

THE SCIENCE OF SPEECH

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The Science of Speech by Alexander Melville Bell

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ALEXANDER MELVILLE BELL

**THE SCIENCE OF
SPEECH**

T H E

SCIENCE OF SPEECH.

BY

ALEXANDER MELVILLE BELL,

PRESIDENT OF THE PHONETIC SECTION OF THE MODERN LANGUAGE
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA.

THE VOLTA BUREAU,
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INTRODUCTION.

In the present work an explanation is offered of all the actions of the mouth and the vocal organs which produce speech.

In the System of Visible Speech, the elements of languages are exhibited in *symbols*, which, to the initiated, are self-explanatory. That system may therefore be considered as a species of SHORTHAND FOR THE MECHANISM OF UTTERANCE. The present work describes the same elements, WITHOUT SYMBOLS; the formation of the sounds being fully expressed in their NOMENCLATURE.

Some beginners are apt to be repelled at sight of unknown symbols, under the impression that the latter must be difficult to learn. But this idea soon gives way, before the lucidity and simplicity of the exponent symbols of Visible Speech.

For the purpose of REPRESENTING language the symbols cannot be dispensed with—

forming, as they do, a Universal Alphabet—; but, for communicating a knowledge of the elements of languages, description may take the place of symbolism. Such is, at least, the hope of the author, in preparing this work. At present, a great part of the knowledge of linguistic science is locked up in the symbols of Visible Speech. This knowledge is now made accessible to all readers.

There is, undoubtedly, an advantage in being able to enter at once on a study without the necessity of first mastering a new medium of instruction. No such necessity exists in connection with the study of the Science of Speech, as here presented. The whole subject, from first to last, is expounded in ordinary language. This book may therefore be put into the hands of pupils in schools and colleges, without explanatory preparation. Some ready means of studying the Science of Speech has long been wanted. This little book is specially designed to furnish the means, and supply the want.

This work will also prove useful as an introduction to Visible Speech. Few teachers of Modern Languages have as yet taken the trouble to study that system, and apply it in their classes; although it would be found to be of unique assistance, in removing all difficulty from the mastery of foreign pronunciations. Nor have teachers in the Public Schools availed themselves, to any great extent, of the manifest advantages of the system for native learners. Only among teachers of the DEAF have the benefits of a training in Visible Speech been duly appreciated.

This backwardness to accept the help of such a phonetic instrument is, no doubt, to be largely attributed to the imaginary difficulty of learning the symbols. Here, only the *meaning* of the symbols is taught. Representation of sounds is everything in "Visible Speech." In the "Science of Speech" DISCRIMINATION is all, and representation is nothing.