the French somewhat resembling our *i*, to be found in such words as *vin*, *fine*, but that there is a difference between them will be immediately perceptible by sounding after them our words *vines*, *fine*. And the difference consists in this, that their diphthong is formed of the vowels *à i*, and ours of the vowels *a i*; so that in order to produce that sound, you are to direct a foreigner to open his mouth as wide as if he were going to pronounce *à*, and meant to found that vowel; but on the first effort of the voice for that purpose, to check its progress by a sudden motion of the under jaw towards the upper, flopping it in that situation in which the sound *é* is formed, and then instantly cutting off all sound. Thus as the sound of *à* is not completed, nor the sound of *é* continued, there results from the union of the two a third sound or diphthong, which has no resemblance to either, and yet is a compound of both.

Our diphthong *à* has also a sound that resembles it in French, to be found in the words *Dieu*, *mieu*; but the difference will instantly be perceived by sounding after them our words *dew*, *mew*; and it consists in this, that their diphthong terminates in the French vowel *eu*, a sound which
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which we have not in our tongue, and is therefore found very hard to be formed by English organs; and ours terminates in å. To form it properly therefore, a foreigner is to be told that it is composed of the sounds å and é, the first sound not completed but rapidly running into the last; and he is to consider it as ending in the French ou, not œ. Our pronoun you is an exact representation to a French eye of the sound of å.

To form the diphthong oi or oy it is necessary to pronounce the full sound of å, dwelling some time on the vowel, before the sound is intercepted by the motion of the under-jaw, to the position of forming the slender sound é, and then the voice is instantly to cease. This diphthong differs from that of i only in this, that the first vowel å is distinctly heard, before it unites with the latter vowel é. This diphthong is represented two ways, either by oi or oy, as in noise, boys.

To produce the diphthong au or aw, as in out, ow, it is necessary that there should be the greatest aperture of the mouth as if it were about to form the sound å; but before that sound is completed the organs are to change to the position of pronouncing é, by a rapid motion of the under-jaw towards the upper, and protruding the lips in the form of sounding é, at the same time stopping the voice short; and thus, as in the diphthong i, by having neither the sound of the former or latter vowel completed, there arises from the coalescence of the two, a third sound different from both, which is the diphthong au or aw.

All the other diphthongs in our tongue are formed by the short sounds of å and é, represented by the characters w and y, and combining with all the other vowels when they precede them in the same syllable.

To instruct foreigners in the true pronunciation of these, it will be only necessary to inform them that our w answers exactly in sound and power to the French ou, when it forms a diphthong. As for instance, our pronoun we is individually the same sound as their affirmative ou; and the mistake which they constantly commit of sounding that letter like a w, has been owing to their not being informed of the true nature of the sound, and taking up their idea of it from the character which represents it, wherein two interwoven wes w are exhibited to view: but if in all diphthongs commencing with that letter they will place their lips in the position of forming the French ou, or English å, they cannot fail of producing the proper sound.

In like manner, all diphthongs formed by our y are to be considered by them as answering to those formed either by their i, as in the words minee, viande, bien; or their y, as in the last syllables of the words voyage, royauté, moyen.

Besides those which I have enumerated and described, there is a vast variety of combinations of vowels in our tongue, which have been most absurdly called diphthongs by our grammarians, when in reality they are only so many different ways of representing the same simple sounds of our vowels. To distinguish such from the true diphthongs, which means double-sounding, I shall take the liberty of coining a new word, and shall call them digraphs, or double written.

SECTION

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Section V of the "Rhetorical Grammar" is titled "Of the Use and Abuse of Letters in spelling or representing Words." This is followed by four rules for spelling. If pursued these rules would result in a perfect phonetic language. Thus, Sheridan described the perfect language that still has not been implemented in the modern world.

1. No character should be set down in any word which is not pronounced.
2. Every distinct simple sound should have a distinct character to mark it, for which it should uniformly stand.
3. The same character should never be set down as the representative of two different sounds.
4. All compound sounds should be marked only by such characters as will naturally and necessarily produce those sounds, upon their being pronounced according to their names in the alphabet.  

These rules applied in Old Greece and Rome. In English all of these rules are either frequently violated or totally disregarded. Indeed, little or no assistance may be derived from books concerning pronunciation. The art of reading properly requires the labor of many years. The main cause of this is a defective alphabet. Referring to his Lectures on Elocution he remarked that little or no effort has been made to correlate the written and spoken language. When the basis of education rests wholly with a written language it is just as though they were dependent

15 Ibid., p. 13.
upon the darkest hieroglyphics. There is too much confusion from this and other causes.

There follows lists of vowels which are pronounced in a variety of ways. Sheridan shows six spellings for the sound \( a \) (hat). There are eight different spellings for the sound \( a \) (hate) and nine under \( a \) (hall). He claims that these are confusions due to the continued use of the defective Latin alphabet. Continuing through the vowel sounds he lists multiple spellings for the sounds \( e \), \( o \), \( o \), \( i \), \( u \), \( u \). He then presented a list of vowel sounds spelled the same but pronounced differently, such as there and here. He next took up the consonant sounds noting the various means of expressing the same sound. Noted are the \( f \) sounds, also spelled \( ph \) and \( gh \). Eleven consonant sounds are shown to have alternate spellings: \( b \), \( c \), \( f \), \( g \), \( j \), \( s \), \( t \), \( x \), \( th \), \( ch \) and \( gh \). This leads to a thorough and exhaustive discussion of each consonant, its use alone, its uses with other consonants, with vowels and comparisons with French.

Section Three closed with lists of consonant digraphs to be compared with vowel digraphs. Some of the consonant digraphs that he took up were \( bt \), \( ck \), \( gn \), \( gu \), \( gm \), \( ch \) (two pronunciations) \( gh \) and \( wh \).

Section Four is called "Rules for the Pronunciation of English Words" and begins with monosyllables.
The general rule for the pronunciation of monosyllables ending in single consonants is that they have their accent or stress on the consonant. In that case, the vowels, with few exceptions, have their first sounds as marked in the "Scheme of the Alphabet" (p. 220, supra). Sheridan is saying that in one-syllable words, with few exceptions, the accent is on the consonant, and the vowel sound will be one of five: hat, bet, sit, not, but.

There may be any number of letters in the word from two to five: am, led, spit, strop, struck. To this rule Sheridan affixes these exceptions:

1. When a precedes r, the accent is on the vowel: car, bar, far.
2. The vowels e and i before r change their sound to that of u as in her, stir, sir.
3. The vowel e has the sound of i in yes (yis) o that of u in son (sun) and u has its second sound in put.

This is but the beginning of rules that Sheridan synthesized from his vast warehouse of the correct pronunciation of English. Under the heading of "Monosyllables ending in more consonants than one," he shows that double consonants at the end of a word are sounded as one.

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16 It is believed by the author that the one-syllable word of nine letters, seven sounds, strengths, is the longest in the English language.

Further, the two consonants do not change the pronunciation of the vowel, such as *add, staff, less*. One exception is *bass* as used in music. This vowel is the second sound of a (*hate*).

There follows rules for *a*, and their exceptions, *e, i, o, and u* coming in their due time. Next he took up monosyllables ending in the mute *e*. Considerable space is given to "Monosyllables ending in Vowels that are pronounced." It is of interest to know that no English monosyllable ends in a pronounced, except the particle itself. When *a* does end a monosyllable, such as *pea, tea, sea, plea*, it merely marks that the vowel *e* is used in its third sound (*beer*). The vowel *e*, when single, is never pronounced at the end of any monosyllable except in the words *he, she, we, me, ye*, and *be*, pronounced in its third sound. The vowel *i* is never seen at the end of any English word, and is only to be found in some technical terms, and foreign words, having its place supplied by *y*, as in the words *try, fry, shy*, always pronounced in monosyllables using the second sound of *i* (*sight*). The vowel *o* ends no monosyllables but the following: *bo, go, ho, lo, so, wo, tho*, *who, two, do, to* and *fro, pro* and con. A single *u* never ends a monosyllable in English.

Monosyllables that end in two vowels use but one vowel sound. These Sheridan called digraphs. He then
lists these digraphs at the end of monosyllables as, ay, aw, ea, ee, ey, ie, oe, oo, ou (also a diphthong), and ue (sometimes silent after g, and shows that g is hard, also silent after q).

The digraphs that begin monosyllables are ai, au, aw, ea, ee, ei, ey, oa, oo, ow. It will be found that oi and ou are always true diphthongs at the beginning of monosyllables. Examples, oil, out.

The greatest number of digraphs in monosyllables occur in the middle.

ai is always pronounced a (hate); except said (sed)

au is sometimes a, as in caught, fraud, vaunt. But it is hâunt, drâught (drâft), lâugh, jâunt, flâunt, stâunch.

aw is always a.

ay is always a (day) except says (sez)

ea generally is e, leaf, speak, except some words ending in d, dead, head, bread, dread, lead, read, stead, tread. Other words ending in d follow the general rule, plead, read, etc.

r exceptions: bears, pear, tear, wear, swear.

Others ending in r follow the general rule, dear, near, spear.
t exceptions are sweat, threat, great which use the first two sounds of e. All others use the third sound as in beer.

k exceptions are steak, break. All others are the third sound of e.

When ea is followed by two consonants it is generally pronounced e (bet) according to the established law that the accent is placed for the most part on the consonants; as, realm, dealt, search. Heart and hearth have the sound of a (hat). There are three exceptions:

1. Words ending in ch, as teach, preach, which conform to the general rule.
2. Words ending in st, as beast, feast, except breast.
3. Words ending in th, as heath, sheath, wreath, and with final e, breathe.

eee is always e as in bleed, steel, fleet, except been sounded as bin.

ei is pronounced e, feign, heir, except height and sleight, which are sounded as hitte and slitte.

ew is pronounced u, lewd, stew'd, etc., except shew'd and shewn, uttered shod and shon.

ie is pronounced e, grief, field, fiend. Exceptions: friend, fierce (sounded fierce), pierce, tierce and sieve, pronounced siv.

oa is o, boat, load, groan. Exceptions, broad, great; a.
oo is o, fool, poor, cool. Exceptions are hood, good, stood, wood, all pronounced as u. Door and floor as o, and blood and flood pronounced as u.

ou is generally a diphthong as in loud, gout. Exceptions are cough (cوقف), rough (رفع), tough (توقف), scourge, touch, young; four, mourn, mould, court, though, dough, source, all o; through, your, youth, wound, are o; could, should, would, are u. Bought, brought, fought, nought, sought, thought, are a.

ow has the sound of o in bowl, rowl, and in all the preterits and participles of monosyllabic verbs ending in ow, as flow’d, flown, grown, except only the verbs to cow, vow, plow, where it is a diphthong, and is on all other occasions, as brown, fowl, etc.

ua in guard is a digraph and the u is silent; but after q it is always a diphthong, as squall, quart, etc.

ue is a digraph after g as in guess, guest, but a diphthong after q as in quest.

ui is a digraph in build, built, guilt, with the sound of i. Quilt is a diphthong. Guide, guile, written gyide, gyile, with diphthong sounds.
Juice, bruise, cruise, fruit, are digraphs with the sound o. Suit, as if written syot, a diphthong.

w in the middle of a syllable always forms a diphthong with the following vowel, as in swain, twice, and is never found but after the consonants s, t, and th.

y is never found in the middle of syllables with a vowel following it in the same syllable, as its place in forming diphthongs in that situation is always supplied by the vowel i.

Here, then, are the rules for pronunciation that Sheridan repeatedly said existed nowhere else. He has covered every aspect of the pronunciation of monosyllables that he could. It is of great interest to see how few changes have occurred in pronunciation, and even fewer in spelling, since 1780.

Section VIII concerns dissyllables. Sheridan began this section by reviewing. This is characteristic of him. Accent, then, meant no more than a certain stress of the voice upon one letter of a syllable that distinguishes it from other letters in a word. The pronunciation of English is regulated by accent. In monosyllables this may be called the accented letter. In polysyllables the syllable so distinguished is called the accented syllable. In monosyllables, accent may be on either vowels or consonants.
When it is on the consonant, the vowels have uniformly their first sound, the exceptions being only when vowel sounds are substituted. When the accent is on a vowel, it sometimes has its second or sometimes its third sound, never its first sound, excepting the vowel _a_ in a few instances.

These same rules apply to the accented syllables of all other words. In order to ascertain the pronunciation of those words, the first object must be to point out the means of discovering which is the accented syllable.

Starting with dissyllables:

Almost all simple dissyllables have the accent on the first, and those which have it on the last are for the most part compound words, made by a prefix or preposition chiefly borrowed from the Latin; such as, _ab_, _ac_, _ad_, _at_, _com_, _con_, _de_, _dif_, _em_, _en_, _e_, _ex_, _im_, _in_, _ob_, _op_, _per_, _pre_, _pro_, _re_, _se_, _sub_, _sur_, _trans_, etc. To these there are some exceptions. Examples: _abhor_! _admit_! _affirm_! _commence_, _conduct_, _deceive_, _disarm_, _embark (imbark)_!, _enchant (inchant)_!, _exalt_, _empair_, _incite_, _obscure_, _oppose_, _permit_, _oppose_, _permit_! _propose_, _recant_, _seclude_, _submit_! _survey_, _transform_.¹⁸

Besides these, there are the following of English origin: _a_, _be_, _for_, _fore_, _mis_, _out_, _un_. Examples are: _1_ _3_ _1_ _2_ _1_ _a base_, _be fo're_, _for get_! _fore wa'rn_, _misgiv'e_, _out do_; _1_ and _una'rm_. All words compounded of the prefixes have the accent on the last syllable, for the most part.

¹⁸Ibid., Sec. VIII.
Where the verb and the noun are expressed by the same word, the nouns have frequently the accent on the first, and the verbs on the last, syllable. Sheridan inserts a list of forty-four nouns and verbs spelled alike but pronounced differently. Example: ab\textsuperscript{str}act as a noun, ab\textsubscript{str}act as a verb; con\textsuperscript{duct} as a noun and con\textsubscript{duct} as a verb. Except for this list, almost all other words in the same predicament have their accent the same.

The rule placing the accent on the last of compound dissyllables refers chiefly to verbs and such nouns as are listed. In other nouns and other parts of speech the general law places the accent on the first syllable. Example: concord, conquer, dismal, distant. Even in words formed with the English prefix out the accent is placed on the last syllable of verbs only, as out\textsuperscript{do}, out\textsubscript{bid}. On other words it is on the first syllable: out\textsuperscript{'cry}, out\textsuperscript{'rage}. Some compound verbs have the accent on the first syllable: per\textsuperscript{'jure}, in\textsuperscript{'jure}, con\textsuperscript{'jure} and others.

"Rules for finding out the Letter on which the Accent is laid in Dissyllables" is the next matter for discussion. When two consonants are found together in the middle of such words the first of these is usually joined to the first vowel, and the last to the latter. In this case the accent is on the former consonant. Example: ab\textsuperscript{'sent}, am\textsuperscript{ber}, dis\textsuperscript{cord}. This is always the
case when the consonant is doubled: 'ad'ler, baf'le, 
beg'gar, bet'ter, cher'ry, col'lege [Exceptions to this 
are verbs with prefixes as shown on page 232 supra]. 

When there is but one consonant in the middle, the 
accent generally falls on the preceding vowel, diphthong, 
or digraph: as, a'gue, a'udit, bi'ble, boo'ty, ci'der, 
cru'el, dow'er, etc. Sometimes the single consonant is 
taken into the first syllable and accented: as, blem'ish, 
cher'ish, hab'it, fam'ish, pal'ace. The number of these 
words is not great so they must be learned through use. 

When the accent is on the last syllable its seat 
may be known by observing the same rules laid down for 
monosyllables (see above). 

The accent of polysyllables is chiefly determined 
by the final syllable. According to Sheridan he called 
the final syllable, the last syllable. He then used the 
Latin terms penultima and antepenultima to designate the 
one that precede. He used fourth and fifth to designate 
the ones that come ahead of these. Then he explained the 
pronunciations, and exceptions, of words ending in ic, ed, 
ance, ence, ble, cle, dle, fle, gle, kle, ple, tile, ure, 
ate, ive, sive, ing, cal, ial, ful, ian, en, ion, sion, 
tion, er, or, est, ous, ant, ent, est, ist, y, ry, sy, and 
ty. He claimed that this list includes practically all of 
the words in the English language with two exceptions. One
group of exceptions is the words not reducible to general rules. Other deviations are those with so many exceptions as to render them of little use. Any endings not included in the list are most likely monosyllables and dissyllables and the general rules for them have been given. Where this has not been done the dictionary should be consulted.

At this point Sheridan wrote,

Having thus laboured through this chaos of spelling, and reduced the apparent confusion there to some degree of order, we shall now emerge into a more lightsome region where we shall have fewer difficulties to retard our progress. 19

Section VII is "Of the Art of Delivery." Delivery depends upon articulation, accent, pronunciation, emphasis, pauses or stops, tones and key or pitch of voice. He then took up each of these components individually and thoroughly.

Good articulation consists in giving every letter in a syllable its due proportion of sound, according to the most approved custom of pronouncing it, by making such a distinction between syllables of which words are composed so that the ear shall acknowledge their number to perceive at once to which syllable each letter belongs. If these points are not observed, articulation is proportionately defective.

19Ibid., Sect. VI, p. 38.
Distinctness of articulation depends upon being able to form the simple elements or letter by the organs of speech described here, and properly distinguishing these syllables from each other.

The chief cause of indistinctness is too great a precipitancy of utterance. To overcome this, one hour a day should be laid aside to practice reading aloud in a manner that is slower than necessary. This should be done in the presence of some person whose duty it is to remind the reader to adhere to his pace and keep him from falling into his old habit. This indistinctness of articulation arises from the language and unless care is taken it is difficult to be free from being affected. Since every word of over one syllable has one accented syllable, the word, when properly pronounced, will be different from all others, and be recognized. A further aid to good articulation is to pronounce the unaccented syllables more fully than is necessary until they are cured of all indistinctness.

In English, accent means a certain stress of the voice upon a particular letter of a syllable which distinguishes it from others. At the same time the syllable which distinguishes it from others compose the word. Thus, in the word hab'it the accent is on the letter b and distinguishes that letter from the others, and the first
sylable from the last. If more sylables are added it remains hab'it ab le. This does not hold for all words. For instance in the word rep Æte the accent is on the u, but if sylables are added it becomes rep'u tab le.

In English, every word of more than one sylable has one sylable distinguished from the rest by accent. Every monosylable has an accented letter. In the word hat it is the letter t and in hate it is the a that is accented. All English words have accent except the particles: a, the, to, in, etc., which are unaccented. And now it can be seen that as articulation is to sylables, accent is to words. If accent is not present there is nothing but a succession of sylables. The accent in English is simple when compared to ancient languages. The biggest distinction of English accent is that it may come on either a vowel sound or a consonant sound. When the accent is on the vowel sound it is long because the accent is made by dwelling upon the vowel. When it is on the consonant, the sylable is short because the accent is made by passing rapidly over the vowel and giving a smart stroke of the voice to the following consonant. Examples: add', bid', rod' and cub' are short due to the voice passing quickly over the vowel to the consonant. To show the opposite result examine the words: All, laid, bide, road, cube. When accenting the vowel, the voice dwells upon the
sound for some time. This point has wholly escaped notice by grammarians and dictionary compilers. They still follow the old Greek method of always placing the accent mark over a vowel. The Greeks had reason to use accent marks on vowels, for to them accent also meant a change of note (pitch) and could only be done on vowel sounds. But since accent consists of only stress, in English, it may fall upon either vowel or consonant. By using this system, compilers of dictionaries, vocabularies, and spelling books, must mislead not only provincials but foreigners in the pronunciation of one-half of the words in English. This practice leads to marking ded'i cate as de'di cate, pre cip'i tate as prec i'pi tate; and phe nom'e non as phe no'm en on. The Scots do pronounce thusly and thereby indicate their diversity with English. Sheridan said it was a pity that lexicographers had fallen into so gross an error. Marking accents in the right way is one of the most general and certain guides to true pronunciation of English.

Since all words of English have one accented syllable, some longer polysyllabals may have two accented syllables. One will be stronger and one will be fainter. To demonstrate: ex pos'i 'tu lat or'y. We find the pos is stronger than the or. This is called primary and secondary accent.
For the right use of accent in common discourse there is one rule. Care should be taken to lay the same accent upon the same letter of the syllable in both reading and in conversation. Do not lay stress on any other syllable. There are very few people who do not transgress this law of accent. They will say such things as för tüne, nà tûre, en ëro'ch ment', còn jeë tûre, pà tieënse, etc. This is not uttering words but syllables. Words when properly pronounced are always tied together by an accent, as för'tune, na'ture, en çro'ch ment, con jeë ture, pà'tience. To avoid this unnatural constrained air about speech, those who deliver speeches in public should pay close attention.

Pronunciation may be considered in a twofold light: first with regard to propriety; secondly, with regard to elegance. With regard to propriety it is necessary that each word should have its accent and each letter its proper sound. That is all that is required of pronunciation of words separately considered. This is the chief point treated in this grammar. With respect to elegance, beside propriety, the proportion of sound is to be taken with regard to the delivery of words as arranged in sentences.

Since there had hitherto been no method laid open for the attaining of propriety of pronouncing words, it is no wonder that the ornamental part has been entirely
neglected. The same thing that brings delight to the ear in articulating sounds is founded upon the like principle as that which pleases in musical composition. There is, then, the twofold reference in musical composition to time and sound. Sheridan gave them the prosodian names of quantity and quality. Consider quantity here, and quality later under another heading.

Sheridan pointed to the weakness of speakers, who, instead of accenting the vowel to make a syllable long, neglects to do so. Thus there is very little difference between long and short syllables. The whole proportional quantity of English is utterly destroyed and it also appears to be a rapid gabble of short syllables. To obviate this he recommended that everyone pay particular attention to every vocal syllable and to dwell upon it so long as to make it double the quantity of the short ones. Without this, speech must be deprived of its smoothness and harmony.

This now becomes a problem of prolonging sounds, mostly consonants. Some consonants are disagreeable when continued. Other consonants are pleasing to the ear. Of the agreeable sounds there are m, n, s, f, sh, zh, th, and th. Unpleasing to the ear are l, n, v, z, ing.
Rules to be observed in sounding the consonants:

1. None are to be prolonged except when the accent is upon them. In this case they are preceded by a short vowel, as, tell, can, love. When a long vowel precedes, the voice must dwell upon the vowel and take the consonant into the syllable in its shortest sound. If they were both dwelt upon the syllable would take up the time of two long sounds and would seem so: as vël, rāi n, brā ve, dāy s. In England there is a tendency to run the sound of the vowel into the following consonant too quickly.

2. Their sound is never to be prolonged, except in monosyllables, or final syllables of other words.

3. Neither consonant, nor vowel are to be dwelt upon beyond their common quantity, when at the end of a sentence.

4. When consonants begin a word, or a syllable, they must be sounded short, and a great care must be taken, that before their union with the following letter, they are not preceded by any confused sound of their own. Sometimes speakers make the s sound before, or after, its actual use. Foreigners have been critical in calling it a Hissing language. Actually English has fewer s sounds than either Greek or Latin. 20

Of Emphasis

As accent is to words, emphasis is to sentences. The linking of syllables together by accent is advanced by emphasis linking the members of a sentence together. As accent dignifies the syllable in which it is placed, and makes it more easily distinguished by the ear from the rest; so emphasis ennobles the word to which it belongs, and presents it in a stronger light to the understanding.

20Ibid., pp. 42-43.
Accent distinguishes one word from another without reference to the mutual relationships between words. Emphasis is the mark which points out the several degrees of relationship of words in their various combinations and the rank they hold in the mind. Where there is no accent, words resolve into their original syllables. Where there is no emphasis, sentences become the original words. One who hears either of these errors is painfully aware that he must struggle to hear the words, only to struggle again to establish meaning. But with the use of both accent and emphasis words and their meaning, being pointed out at their uttering, the hearer has nothing to do but listen. The hearer can keep pace with the speaker with a clear comprehension of the matter being considered.

Much to the prejudice of elocution, emphasis has been explained as just more forcible accent than ordinary. However, there is an absolute and constitutional difference between accent and emphasis. Every emphatic syllable is marked by a change of note in the voice besides a greater stress. To show why this is necessary we need merely to observe that the mind, in communicating its ideas, is in a continual state of activity, emotion, or agitation. Since the end of such communication is not merely enumerating ideas but also the speaker's feelings,
something besides words must be used. Words uttered in a monotonous state can only represent a similar state of mind.

All that passes in the mind of man may be reduced to two classes, ideas and emotions. All thoughts which rise and pass in succession in the mind of man are classed under idea by Sheridan. Emotions are more complicated. He explains them as "all exertions of the mind in arranging, combining, and separating ideas; the effects these produce upon the mind itself by those ideas, and from the more violent agitation of the passions, to the calmer feelings produced by the operation of the intellect and fancy." Thought is the object of ideas; internal feeling is the object of emotions. That which serves to express the former he refers to as the "language of ideas," while the latter is served by the "language of emotions."

Even though Sheridan wrote in complicated, involved and repetitive ways, he was pioneering in lexicography in a way never before done. Comments by contemporaries were probably honest and justified. He was copied while still alive as well as after his death. The painstaking work that he lavished on his Dictionary was worthwhile. The meticulous effort in delineating pronunciation set a standard that is still in use. It is regrettable that he has never received credit for his perception, nor his
ability to say what was on his mind. So few critics have been so well-armed with precise information and clarity of communication. Recent writers have done little but refine his ideas. Not one gives Sheridan credit for pioneering the pronouncing dictionary and the by-products of exhaustive rules.
PART IV

THOMAS SHERIDAN IN RETROSPECT
BETSY
SHERIDAN'S
JOURNAL

Letters from
Sheridan's sister
1784–1786
and
1788–1790

Edited by
William LeFanu

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They who apply their studies to preserve the memory of others, will always have some regard for their own.¹

The sixty-nine years that Thomas Sheridan spent on earth were periods of great personal achievement. He may have realized it, but it did not affect his zeal. Also, no one has been able to carefully place this man in his proper perspective. This work has attempted to show that he made contributions to British speech technology through his drive to pioneer, to be unafraid to give of himself to the cause in which he believed. There are so many instances of good ideas, innovations, and new presentations of old ideas that to summarize them here is almost to repeat them.

Sheridan was the first Englishman to publicly recommend that all education be based upon a thorough training in oral English. He would have started with a

¹Quoted by Thomas Sheridan in Preface to Dictionary, p. x.
few trained teachers and with the clergy. The teachers
would train other masters to teach students. The members
of the clergy would start putting good English into practi-
cal use. He would have had the clergy abstain from read-
ing their dull sermons, but to speak from the heart. He
believed in a controlled use of the voice in delivery,
contrary to the mechanistic elocution that existed at his
time.

Aristotle claimed that no one had done a good job
of presenting rhetoric, and Sheridan prefaced his books
with a similar approach. Since no one else had, the job
must be done, "here it is." And also as Aristotle had
done, he spoke much of what he was going to do about
delivery. Sheridan might have written more, but he did
not exhaust the subject.

Sheridan could just as easily be called a patriot
as any other name. He insisted that in order to perpetuate
the constitution and the government there must be an alert,
educated citizenry. The type of education in use in his
day was started two hundred years before by Roman Catholic
monks. It was suitable then, but the government and the
church had both changed. The present plan of education
was not compatible with the present government. Boys were
taught only in Latin and Greek. This was useless to them
for there was no practical value in these languages. Boys
with inadequate educations stirred the patriot into action. To complete their education, young men might go to the continent where it was not uncommon that they stayed. This was a drain on the young men that the patriot could not countenance. If they stayed in England they were not well trained for a profession or for the carrying on of business. Sheridan constructed a logical case as he pointed out the weaknesses of the educational system. But at no point could he be pointed out as an exploiter of his own activities. He worked for the common good of all as he fitted into his own scheme.

Sheridan, the patriotic optimist, began to show the incompatability of the existing educational system. As he did this he carefully built up the confidence of the English people as he presented his alternate plan. So, as he tore apart the Latin-Greek mode, he told the British people that they deserved something better, while describing step-by-step how to achieve a better educational system.

Students might do well to inspect definitions before getting involved in discussions of this period. For instance, the word orator meant a person who spoke in public. Oratory meant a speech that followed rhetorical rules. At some point since his day these words have taken on a more formal meaning. When Sheridan proposed the study of oratory he meant just what educators today propose when
curricula for General Education require a basic speech course. There is still a need to possess the use of the mother tongue in this country.

Sheridan would have had boys begin with oral English, then proceed to written, then to reading. This idea of Sheridan's has been put into use some time between Sheridan's day and today.

But what precedes all of this is the understanding of human beings that Sheridan possessed. First he knew the background of the weaknesses that he detected. He knew how to present his plans to the public. He knew how to remedy the condition by applying his plans to the current situation. He never lost sight of his objective to have Britons lift themselves out of their deplorable place in the education of their boys.

Sheridan must have been right when he alleged that the Parliament had never brought up the matter of the education of the youth of the day. He defined the good legislator as one who was less bent upon punishing than preventing crimes. He said that there must be a reason before embarking upon a campaign of reform. He explained that corruption could come about two ways: first, by those who do not observe the law, and secondly, by those corrupted by the law itself. He must have felt that the legislature had become stagnant through corruption.
As Sheridan proceeded through his books, British Education and A Plan of Education, he interpolated many sage observations. Many he referred to by giving two reasons or causes. An example is, in a well regulated state (1) the youth will be helped to become good members of society, and (2) youth will be helped to be of service in support of the government. Again we find the stability of a language will depend upon pronunciation (represented through speech) and meaning (represented through books).

He liked to build up little dependent structures to prove a point. Language is made up of words. Words have sense and sound. Sense is an intellectual faculty that allows one mind to communicate with another. Sound is the faculty of hearing and conveys sense. Sense is the soul of words; sound the body. Together they aid in the perfection of man. He then described words as having precision to insure that the same idea applies to both speaker and listener, while words have copiousness that a more perfect transcript may result. Sounds then are divided into qualities of distinction and agreeableness. A sound must be distinct in order not to be confused with other similar sounds, while in order to circumvent weariness and disgust of the listeners, agreeable words must be found that fall pleasingly on the listener's ear.
Sheridan was a real champion of the eloquent classical orators of Greece and Rome. Constant reference was made to their use of oral language. He was familiar with their heroes and quoted Cicero and Quintilian throughout his Plan. He felt that the British were ahead of these ancient peoples because of the printing press. He stressed that nothing would bring people together in unity more than a common language. This held the ancients together, and he could have quoted Genesis, chapter eleven, to make it more impressive. John Locke had written about this situation and felt that a return to the Spartan ways would be good. Sheridan felt that was not good for it required too much stress on physical rather than intellectual pursuits. John Milton would just do over the present system. Sheridan held out for a different aim. Stress the present mother tongue. He saw no reason why English could not become the much sought universal language. Since World War II and the advent of the United Nations his prophecy has come close to reality. His grounds for universality lay in the fact that there are different terminations of nouns for cases, genders, numbers, and the moods and tenses of words. Another inducement is that the order of words in a sentence may vary.

... "from common benevolence, the worse the parents are, the more pains ought to be taken with the
children, to prevent the contagion of their example."
Sheridan is quoted above on page 54 as saying this. He was assailing the educational system that had parents spending up to four times as much to have their dogs or horses trained as they did for their children. Ascham (pages 61 and 62 above) was quoted as saying that in the end these parents "find more pleasure in their horse, than comfort in the child." And all this time the pupils were taking the same courses, using the same books, submitting the same exercises. Sheridan said the system was like quack medicine because it cured all disorders. How could a boy who wanted to be in the clergy do so when he was never trained in speaking? Why should lawyers, doctors, clergymen, legislators, and army officers all study the same studies, turn in the same work, and leave at the same time? He claimed they could never function outside their own homes. But how could slow learners profit? Hold back the quick ones? Should they go at a pace that the slow ones got nothing out of education but a fast run through? The slow would have no chance to learn. If we tie all of the horses together at a race how could we set any track records? How could boys profit from this way of life?

Sheridan had pointed out some of the weaknesses and some of his ideas for improvement. He said that a skillful gardener would give up the incorrigible tree to
concentrate on the care of shaping the branches of the young saplings. A skillful surgeon probes to the bottom of a sore in order to effect a cure.

Sheridan's Plan was worthy, and much of it has been put into use. His granddaughter, Alicia Lefanu, wrote a book about her grandmother, Mrs. Frances Sheridan, in 1824. This was thirty-six years after Sheridan's death. There is not a great amount of information concerning Thomas Sheridan in it. On page 13 she includes that Mr. Sheridan "possessed a happy and agreeable manner of address towards those he wished to engage, which inspired them with a personal love for him." On page 14 she quotes an actor who worked under Sheridan, "In private life, when his labors blessed him with success, his great pleasure was in assisting his relatives and distressed friends." Then on the same page, a footnote quoting the Reverent Doctor Parr was quoted, "Mr. Sheridan never appeared to me opinionated or dictatorial. He was whimsical, but never opinionated; he was animated, but not dictatorial." Recounting the happenings of 1764, there is a note, "... we find Mrs. Sheridan accompanying her husband to Bath and Bristol, where he gave lectures on oratory."

What of Sheridan's life and health? He was always in debt, so moving to France was a measure of economy. Yet, Alicia Lefanu writes that he said, "I have had a long fit
of my old disorder." The next pages, 269 and 270, show the description of a severe oppression of the head and stomach, to which Mr. Sheridan was subject, and which is often the consequence of intense mental application. It was aggravated in after life by violent and repeated bilious attacks. This was entirely a bodily disorder, though of a nature as he describes it, to forbid for the time any degree of mental exertion. As to low spirits and gloom, though few had suffered severer disappointment than Mr. Sheridan, he possessed a mind remarkably free from such impressions. He had in general uniform and cheerful spirits, and an elasticity of mind that rose unsubdued from repeated infictions of misfortune.

In trying to establish the man Sheridan, why not include a Boswell story that was not found in his writings? Again it is Alicia Lefanu, pages 321 and 322, that yields the switch.

Mr. Sheridan did not pretend to the power of recommending persons immediately to court favor, but he was the first who mentioned the distress and merit of Dr. Johnson to Mr. Wedderburne, afterwards Lord Loughborough, who mentioned it to Lord Bute, by whose influence a pension was conferred on Johnson of three hundred pounds a year. . . . Boswell is quoted as telling this incident. . . . When I spoke to Lord Loughborough, wishing him to know if he recollected the prime mover in the business, he said, "all his friends assisted"; and when I told him that Mr. Sheridan asserted his claim to it, his Lordship said, "Sheridan rang the bell."

One other comment about Sheridan was made by Lord Edgworth.

There is an enthusiasm of the head, and that is genius; there is an enthusiasm of the heart, and that is virtue. There is also an enthusiasm of the temper.2

Sheridan's granddaughter connects these two quotes and adds her own salutation to the husband of her grandmother:

Of the first two species, the elder Mr. Sheridan had a considerable share; nor was he without a portion of the latter. And it was rewarded, although not exactly in the way which his sanguine wishes pointed. His ideas on education have gradually spread, and have been adopted in this country by all those who have either written for youth, or introduced new improvements in education. His plans, for which the times were unripe, have influenced every emelioration that has been since introduced in the early and difficult approach to learning. His simple, yet nervous eloquence, like a fertilizing stream, has enriched the minds of those who tasted it, with pure draughts of knowledge and literature, and with views the most liberal and praiseworthy; and (to quote a phrase applied to a former occasion), in all the modern works in which learning language has been placed in its thorns and difficulties, in which language has been placed in its clearest and most beautiful light, and the parental task of education simplified, the praise must be adjudged, in the first instance to him in whom such ideas all originated; and their authors gratefully acknowledge that "Sheridan rang the bell."

The reader should keep in mind that this book was written by a granddaughter who referred to her grandfather as Mr. Sheridan. And there may be those who wonder where the phrase "rang the bell" actually began.

As Sheridan moved forward in his written contributions to British speech technology, he said that England's greatest blessing in the eighteenth century was its "science." His dream was to fuse the arts of the early Greeks and Romans with the science of modern England. The
resulting product would at least be partially a cultural natural language known as living speech.

Sheridan proposed to write about delivery, or the oral presentation of speech. Good reading and speaking were scarce. To him the proper way to deliver a speech was the same as it would be done with just one other person listening. Speech in public should be similar to the speech of a private conversation. Winans first talked of this in the twentieth century. In this Sheridan said that all gesture and expression of countenance should vanish.

His argument was that there is a lesson for us in the ways that the blind and the deaf acquire language. Neither of these classes of people can understand how the other can communicate. They cannot communicate with each other. Neither have a conception of words independent of sounds. Sheridan then said that the illiterate person is similar to the blind person. They cannot comprehend how it is possible to make sounds visible to the eye. Sheridan added that when reading first became prevalent it was thought to be a supernatural power. But the illiterate man who learns language through hearing will always use a variety of tones as he speaks. His emotions will be

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reflected in his speech. He tells that some deaf are taught to speak, but they always use a monotone. This truth could hardly be stated more clearly or concisely.

Sheridan declared that the printed page interferes with communication. Theoretically a reader should be stimulated by the written words and give a good performance. Actually he does not. It takes study and repetitions to read well. Something partially memorized is not performed well. Extemporaneous speaking lends fluency and an easy command of words. Reading is a poor substitute for the extemporaneous speech. Even a good reader improves his performance by firmly fixing the words in his mind by rehearsal. He said that it takes even more than twenty repetitions of parts to get the right tones, looks and gestures. "One must practise in order to execute comedy lines, or any reading," Sheridan said.

Faults in articulation contracted early in life gain strength by habit. They grow incurable. This is partly due to inattention and partly due to a lack of skilled persons to remedy the evil after it has started. Parents do not think it necessary to help their infants to make their first attempts at sounds and words. Instead of starting with the easy sounds parents try to get them to pronounce difficult ones. This may affect the speech organs. From this may come stuttering, lisping, and a
total inability to pronounce certain sounds. A child that is urged to utter a sound that is either too difficult or impossible will hesitate. He will substitute another sound that is easier to pronounce, wholly omit the sound and pronounce the word, or alter the pronunciation to one that he finds easy for himself. Charles Van Riper has written that articulation defects may be substitutions, omissions, or distortions in this century.

Sheridan agreed with Quintilian that probably the child's first teacher was an aged woman ignorant of all of the rules of reading. They would teach the alphabet by putting letters and syllables together as they are written. So, if a boy had a speech defect, the teacher would not know what to do. The defect would thus remain hidden and the child would possess it for life. Even after going on to Latin school there was no stress put on articulation. The art of delivery would be overlooked. This could infect a man's articulation for life.

The biggest reason for poor articulation was said to be the rapidity with which a person spoke. The speed led to a lack of distinctness. Parental apathy is high on the list of evils, followed by schoolmasters, companions, and relatives who were used to their manner and could understand them. To overcome this Sheridan recommended that a person set aside an hour a day to practice reading
aloud slowly and more flowery than necessary. Some interested person should listen and help. The reader should not read to make sense lest he hurry during this phase.

Pronunciation refers to the way a person sounds the individual words. These are so minutely and carefully noted in the "Rhetorical Grammar" of the Dictionary that they should be studied and restudied to extract the extreme intelligence used to formulate them. In turn Sheridan explained in The Art of Reading how these things were accomplished.

Some of the findings of Sheridan that concerned accent are exhausting as he sizzled his critics. Where else has anyone written about accents being on either vowel or consonant sounds? And was Sheridan not right? He still wanted to hear sermons delivered in a manner befitting the interested listener. This British listener would be a better citizen if he heard a sermon correctly read from the pulpit.

Wallace A. Bacon, in Speech Monographs, Vol. XXXI, No. 1, 1964, in his article "The Elocutionary Career of Thomas Sheridan," noted on page 46 that

his principles of elocution lie somewhere at the roots of much of the present teaching of oral interpretation. Histories of education have too often passed him by, since he never actually founded a school; yet the principles of his projected academy often may be found behind sound current practices.
"The Rhetorical Grammar" contains so many inspirational items that to look at it piecemeal, or for highlights, can be but repetition. The main thought should be that Sheridan explains everything he mentioned elsewhere. It is truly the end of his journey. He is whimsical and a rascal at the same time. His humor is slight, but his sarcasm is biting. He utilized ideas of others but he did it better. Sheridan pioneered in waging war against archaic ideas of education. He pioneered in new ideas and emphasis in education. He pioneered in the ideas that elocution begins within a man and that to read or speak is to make sense. Sheridan went to great length in pioneering exactly how to pronounce the sounds and words of English correctly. His innovations were needed and have lasted. When the comment that "The Dictionary" was the best in all England for eleven years is made, it seems slight. But when John Walker came out with his copy and additions, to be succeeded by Stephen Jones and others, compare these years to today. No new item is produced that there are not variations or duplicates on the market forthwith. It may not have been a continuous unending toll, but,

"Sheridan rang the bell."
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