

**AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ART  
OF READING, WITH SUITABLE  
ACCENTUATION AND  
INTONATION FOR  
THE USE OF TEACHERS, PP. 1-247**

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**COMMISSIONERS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION IN IRELAND**

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## INTRODUCTION TO ELOCUTION.

### PART FIRST.

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THE Lessons annexed to this first part of the Introduction to Elocution will be found printed with certain marks which require explanation. They are intended to afford assistance in teaching to read, by regulating the pauses and accentuation.

These marks are of two kinds. The first kind, placed between two words, may be regarded as an addition to the ordinary punctuation; marking those pauses which ought to be made in reading, but which are not marked in the punctuation. The marks for this purpose are two: the one, a double horizontal line or hyphen (—), marking a longer or more decisive pause, usually separating the subject from the verb, and the noun from its description, or its adjunct connected by a relative pronoun; and the other, a horizontal line or single hyphen (-), uniting separate words or phrases into one whole, and usually requiring a shorter pause. The second kind of marks are accents: the *acute* accent, sloping downward to the left (´), marking the stronger; and the *grave* accent, sloping downward to the right (`), marking the weaker or secondary accent.

## 2 INTRODUCTION TO ELOCUTION.—PART I.

A brief explanation of the principles on which these marks have been inserted, may afford some useful hints in reading, and in teaching to read.

When children begin to read, they give to every syllable an equal pause, and all are equally accented, thus :

Tis-the-voice-of-the-slug-gard-I-heard-him-com-plain.

The next step in their progress is, that they class those syllables together which form words, leaving the others as before, thus :

Tis-the-voice-of-the-sluggard-I-heard-him-complain.

The words "sluggard" and "complain," are now heard, not as four separate syllables, but as two words.

Words are thus formed of syllables, partly by pronouncing the syllables more closely together, and partly by giving an accent to one of the syllables, round which the other syllables are congregated; as, slúggard, compláin, májesty, majéstic, recolléct, difficulty, sufficiently, manufácture, vóluntarily, accúmulating, gratificátion, &c. As the number of syllables in a word increases, especially when, the accent being near the beginning or end of the word, a number of unaccented syllables are thrown together, a secondary accent is introduced. Thus, in the word, *vóluntarily*, the primary accent being on the first syllable, *vol*, there is a strong tendency to place another, or



secondary accent, on the third syllable, *tar*. So, in the word *gratificátion*, the chief accent being on the fourth syllable, *ca*, the first, *gra*, acquires a certain degree of accent. When words exceed five syllables, a second accent is always necessary, wherever the principal accent may be; as, *commúnícátiveness*, *rèconsiderátion*, *còmprehensibility*, *incòmprehensibility*, *àntitrinitárian*. In these long words, there are frequently three accents distinctly heard. Indeed a discriminating ear will discover that there is a sort of gradation of accent running through them. Thus, in such a word as *incòmprehénsiblèness*, the accentuation is regulated thus: the chief accent is on the syllable *hen*, the second on *com*, the third on *ness*, the fourth on *in*, the remainder being totally unaccented.

Now, there are constantly occurring, phrases, in which, though the words are separately written, yet they are so closely connected in sense, that they require to be treated in precisely the same manner; namely, to be combined, as it were, into one word, by pronouncing them closely together, and giving to one of them an accent, and sometimes to others of them secondary and tertiary accents. Thus, the line which we have already quoted, ought to be read as if it consisted of four words, thus:

*Tis the voice—of the slúggard—I héard him—compláin.*

4 INTRODUCTION TO ELOCUTION.—PART I.

Now, much of the perspicuity of reading consists in thus grouping together those words which are closely connected, and which present one object to the mind. And nothing creates greater confusion and indistinctness, than when a reader or speaker separates those words which ought to be united, and joins together those which ought to be separated. Let any one read the above line differently grouped, and he will discover the injury that is done to the perspicuity of the language, thus :

Tis the—voice of the—sluggard I—heard him—complain.

Or,

Tis the—voice of the—sluggard—I heard—him complain.

In the following lessons, the words of each lesson are distributed into groups, each forming a compound word, to be read closely together, and having an accent on the principal word ; so that when read, it may be heard, not as a succession of syllables or words, but as a succession of phrases, each containing a distinct idea within itself, and kept separate from the others.

But these compound words or phrases are not connected together with equal closeness. Some of them require to be pronounced more closely together than others, because they are more nearly connected in sense. Thus (to keep by the same example,) there ought, manifestly, to be a longer pause after the word *sluggard*, than after the words

voice and *him*. To express this difference of connexion between different phrases, the two marks of pauses already noticed, have been adopted:—the double hyphen, intimating the longer pause, and the single hyphen, the shorter pause. When one of the ordinary points intervenes, no additional mark is deemed necessary; because any of them implies a division between one phrase and another. Thus, in our example, these different connexions might be marked in this manner:

Tis the voice of the slúggard—I héard him-compláin.

Or thus:

Tis the voice of the slúggard, I héard him-compláin.

Sometimes words are so closely connected, while yet two, or even more of them, may be words which ought to be distinctly marked in reading, that it is difficult to say, whether they should be united together in one compound phrase, with primary and secondary accents; or whether they should be regarded as separate phrases. In these cases, the principal words are accented; but without any mark of separation being placed between them.

This suggests another very important topic, namely, primary and secondary accents. In uniting the phrases into which language is distributed, it will be found that there is a great diversity amongst the accents, some being more strong and