

FIRST LESSONS IN SPEECH IMPROVEMENT

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649077922

First lessons in speech improvement by Anna I. Birmingham & George Philip Krapp

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

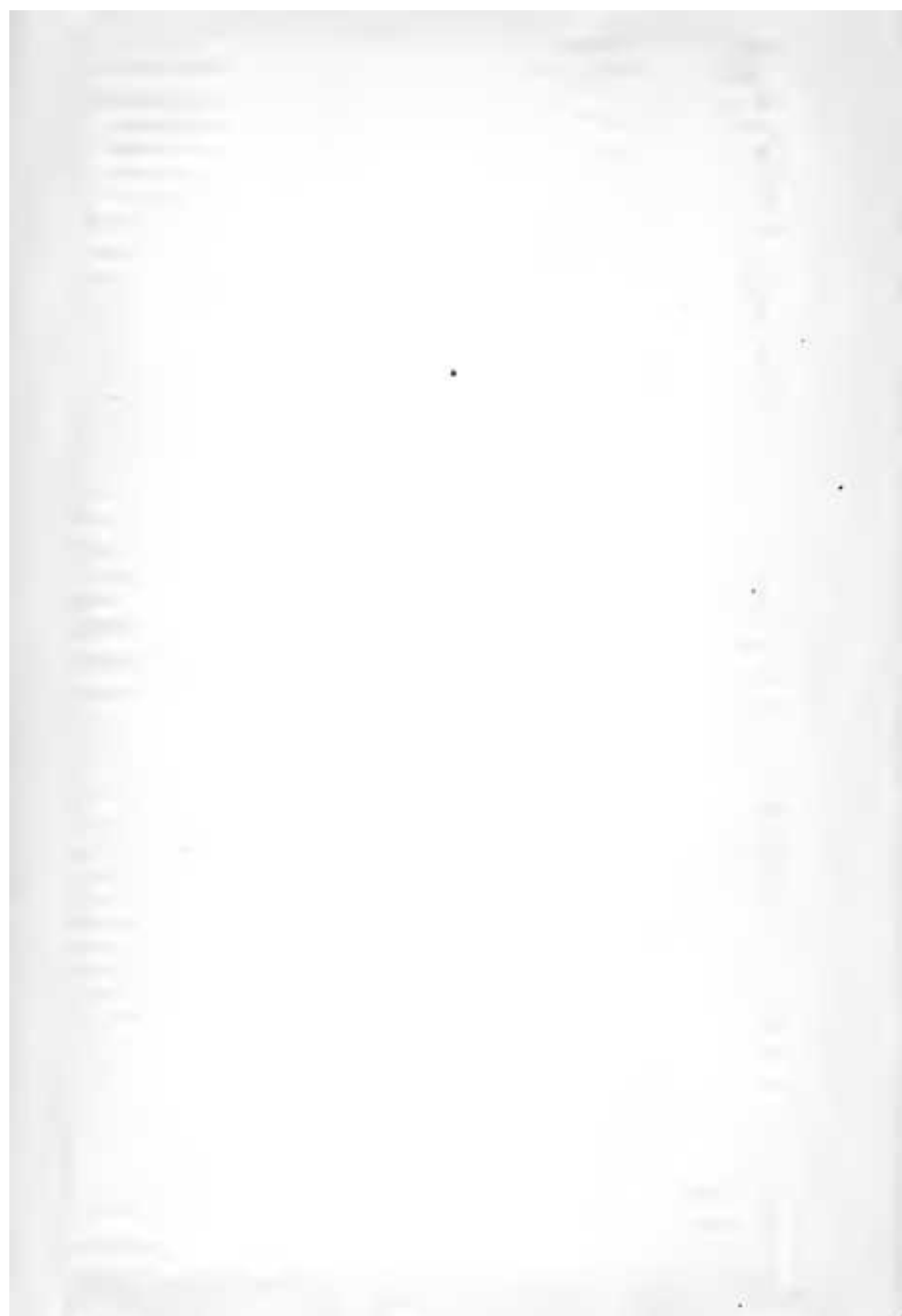
www.triestepublishing.com

ANNA I. BIRMINGHAM & GEORGE PHILIP KRAPP

**FIRST LESSONS IN
SPEECH
IMPROVEMENT**

FIRST LESSONS IN
SPEECH IMPROVEMENT

BIRMINGHAM AND KRAPP



LaE.Gr

B6193

FIRST LESSONS

IN

SPEECH IMPROVEMENT

BY

ANNA I. BIRMINGHAM

TEACHER OF SPEECH IMPROVEMENT, NEW YORK CITY

AND

GEORGE PHILIP KRAPP

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH IN COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

259409
22.9.31

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

NEW YORK

CHICAGO

BOSTON

COPYRIGHT, 1922, BY
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

Printed in the United States of America

J



INTRODUCTION

This book is primarily a drill book of exercises with a two-fold purpose. The first is training in the manner of producing English sounds. Through such training, pupils learn to form the sounds of their speech effectively and distinctly. Just as for the best and most economical results in writing one must learn control of the muscles of the hand and arm, so for the best results in speaking one must learn control of the muscles of the throat, the tongue and the lips.

The second purpose of the book is to give training to the ear in hearing and distinguishing shades of sound. No normal person probably has any difficulty in hearing any of the sounds of the English language, but it does not follow that every person can clearly distinguish all the sounds he has heard. In music, people sometimes say they cannot tell one sound from another. Now, since sound is merely the vibration of the air striking upon the sensitive parts of the ear, such persons, unless their hearing is defective, must receive these vibrations in exactly the same way as other persons. They hear the sounds, so far as the mere physical side of the production of sound is concerned, but they have not learned to distinguish in their minds the qualities of the several sounds. The ability to hear sounds so as to distinguish them is largely a matter of training. Any one who says he cannot tell the difference between the initial consonants of *thin* and *that* can learn to do so. He must hear the difference, otherwise he would

not be able to distinguish between *wreath* and *wreathe* when these two words are pronounced.

These two purposes are equally important. Training in one results usually in training in the other. When one produces sounds sharply and distinctly, one is likely to feel and hear them so. And when one has a definite and clear impression of a sound, one is likely to produce the sound definitely and clearly.

The ability to hear shades of sound clearly and distinguishably is not always easy to acquire. This is true not because the hearing is imperfect, as has just been pointed out, but because the judgment of the sounds is confused in the mind by irrelevant considerations. Thus, one is sometimes led to suppose a difference in sound between two words because there is a difference of spelling, though as to sound the two words may be exactly alike. *Fair* and *fare* sound exactly alike, though they are spelled differently, so also *pear*, *pair*, *pare*, are alike. The words *doe* and *dough* are exactly alike to the ear but they are different to the eye. The same is true of *right*, *wright*, *rite*, *write*, all of which have exactly the same pronunciation. Any one could find dozens of words like these in the English language. In all such words one must guard against allowing one's judgment of the sounds of the words to be confused by the form of the words as they appear to the eye.

The principle involved here is of wide application. One may agree that to the ear, *pear*, *pair*, *pare* all sound alike, but some persons maintain that, being spelled differently, they *ought* to be made to sound differently. This raises the whole question of the determination of the right or correct pronunciation of words. Perhaps no reasonable person would expect to make pronunciation harmonize

altogether with spelling. Thus one would have to pronounce *indict* with the *c* sounded and would have to pronounce other words in ways which the ordinary practise of cultivated speakers does not authorize.

Where shall one go, then, for the correct pronunciation of the language? One may go to the dictionary. This does not really answer the question, for one must still ask, "Where did the man go who made the dictionary?" In many instances, unfortunately, he merely may have gone to a man who made a dictionary before him, and pronunciations handed on from one dictionary to another do often have a kind of dictionary life like this. But the real question is this, Did the dictionary make the language, or does the language make the dictionary? Obviously the latter. One must go to the ordinary use of the language to find how words are pronounced, and one goes to the dictionary only to supplement or enrich one's knowledge and observation of the language as ordinarily used.

When one thinks of the language as ordinarily used, one means, of course, not the language as carelessly or vulgarly spoken, but as it is spoken by persons whose practises are worthy of respect and imitation. In ordinary use there is a difference, however, between Formal and Familiar Style. When one speaks in a conversational and rapid way, one makes certain sounds less fully and clearly than when one speaks slowly and emphatically. This is especially true of words which are slightly accented. The preposition *of*, for example, often becomes so slight that it loses its final consonant. When one speaks in Familiar Style of "a man of war," the first and third words of this phrase may sound exactly alike. For purposes of exercise and discipline, however, one does not take the Familiar Style as a foun-