answers which show that in many instances they must have cost not a little trouble; and particularly I thank the Revs. J. Qualtrough, W. Kermode, and R. Airey, Vicars of Kirks Arbory, Maughold, and Michael, for the exceeding kindness and attention with which they received me, a perfect stranger, going among them with no sort of introduction, save a common interest in the Manx language; and to them I am indebted either directly or indirectly (through their putting me in the way of getting it) for a good deal of the information contained in this paper. I also thank Mr. Thomas Kenvig, fisherman, of Castletown, for considerable help towards understanding the pronunciation and colloquial usages of Manx; and should other philological inquirers find their way to the Isle, I strongly recommend them to get some conversation with him.

VI.—THE DIALECT OF WEST SOMERSET. By
FREDERIC THOMAS ELWORTHY, ESQ. With an Appendix.

It is said that dialects are disappearing, that railways, telegraphs, machinery, and steam will soon sweep clean out of the land the last trace of Briton, Saxon, and Dane. This statement, though highly coloured, has much truth in it, if these traces are to be looked for only in distinct forms of speech, and in archaic words: but even in these respects, the practical effect of modern improvements and the advance of science are far less than it is usually believed by those who write about them, but whose acquaintance with the subject is confined for the most part to what others have written. This must necessarily be the case: practical information is hard to get, except by those who are actually living amongst the people and with whom they feel at home. The peasantry, who are the true repositories of verbal treasures, are shy, and not easily drawn out by any one they look upon as a *jin'-l-mun*.¹ Any at-

¹ All the dialectal words, which are printed in italics, are written in accordance with Mr. Alexander J. Ellis's Glossic system of spelling, which is explained in the Appendix, where also every vowel and diphthongal sound in the dialect is fully illustrated by classified lists of words preceded by remarks.

tempt from a stranger, or even the *paa'sn* (unless he mixes much with them), to extract information from a real native, is at once to cause Hodge to become like his namesake, and to effectually shut himself up in an impenetrable shell of company manners, and awkward mimicry of what he supposes to be *jin'l-vòaks wai òa spai'kin*.

Now although a process of levelling may be going on, as respects quaint words and local idioms, which board schools in every parish will surely accelerate, yet I shall hope to show that this process is slow, and at present very far from complete. As regards pronunciation, intonation, and those finer shades of local peculiarity which mark divergences from the Queen's English almost more than the words used, I maintain that the changes are far slower than those which are constantly going on in what we call received English itself.

Many words are continually dropping into disuse, especially such as are of a technical character, belonging to trades, like those mentioned as extinct by Sir John Bowring in his paper on the Devonshire dialect (reprinted from the Transactions of the Devonshire Association for the Advancement of Science, etc., without date); but even of these I may remark that burler and burling, pronounced *buur'dler*, *buur'dlin* (picking out all foreign substances from unfinished cloth with an instrument called a *buur'dlin-uy'ür*, burling iron), fuller, fulling mill, tucker, *tuuk'in mee'ülz* (mills for dressing woollen cloth), rack, rack-field (frames for stretching woollen cloth while being dried, so as to make it even in width; these frames are attached to posts in the ground; every woollen mill has its rack-field), linhay (a shed; lean-to), estemane (a fine kind of woollen serge), soce, pronounced *soa'üs* (companions, mates, fellow-workmen; *kau'm soa'üs* is a very common expression used either by a farmer to his men, or by one man to his fellows), *sùe'ünt* (regular, even, smooth: *a sùe'ünt pee's òa klaa'th*, "a smooth even piece of cloth," *a sùe'ünt fee'ül òa wai't*, "a regular field of wheat," i.e. free from patches or inequalities, are both very common phrases), and *skoav'ée* (the exact opposite of *sùe'ünt*), are all perfectly familiar to me as in daily use at the present

moment. While as to the others enumerated by him, duroy, worley, lindsey, serafine, bayeton, they are but the names of fabrics no longer manufactured, yet remembered still, along with camlets, gingham, and nankeens. Sir John's failure to discover them only proves the difficulty to which I before alluded. A stranger as he must have been after fifty years' absence, must fail in trying to penetrate below the surface of peasants' talk.

At the same time that words of this kind are becoming forgotten, others of a like nature are continually taking their places, not merely in the vocabulary of the people, but, from the manner in which they are uttered, they become new links in the chain of that hereditary pronunciation which has come down to us West-country folks, and which connects us with the times when our British forefathers were elbowed back by the prolific Saxon, and lorded over by the proud Norman.

We in our benighted regions have now *raa'ylroa'uds*, *tuul'i-graams*, and *traak'shun eenjinz*, bringing with them new ideas and enlarged knowledge; but we do not find that the *awp kuun'tree mai'n* who come with them are in sufficient number to make any impression upon local pronunciation; and we find, too, that the words which they import into the district are adopted as words, but with more or less different sounds attached to them; and I have no doubt but that similar results attend the importation of words into all other districts.

Speaking from my own experience, I have often been amused at the very marked provincialisms in the pronunciation of educated men and women in the Northern and Midland Counties, whose tones in conversation and whose mode of expression, because diverging in an opposite direction, sound to my southern ears more exaggerated from contrast than they would to a born Londoner. For instance, the *koo'm* of a Lancashire man is not so far from *kum* "come," as it is from our *kaw'm*.

The particular dialect, or sub-dialect, upon which I trust I may be able to throw some light, is, if one may judge from the mistakes of some, and the cursory remarks of others who have written upon Somersetshire, very little known, and it

appears to have received far less attention than most others. Punch's typical clown always talks what is meant for *Zuum'-urzetzhee'r*, and there are glossaries and poetic effusions in abundance written in the Saxon of the county, yet they all belong to the Eastern division, while the far richer vocabulary and more expressive speech of the Western is passed over with the remark set against a few stray words in the glossaries "pronounced so-and-so west of the Parret," thus leaving it to be inferred that, with the few exceptions alluded to, and a slight difference noticed here and there in the sounds of *oo*, the dialects are identical: but this is a great mistake.

In the same way it has been assumed as a fact in all the works on the subject with which I am acquainted, that the boundary dividing the people who utter these slightly different sounds is the river Parret, and one learned gentleman quotes as a proof of this, a record in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle of A.D. 658, how in a certain battle, the Britons were driven back as far as the river Parret. My obtuseness, however, fails to comprehend how the record of a battle written more than 1200 years ago can establish the fact that down to this time there has been no other driving back, and that the traces of those old Britons still remain in the speech of their descendants up to the brink of that river, but no further.

I admit that there is a tolerably defined boundary on the east side of the district known as West Somerset, but so far as language is concerned, it is not the Parret.

If we take the Ordnance map of the county, we find the ridge of the Quantocks, a high bleak moorland, running nearly south from the Bristol Channel. We also find a sharp spur of the Blackdowns called Pickeridge Hill running northward as far as the village of Thurlbeer (pronounced *Dil'buru*). This hill, jutting out to meet the Quantocks, contracts the great Somerset flat into a narrow neck, and in the centre of the valley between these hills, just at its narrowest part, and precisely where a modern engineer would place a defensive stronghold, we find the Saxon fortress of Taunton, to us known as *Taa'ntn* or *Taa'nun*. The people of the little village

of Ruishton (called *Ruy'shn*), only a mile and a half to the east of Taunton, speak the eastern dialect; while at Bishops Hull, one mile to the west, they speak the western.

The Quantocks are in fact, what we should expect them to be, the natural boundary of the district, and Taunton is the military position which protected the lowlanders of the plain and marshes from the highlanders of the western hill country.

On the south and south-west there is much shading off in the mode of speech, and it is difficult to point out any sharply defined line; but westward, taking in a portion of Devonshire, it follows pretty nearly the boundary of the counties as marked on the map, and includes most of the wild and beautiful Exmoor district, as well as the Brendon Hill range.

In many respects the dialect of North Devon is the same as ours, and it much more nearly resembles it than the East Somerset does, but there are however many marked differences. One of the most striking is that in Devon they use *us* as a nominative, while in Somerset we do not. Again they use the old inflexion *th* more than we do; they would say, *u goo'ûth*, *u tau'keth*, "he goes," "he talks;" we should say, *ai du goo*, *ai du tau'kêe*, "he do go," "he do talk."

In noting the peculiarities of my native patois, I have taken no pains to ascertain how far it shares them with other districts, or in what respects it differs from them; but leaving comparisons and deductions to your more competent hands, I simply place before you such facts as are within my own personal knowledge, and every one of which I am ready to substantiate by the test of a practical illustration out of the mouth of some veritable plough-tail native.

Authorities upon the subject there are none, so far as I know; and therefore, in preparing this paper, I have adopted no other standard than to note whatever seems to me important in the speech of the people as a divergence from received English. I must here, however, acknowledge the assistance, in the way of suggestion, I have found in the two papers read before our local Archæological Society by my distinguished friend and fellow-countryman, Professor Spencer Baynes, of

St. Andrews. But even in his papers there are many assertions and examples which he would, I am sure, admit to need "quantification," if tested in the practical way I have mentioned. Valuable as his papers are upon the general dialect of the Western Counties, Mr. Baynes has omitted all notice of the strange differences which occur in the pronunciation of the same combinations of letters. For instance, he classes *hay*, *May*, *day*, and *say* as all of the same sound; whereas in West Somerset we should *Zai*, *dhat dhu laa's Dhuuz-dëe in Maay aay wuz u foorüs tu laef oa'f haa'y mak'in, vur tu goo vur tu paa'y mëe rai'nt*, "Say, that the last Thursday in May I was forced to leave off haymaking, for to go for to pay my rent." Surely these different soundings are not arbitrary, or even chance results; but they must point to some influence, which is to be looked for in the origin of the word itself, or rather in the speech of those people from whom it came to us.

The Norman has not left very many signs of his presence among us; yet in a district where we have the villages of Huish Champflower, Langford Budville, Hatch Beauchamp, and Thorne Falcon, we may fairly ascribe to him any peculiarity in the pronunciation of those words which must have been daily used by him and are now adopted by us. How otherwise is it to be accounted for that we always give the difference in sound which I have instanced, *zai*, *dai*, *paa'y*, *Maay'y*? But I shall have occasion to allude to this further on. These and similar varieties of sound seem to make our dialect incapable of being reduced to anything like rule or order, that is, as measured by received pronunciation; for the same combination of letters still oftener represents several distinct sounds in West Somerset than it does even in ordinary English.

The patois is essentially one of vowel-sounds, connected by indistinct consonants; for we get rid of these or reduce them to faint breathings whenever we can.

I propose to take the vowels in the order of the old grammars. In village schools they are called *ae'ü*, *ai*, *aai*, *oa*, *yüe*. We have both the open *a* and the close *a*, and a sort of semi-

open sound as in *bae'ûkn*, or the invariable infant school spelling of "Aaron," *guurt ae'û*, *lee'dl ae'û*, *aar*, *oa*, *ai'n*. The various sounds of *a* are represented in the following sentences:—*Aa'y aa'nt ü-vuw'n dhu paa'th*, "I have not found the path;" *Ai wid'n saar iz wae'ûjez, ü-peol'in dhai tuur'muts vur zik'spuns u bai'g*, "He would not earn his wages, pulling those turnips for sixpence a bag;" *Dhu aa'tur-maa'th wuz tûe geo'd vur tu lat wot dhik'i vaar'th ða pai'gz een un*, "The aftermath was too good for to let out that litter of pigs in it." Or there is still more variety in the following: *Uur zad tu mee u Zin'dêe aa'turneo'n jis ubuw'd u dree ða klauk*, *Aa-l tuul'têe haut tai'z*, *Aa'y bai'ünt gwaa'yn aun lig dhis yur noa lau'nggur*; *vaur ee aa'nt übin' unee'ûs mee vaur vaaw'ûr yuur kau'm dhu tuym*, *un dhad'l bee dree wiks üvoa'ûr Baa'nun vai'ûr*; *Aa'y muyn uw dhu ween daed bloa'êe fit tu bloa duwn dh)oa'l uwz*: "She said to me on Sunday afternoon, just about three o'clock, I'll tell you what it is, I am not going on like this any longer; for he has not been near me for four years come the time, and that will be three weeks before Bampton fair; I remember how the wind blew fit to blow down the old house." The prefix *ü* in *übin'* is used almost invariably with all participles, both past and present.

Our *e* is often very like the French *é*, and in diphthongs with *a* is often so pronounced when the vowels are not sounded separately, as in *seat*, *meat*, or *eat*. *Dhu chit'urn ad'n ugoa'ût u beet ða mai't vur ai't*, *nur eet' nuudh'ur sai't vur tu zit duwn paun*, "The children had not a bit of meat to eat, nor yet any seat to sit down upon."

The letter *e*, though called *ai*, is sometimes pronounced as *ee* long when followed by *a*; for instance, *nee'ûr*, "near," *fee'ûr* "fear," *bee'ût* "beat," *bee'ûs* "beast." You will note that these are distinctly vowel fractures.

For the diphthong *ea* as written in common English we have at least six distinct sounds: *mai't*, *ai't*, *sai't*, as before given; *dae'ûl* (deal), *rae'ûl* (real), *mae'ûl* (meal), *ae'ûth* (earth), *mizh'ur* (measure), *jil'is* (jealous), *mid'u* (meadow). For *heat* we say *yaet*; and for both *heath* and *hearth* we say *yee'ûth*,

but to this last I must refer again. Hear, year, here, and ear, have with us but one sound—*yuur*.

The commonest of these sounds is of course that which follows, if I may so express it, the genius of the dialect—that is, to separate vowels, and sound them all, as in *bee'ūs* (beast), *kleē'ūn* (clean), *dee'ūr* (dear), *mee'ūd* (mead), *wae'ūl* (weal). You will have noticed that in these double sounds the *e* is sometimes *ee* and sometimes *ae*. Mr. Baynes is mistaken in classing cart, card, heart, meat, and milk, among these fractures, although *kee'ūr* (care), *kee'ūz* (case), *shee'ūd* (shade), and *shee'ūr* (share), may well be so included. No other rule than that of placing every word with the diphthong *ea* in it as an exception seems possible. But here again Etymology may well be served by a study of these exceptions; for without doubt they are true key-notes of the archaic stave.

E short before *n* becomes long, as in *ai'n* (hen), *pai'n* (pen, for writing only), *tai'n* (ten), *mai'n* (men), *wai'n* (when). Before *l* it becomes short *uu*, as in *wuul* (well), *tuul* (tell), *zuul* (self), *vuul* (fell): but to sell becomes *sīl*.

The substantive *vuul* (vell) means a portion of the internal economy of a calf, from which rennet is made. To *vuul* (fell) is a particular kind of sewing; but we *droa* (throw) our trees, we never fell them.

Funnily this change of *e* into *u* is often reflected back. I heard a man sing a song the other day, of which the refrain was *drai'v dæl kee'ūr u-wai'*, "drive dull care away." Servants and ill-educated people always say *vaelgur* (vulgar) and *mael'tichùe'd* (multitude).

We settle all doubts as to the *ei* in *ee'dhur* (either), and *nuy'dhur* (neither), for we should say, *Az a-zeed uudh'ur wau'n òa m?* *Nao'ū, nuudh'ur wau'n waud'n dhae'ūr*, "Hast seen either one of them? No, neither one of them was there."

Double *e* again has two or three different sounds: *Aa'y zeed un zoa geo'd zee'ūd laa's wik*, "I saw him sow good seed last week." Or the old couplet:

Wau'n yuur sidi'n, "One year's seeding,
Zab'm yuurz wid'in. Seven years' weeding."

This change of *e* into short *i* naturally leads to the distinction between *Zin'dëez an wik'ud dai'z*, "Sundays and wicked (week) days."

Our *i* is often like the French *i* [ee]: *Gee mee u lee'dl beet, wùol-ëe?* "Give me a little bit, will you?" And from this example you will also observe that the short *i* has a tendency, like short *e*, to become short *u*, or rather short *oo* or *uo*, as in wool. Endless mistakes occur on our local railway between tickets taken for Williton and Wellington, which we pronounce *Wuol'itn* and *Wuul'itn* respectively, niceties which only native booking clerks can easily recognize. Short *i* changes sometimes into *aa*; we say, *tak dhu baa'tl an aat un duwn*, "take the bittle and hit it down." This word *baa'tl* is a sample of a double change. The word in Shakespeare (Henry IV. Act 1, Sc. ii.) is beetle. And this is no doubt still the correct word; but being, like the insect beetle, pronounced *bitl*, it is changed, by the same process as hit in *aat*, into *baa'tl*. Sometimes however it is pronounced *buy'tl*. Again, to spit is always to *spaa't*. *Aa'y bee dhat draa'y aa'y keod'n spaa't u zik'spuns*, "I am so dry I could not spit a sixpence," is the usual, but not elegant plea for begging a cup of cider.

Long *i* sometimes changes into long *a*: drive is always *drai'v*, and knife is often *nai'v*. The personal pronoun is sounded *u'y* in East Somerset, but *aa'y* in West. They too habitually use it in the accusative, we scarcely ever do so. They would say, *hee akst u'y vu'yo skil'unz*; we should say, *hee aaks mee vai'v shuul'inz, buud Aa'y wid'n gee un bud vaaw'ür*, "he asked me five shillings, but I would not give him but four."

In this example you will notice short *i* used for *ou* in would (*wid'n*). Again, it is also used for short *o*, as *he wau'dn nit aa'yt pae'üzex awai vraum un*, "he was not eight paces away from him." Double negatives are the rule, and even treble ones occur sometimes. Again, the proper name Will is sounded quite differently to the auxiliary: *Aaw'r Wee'ül wuz u teok dhat bai'üd, wee wuz u foo'üs tu zai'n vur dhu dau'ktur; ee kaw'm aal wot oa'rur Buur'nun Ee'ül un geed un suum pee'üls, un Aa'y kyuwnt ee'ül mak wot u guurt lau'ng*

bee'ül vaur ut, "Our Will was taken so ill, we were obliged to send for the doctor; he came all out over Brendon Hill and gave him some pills, and I expect he will make out a great long bill for it."

O has many sounds, as *ùe toar'uld-ëe ða ut?* "Who told you of it?" *Dùe-ëe kaum alau'ng un nit buyd ubuw'd dhai dhae'ür kontraap'shunz*, "Do (ye) come along, and not stay about those contrivances." *O* long is much closer, as *a* is much opener with us than in East Somerset. There they say *au'ver*, *au'ld*, *tau'ld*, *aks*, *parth*, *va'st*; we say *oa'veur* (over), *oa'l* (old), *toa'l* (told), *aak's* (ask), *paar'th* (path), *vaa's* (fast); but still we too give *o*, though rarely, the sound of *au*, as in *hraw'd* (road), *kraw's* (cross), *law's* (loss), *tau's* (toss). It far more frequently however has a fractured sound, as *hroo'üd* (road), *hroo'üp* (rope), *boo'üth* (both), *uoa'ür* (before). On the other hand, we often change *o* short into *aa*: *Dhee staap aur aal ai'n u klaat dhad'l mak dhee draap*, "Thee stop or I'll throw a clod that will make thee drop." So we say *gyuur'dn plaat* (garden plot).

Both long and short *o* change unto *uu* short. We say *ruub* for rob, *juub* for job, *uud* for hod, and always *muuv* for move—and why not, if it is correct to say *luuv* (love)? Double *o* is deservedly famous; but, as will be seen presently, it has more than one sound. *Wau't u veol' dhik'i keok ai'z! dh-ðal geok'eo-v ulaef ur beok un ur beot's duven in uun'dur dhu peok ða aay*, "What a fool that cook is! the old cuckoo has left her book and her boots under the hay-cock." Or the old couplet said to have been droned out in church by a parish clerk, who had been playing cards late on a Saturday night—

Hoak's bee truum'ps in Aurnur eo'd,

Dhae'ür dhai groa'üd un dhae'ür dhai steo'd.

"Oaks are trumps in Horner wood,

There they grew, and there they stood."

You will notice that we know nothing of *grew*, and although I may have very imperfectly rendered it, there is a slight distinction between these sounds of *oo* and those of *dùe* (do) and *ùe* (who). These latter occur, again, in our vernacular

bùe, and this word, you will admit, when allowance is made for the common change of *v* into *b*, is far more like its ancestor than the modern nondescript—view. A man, now dead, who used frequently to come to my house, always used to exclaim: *Aa'y zìm, zuur, tai'z u bìt-ipeol bùe yuur*, "I fancy, sir, 'tis a beautiful view here." With us to roof a rick, is to *ruuv'm-een* or *ruuv'm aewt*, that is, roof it in, or roof it out. This means to pile up the hay or corn in a ridge, so as to form slopes, on which to lay the thatch—and in no way implies the thatch itself. Similarly *tu ruuv u uwz* (to roof a house) is to set up the timber slopes, but has no reference to the final covering; this latter is always the *tuy'tèen* (tiling) or the *dhaach*. I have scarcely ever heard the word roof used as a substantive by a true son of the soil. For hoof we say *uuf*, and though wool is generally *eo'ul*, yet I have very often heard *wuul*. The word *eo'd* (wood) is peculiar, the *v* is always dropped, and except in the sense of a collection of large trees, it has but one signification. If I went to market, and said I wanted to buy some *eo'd*, I should be told the price per score or hundred, always six score, and nothing would be understood but faggots, called *faak'uts*. Chairs, tables, and doors are made of *tìm'ur* (timber); but we never hear of anything wooden. If *tìm'ur* is not the word used, the particular sort of wood is mentioned, as *aa'rshn*, *oa'kn*, *bich'n*, *haw'sn* (hazel). If I may here digress a little, I would remark that if I told a man to fetch *u beet òa stuuf* (a bit of stuff), he would probably ask if I wanted *u beet òa ruuf stuuf* or *wau't soa'ürt* (what sort); but no vision of woven fabric would enter his mind. *Stuuf* means "sawn wood," and the *geo'd* (good) or *ruuf* (rough) would express the quality and shape, that is, whether sawn square, or, as the outsides of logs are, *wae'ùni*. A piece with us means a part or portion of anything, whether solid or liquid. A hogshead partly full of cider would be *a pèes òa-u ok'sèed* (a piece of a hogshead); a small quantity of potatoes, say seventy or eighty pounds, would be *a pèes òa-u bai'g* (a piece of a bag, a bag of potatoes being 160 pounds, or *aa'yt skoa'ür wauy't* eight score weight); a

heap of stones would be *uun'ée u pées ða-u loo'üd* (only a piece of a load). A piece of cloth means the entire end or length, as woven; any portion cut off would be a *beet ða klaa'th* (a bit of cloth).

A floor, unless we spoke of a *baa'rnz vloor'ür* (barn's floor), means anything but a boarded structure. When we wish to speak of the wooden floor of a room, we always speak of the *plan'shëen*, and of a single board in a floor as a *plansh*. Another pretty plain Norman or French influence is seen in the pronunciation, as well as the use of the words *akùe'z* (accuse) and *sekeo'ür* (secure). A short time ago a man was speaking to me about the funeral of a woman whom I had well known. He said, *avoa'ür uur duyð, uur ukùe'z aul dhai uur weesh vur tu kaa'r ur*, "before she died, she accused all those she wished to carry her," meaning that she had appointed and fixed upon those of her neighbours whom she desired to bear her corpse. Since writing this paper, I have again heard the word used in the sense of advertising or informing beforehand: *ee akùe'zd um ða-ut un zoa dhai wuz upurpae'ürd*, "he accused them of it, and so they were prepared." Again, the beard or needle-like spears which grow on barley, when broken off in thrashing, are called *aa'ylz* or barley *aa'ylz*, which is however Anglo-Saxon, according to Wright. I venture, however, to commend these words to the attention of Norman students, together with *kwaayn*, *maayn* and *ruwt*, to which I shall refer presently.

U may be called our test vowel. If a man can say *bëol*¹ (bull), *vëol* (full), *pëol* (pull and pool), he is surely either from West Somerset or North Devon; but yet we say *kuul* (cull), *guul* (gull), *guut*, *puut*, *cuut*, but not *ruut*; we are more correct, we say *ruwt*. Sometimes short *u* becomes *i*—*vraanch nits* (French nuts); the *nit* of a wheel is the stock or nave.

Notwithstanding its extreme richness in vowel-sounds, it is in its consonants that our dialect shows its great vagaries, and although highly grammatical in its inflexions and construction, it is apparently quite chaotic and arbitrary in pronunciation. We do not like to marry our consonants

¹ See Appendix, page 247.

any more than our vowels,—that is, although we can manage initials even three deep, as in *skraam* (small), *straa'yn*, *splai'-veot'ed* (splay-footed), yet whenever two final consonants occur, we try to reduce them to a simple sound. To a stranger the characteristic of our dialect is indistinctness of articulation—possibly the result of general slovenliness of utterance induced by a mild and slightly enervating climate; but rather I believe this to be the result of hereditary modes of speech derived from our remote ancestors, whomsoever they may have been.

We usually reject final *d* or *t* when following a consonant other than *r*, as in *ween* (wind), *huyn* (hind), *buyn* (bind), *vryn* (find), *veer'ul* (field), *paa's* (past), *vaa's* (fast), *pau's* (post). To this there are, however, many exceptions (see Appendix). When the inflexion is sounded, the full syllable is always given, as *ee paarsud lau'ng dhik wai*, “he passed along that way;” *ur leok'ud vau'rn*, “she looked for him;” but this is not usual, the inflexion is commonly dropped. A man said to me the other day, *Dhee'üz lau't öa hreer'üzd aal an'draash*, “This lot of reed is all hand thrashed;” *Aay waa'rsh dhu fae'üs öa un aal oa'rur aes mau'rnin wai zoo'üp un vau'dur*, “I washed his face all over this morning with soap and water;” *Aay-v ubee'üsl mizuul tuur'bl bae'üd*, “I have made myself very dirty.” When, however, the next syllable commences with a vowel, the *d* or *t*, whether an inflexion or not, is sounded as its initial: *ee uurnd uwai*, “he ran away.” Change the vowel to a consonant, and we should say, *ee urn zu vaa's uz thau'f dh-öa'l fuul'ur wuz aa'turn*, “he ran as fast as though the old fellow was after him.” *Dhai'v urab dhu maa'yl koo'üch*, “They have robbed the mail coach.” *Dhai'v ustoa'üld u wau'ch*, “They have stolen a watch.” This last is a good example of the strong conjugation being supplemented by the suffix of the weak. We have it again in *toa'ürd* (tore), *uroa'üzd* (raised), and in *broa'kt* (broke), when followed by a vowel. Now, although we may call it a rule absolute that *d* final following a consonant is dropped, yet this is clearly from no dislike to the sound itself; for we find it sometimes inserted without any apparent reason. The word corner,

after politely dropping the *r*, becomes by this process *kau'n-dur*; and tailor is always *taa'yldur*. Here I must explain that the *kaun'dur ða dhu uɔz* (corner of the house), means the interior angle of the living room. If we wished to express the external angle of the house or wall, we should always speak of the *kwaayn*, *kwaay'n* or *kwain*. The exceptions to the rule of dropping the final *d* and *t*, besides those mentioned, are when they happen to follow *r* or *l*. We always say *paart* (part), *kaart* (cart), *aard*, (hard), *vaard* (fell). *Aas ugoa'ut oa'urt tu dringk?* "Hast aught to drink?" *Aay aa'nt ugoa'ut noa'urt* "I have naught." Again, whenever *r* and *l* come together, as in twirl, girl, purl, burl, we find the sound too complex for our organs, and therefore provide another syllable by inserting a *d*, and say *twuurdl*, *puurdl*, *guurdl*, *buurdl*; while *wuurdl* for world, which is a mere transposition, is one of our commonest words. *Uurz u puur-ti lee'dl guurdl*, "She is a pretty little girl."

Initial and medial *th* are nearly always softened into *dh*. I can only remember one or two instances of hard initial *th*. For though we say *thau'f*, but this is sometimes softened into *au'f*. *Dhu lai'ün wuz au'l tìe u sluur'ee, un twuz dhat luur'in, jis dhu vuur-i sai'ümz au'f twuz buurd luy'm*, "The lane was very muddy, and it was as sticky as bird lime." For thin we say *theen*, for off we always say *oa'f*. *Dhu loa'ks u-spucuuyl, dhee muus tak un oa'f*, "The lock is spoilt, thou must take it off."

Although much has been said and written about it, yet our *fs* are not all *vs*. Our decided preference of course is for the softer sound; yet we always say *fuun*, *faarmur*, *faat*, *Fan-i*. *Dhiki loav ða bra'idz maa'yn tu'f*, "That loaf of bread is very tough." Also we say *puuf*, *ruuf*, and *laa'f* for lath, with many more. Of course we say *wuyv* (wife), *kyaa'v* (calf), *haa'v* (half), *vaur'ed* (forehead), *van* (fan), *vaar* (far), and *veo't* (foot). This last word as a measure of length has no plural form. We always say *aa'yt-veot dee'p*; but we talk nevertheless of our *veet un ligz* (feet and legs). In these respects polite society is now following our lead.

A curious instance of interchange of letters, or rather

sounds, arises in the word carpenter. We sound, or rather do not sound, the *r* according to polite custom, and thus should have *kaa'pentur*; but *kaa'fmdur* is the word we use, thus softening both the *p* into *f*, the *n* into *m*, and the *t* into *d*. *F* or *v* and *dh* or *th* seem to be interchangeable sounds. Vetches become *dhaach'es*, and very *dhuur'i*, while think, though generally *dhingk*, is often *fink*; and something, *suuf'in*.

G final is always dropped in words of more than one syllable ending in *ing*. As an initial it is softened as much as possible. *Iz dhu gee'üt oa'p?* "Is the gate open?" *Waurts yur gee'üm?* "What is your game?" Nothing is more grating to our ears than the *sing-gingg*, *long-gingg*, of our Northern acquaintances. In monosyllables, however, like *dhing* (thing), *eling* (fling), *dring* (to press), *sting*, *spring*, etc., we sound the *ng* distinctly.

All gutturals, especially final ones, are distasteful, and we very rarely leave one ungarnished at the end of a word. My father once heard a witness at *Taa'nun Suy'sez* (Taunton Assizes), in reply to the usual question as to his name, say: *Plai'z, zuur, muy nae'ümz Strik; buud tu spai'k ut shaw'rt, tai'z Strik'ëen*, "Please, sir, my name is Strick; but to speak it shortly, it is Strickeen." When the *k* sound is followed by a syllable beginning with *n*, we give the latter a syllable to itself; hackney and cockney become *aak'n-nee* and *hauk'n-nëe*.

Our dislike of gutturals is well balanced by our fondness for liquids, of course I mean *l*, *m*, and *n*: yet we cannot do with them mixed. We never say elm, helm, haulm, culm, calm, or qualm, but *huul'm* for the first three, *kuul'm*, *kaal'm*, and *kwal'm*. The town of Collumpton on the river Culme is, I presume, Culme-town. This place, however, is now locally pronounced *Kuul-up-m*—another curious case of elision and change. The *m* and the *t* have entirely disappeared, while the final *n* becomes *m*. This *n* nearly always changes into *m* after *p*, *b*, *f*, and *v*, as *faaw'rpmëe* (fourpenny), *ae'üpmëe* (half-penny), *aeb'm* (heaven), *laeb'm* (eleven), *zaeb'm* (seven), *staef'm* (stiffen), *kaa'fmdur* (carpenter), *oa'vm* (oven), *woa'vm* (woven). A faint sound of *m* in common speech is all that remains

of *am* or *them*: *aa'l ða m* means all of them, and *yeo m* or *dhai m* means you or they are.

N is articulated rather more distinctly than *m*, except when joined to *r*; it is then sometimes dropped, as *wes'tur zuyd* (western side), *eest'ureen*. This last does not signify Easter eve, but the eastern end, just as to *stan un ee'n* means to stand on your head—a phrase used by boys very commonly. Also *au'pm ee'n* means upright, on end. We never say, as they do in East Somerset, *hiz'n* or *dhair'n* or *aawrn*; but we do say *vaur'n* for for him, and this *n* does duty for a neuter as well as a masculine pronoun. *Tid'n*, *twau'dn*, mean it is not, it was not; *aa'rt'n* "art thou not?" *shat'n* "shalt thou not?" *wùot'n* "wilt thou not?" *kas'n* "canst thou not?" So also we rarely use the ordinary possessive pronouns. *Leok tu dhu shùe'z ða un*, *wuy ee'v u kik aewt dhu toa'ürz ða m*, "Look at your shoes, why you have kicked out their toes." *Tae'üh aup u gin'i paig bee dhu taayl ða un*, *un dhu uyz ða un ul vaa'l aewt*, is our version of the old saying: "Take up a Guinea pig by its tail, and its eyes will drop out." From these and other examples it will be noticed that our possessive case is nearly always formed by the preposition; we very seldom use the ordinary 's. We have, too, no neuter pronoun for denoting a common substantive. The word *it* is never used, except an abstract idea is to be expressed. We should say *tai'z* for "it is," and *aary oa'n dùe ut*, "I won't do it," but never give it me, always *gee un tu mee*. The nominative *ai* (he) does duty for both genders. A man said to me of his daughter, *Ürz a maa'yn guurt strau'ng maa'yd, ai ai'z*, "She's a main great strong maid, she is." With us the word maid has precisely the same meaning as its equivalent *mädchen*.

And here I may as well give you our present tense of the verb "to be."

aary bee (I am),

dhee aa'rt (never *bist*) (thou art),

ai'z }
uurz } or emphatic *ai ai'z*, *ur ai'z* (he or she is),

wee bee, or *wee m*, *wee haam* (emphatic) (we are),

yùe bee, or *yùe m*, *yùe haam** (emphatic) (you are),
dhai bee, or *dhaim*, *dhai aam** (emphatic unaspirated) (they
 are).

Just as the pronoun *ai* (he) is both masculine and feminine, so when the verb is used interrogatively is the pronoun *ur*: *did'n uur?* *id'n uur?* means either did she not? or is she not? did he not? or is he not? It also has an impersonal meaning, as *kaan' ur?* can one not? *mid'n ur?* might one not? *ad'n ur?* had one not? *Dids zee Bee üt?* *ad'n ur goa'üt noa'ürt tüe aez baak?* *wae'ür'oev'ur aav uur ubin' ubuy'din tüe?* "Didst see Bill? had not he anything on his back? wherever has he been staying?" Before this you will have observed that we only use aspirates before vowels for emphasis.

But to return to the consonants. *R* is the most capricious of all, for it is dropped here and affixed there without much apparent reason; yet of all the consonants, one rule may be invariably applied to it—we never roll or trill it.¹ In South Devon and Cornwall, on the contrary, they always talk of *her'ings*, and a common name is *Buur'ij*; we say *uur'inz* and *Buur'ij*. Often we hear the *r* aspirated, as in *hreed* for reed, *hroa'üd* (road), while to read is *tu hrai'd*.

Before short vowels it is that the well-known transposition of *r* takes place: *Uur'chut*, *urn un buursh dhu uurd'in oa'f ða Mis'tur Buur'jez buur'chez*, "Richard, run and brush off the redding from Mr. Bridge's breeches."

The danger of a little knowledge is shown in the almost general naming of the well-known equipage the tea-urn, *dhu tai ruun*. My good mother once tried to prevail on a nurse to use the proper term; but it was no use. Nurse persisted that she never said *urn* in her life, and was not going to begin now. There is a large factory near where I live, called Tonedale. Certain wise people have learnt that a *dae'ül tae'übl* should be called a *dee'i tai-bl*, and apply their rule to

¹ The exact nature of this peculiar *r* is explained in the Appendix, in the notation, under *r*, the proper symbol, for which *r* has been used for convenience throughout this paper.

the factory, which thus becomes *Toa'ndeel*. But all this will be cured in the coming generation, by the board schools, where, forsooth, *Dhaiv ubin*, *zuur*, *un utai'ch muy brouuy vur tu spuul tae'üdëez*¹ *vai u pee*, *shoa'ür*! "They have been, sir, and taught my boy to spell potatoes with a p, sure!"

In those English words which are written with *w* before the *r*, we still sound it as a *v*, as *vruy'tin* (writing), *vraa'slin* (wrestling), *vrauw'ng* (wrong), *vraut-uy'ür* (wrought-iron), *vreth-uur'dlz* (wreath-hurdles), *vruyt* (right or wright); but yet the *r* is dropped in *Fid* (Fred), *Fad'urik* (Frederick), *wis* (worse), *vuuz* (furze), *oa'üz* (hoarse), *puus* (purse), and many others.

To many words we affix a faint "vanish" or even syllable ending in *r*, as *wau'r toa'ürz*² (ware toes), *muyn yur taap'ur* (mind your top, or head). The nasal bone of all animals is called by the butchers *dhu snaut'ur boe'ün*.

The following dialogue is quite authentic from the parish of Winsford on the borders of Exmoor:—

Boy. *Mau'dhur*, *u blaak pluum'urz goa'üt lai'gurz*?

Mother. *Blaak pluum'urz goa'üt lai'gurz*! *nao pidh-ëe, chee'ül*.

Boy. *Wuul dhaen*, *faath*, *uyv ai't u stuur'tl boe'ür*, *aur u daev'iz hyuw*!

Mother, have black plums got legs?

No prithee, child.

Well, then, faith, I've eaten a black beetle or a large black snail!

We are the very type of clowns in *Zumurzetszheer*, because we are said to make all our *ses* into *ss*: but this is a libel. We should go to *zee dhu sai* (see the sea), and *saa'r u sik'spuns* (earn a sixpence), and say *sae'ül waeks un soo'üp bae'ün dhu*

¹ The *d* is here very indistinct, arising probably from the contact being imperfect, and every time Mr. Elworthy sounded the word to me, I seemed to hear a faint sound of a trilled *r'*, not of the local *r*, in place of the *d*. This reminds me of Winkler's use of *d*, in his Low German *Dialektikon*, to represent a sound which it was difficult to assign either to *d* or to *r*.—A. J. Ellis.

² The existence of this *r* in the local form is quite clear in Mr. Elworthy's imitation of the local pronunciation. "Toes" is not *toa'üz* simply, but *toa'ürz*. It must be remembered that *r* is very vocal, and that a vowel such as *aa* may be even pronounced through it. It is quite different from the trilled *r'*, or even the literary vocal *r*.—A. J. Ellis.

sae'üm (sealing-wax and soap are not the same), *u shaep dùe saa'ylée* (a ship sails), and plenty more.

Our *s* goes a long way and has many duties. One of the most usual expressions after giving an order is *shuur*?¹ (dost thou hear?) *snoa*? (dost thou know?) *wuy'sn leok shaarp*? (why dost thou not look sharp?) *kas'n hrai'd*? (canst thou not read?). I know of no case where either an *s* or a *z* sound is dropped; but where *s* and *p* come together, as in crisp, hasp, clasp, wasp, these letters are transposed, *krips*, *haaps*, *klaaps*, *waups*. When a plural has to be given to words ending in *st*, it is usual to make a distinct syllable of it: crust, singular *kris*, plural *kris'tez*; *nes* (nest), *nestez*; post (of a gate) makes *pau's* and in the plural *pau'sez*, not *paus'tez*; and though post (for letters) is *poa'üst*, the plural is *poa'üsez*.

Generally the present tense of all our verbs is formed with the auxiliaries *do* for active, and *be* with the present part. for neuter verbs; but by no means unfrequently for emphasis we use the usual inflexion. In that case, however, we have no notion of tacking on a simple consonant and saying "he walks." Our inflexion would be *ai wau'kus*, if we wished distinctly to assert that he does not ride; if merely that he is walking, we should say *ai du wau'kée*. So we say *dhu zèn skaa'hus* (the sun scalds), *dhu znoa vaa'hus* (the snow falls), *dhu wau'dr buur'nus*, *tai's tu aa't* (the water burns, it is too hot). Since this paper was commenced, a farrier gave to me, as his reason that a pony, about which I consulted him, was not looking well, that "*ai kwee'dus*." This meant that the pony suffered pain in its mouth, and so seemed to be, as it were, chewing the cud. "This latter operation is always called *chuw'in dhu kweed*. I expect this gentleman would need an interpreter if his practice led him far a-field.

This emphatic inflexion *us* can only be used with neuter verbs, or transitive verbs when used without their objects, and the same invariable rule applies to the well-known suffix *y* or *ée* as given in the preceding and following examples; but this

¹ Since "hear" becomes *yuur*, "dost hear" ought to be *s-yuur*, and the *sy* falls into *sh*, generating *shuur*."—A. J. Ellis.

last is the sign of the neuter infinitive: *Aary du faat muy bee'us wai kee'uk, un dhai dùe preor'ee tuur-bl*, "I fat my cattle with (oil) cake, and they thrive extremely well." *Aary sim tul druur'ee tudai*, "I think it will be drying weather to-day,"—that is, fit for haymaking. Or the very common saying, *Sae'rums Jon-i Krok'ur laa'rn du rok'ee, aarl aewt da ez oa'n aird*, "The same way as Johnny Crocker learned to rock (the cradle), out of his own head."

This short *ee* or *i* sound is clearly an inflexion, and that we have no particular fondness for the termination is proved by the fact that in most English words ending in *y* we get rid of it. For carry we always say *kaa'r*, for quarry *kwa'u'r*, and for story *stoa'ür*. A woman said to me the other day, *Dhai'v uroa'üzd aup a puurty stoa'ür buw'dn*, "They have raised a pretty story about him."

Some words change their aspirates into *y*, as *yaefur* (heifer), *yee'üth* (heath and hearth,—the same sound), *yee'üt* (heat), *yuur* (here, hear, ear, year,—all alike); but this *y* sound does not occur in the unaspirated words mentioned by Professor Baynes, i.e. east, earn, earth, early, eat, ale, arm, etc., and the *y* is dropped altogether in the pronoun *ye*: *wuol'ee* (will you), *dùe'ee* (do you), *aar'ee?* (have you?).

The word heather is unknown. There is a sort of oat-grass which is called *ai'ver*; the seedsmen spell it eaver, and call it *ee'ver*; but I suspect our pronunciation is most correct. Our word *yee'üth* refers to the plant only; the land on which the heath grows, the heathfield, is always *dhu yaef'fecül*.

A curious use of the auxiliary as well as the old form of the verb is found in the common expression *ur daed'n au't tìe u wai'nt* (she ought not to have gone).

Upon the words and quaint idioms, the wonderful verbiage, the cumbrous jokes, the superfluous prepositions, beyond the few examples I have given, time does not permit me to enter; and though I fear I have already crowded too many examples into this paper to make it fairly intelligible, or anything else than a practical illustration of *Zuum'urzet* indistinctness, yet it touches only the fringe of the subject. There is a very rich mine of treasure in our dialect still unexplored, some portion

of which I hope to be able at some time to lay open in another form.

I ought not, however, to conclude without mentioning that our demonstratives are *dhee'uz* (this), *dhais* (these), *dhik*, *dhik'i* (that), *dhai*, *dhoo'üz* (those). Generally to all these we add *yuur* or *dhac'ür*. *Dheez yuur sait*, "This seat here;" *Dhai dhac'ür bee'üz*, "Those beasts there;" *Dhik'i dhac'ür vee'ül ða wait*, "That field of wheat there." *Dhat* is never used except in a neuter sense. *Aa'y daed'n zai dhat dhac'ür*, "I did not say that there."

In our adverbs we are primitive: *ai du wuur-këe kuruy'ut luyk*, "he works quietly," *aa'rd luyk* (hardly), *süe'unt luyk* (evenly), showing our conservatism in retaining a guttural sound that our usual humour would lead us to discard. We also use *pres'unt luyk* in its true sense of now, at this moment, and not at some short time hence. Presently is still used habitually in this way by many people above the middle class.

Also very commonly we affix prepositions to our adverbs, as herefrom, wherefrom, therefrom; and frequently, as in German, the preposition is the last in the clause, and far removed from the word it governs, *Wae'ür w'ur daed ur git dhe see'üd rur dhik'i vee'ül ða waets vraum?* "From whence did he get the seed for that field of oats?"

Many of our verbs take their own prepositions after them, *Wau't bee laa'fin ða?* "At what are you laughing?" *Daan'ëe tich ða m*, "Don't touch them;" *Wae'ür d'ue ur lee'o t'ue?* "Where does he live?" *Wae'ür bee gwaa'yn t'ue?* "Where are you going?" The old couplet giving the names of noted parishes in the Stag-hunting district also illustrates this:

Oa'ür, Kuul'boa'ün, un Stauk Pee'roa,
Dree jis pla'e'üzex y'ue n'iv'er daed yee'r ða.
 Oare, Culbone, and Stock Pero,
 Three such places you never did hear o'.

I have already referred to the fact that in our climate *dhu zin du skaal'ëe*, "the sun scalds," and that *wau'dr buur'nus*,

"water burns," but possibly owing to peculiar manufacture our *wee'ndurz un kloa'm bee uta'o'rd*, "windows and crockery are torn," while our *koa'üts un aawr buur'chez bee ubroa'kt*, "coats and our breeches are broken." We are fond of titles like our German cousins, and therefore we, like them, dub our neighbour with his calling: *Bae'ükur* (Baker) Smith, *Beoch'ur* (Butcher) Tripe, *Taa'yldur* (Tailor) Halfyard, *Baar'bur* (Barber) Clark, *Tuur'née* (Attorney) Green, *Faa'r-mur* (Farmer) *Vaaw'ürae'ükur* (Fouracre), *Keo'pur Paa'yul* (pail) (Cooper) Pile, are all veritable names.

I have now, I trust, made good the assertion with which I started, that the traces of our archaic speech are by no means as yet swallowed up by the great wave of advancing civilization and enlightenment, and if the examples I have given you shall be the means of drawing more attention from the members of this learned society to the very rich dialect of West Somerset, I shall feel that my presumption in stepping out of my accustomed obscurity, and in coming before you to-night, is not only condoned, but very richly rewarded.

APPENDIX.

CLASSIFIED LISTS OF WORDS TO ILLUSTRATE WEST SOMERSETSHIRE PRONUNCIATION, WITH INTRODUCTORY REMARKS, AND AN EXPLANATION OF THE GLOSSIC SYSTEM OF SPELLING HERE USED.

I.—TABLE OF GLOSSIC LETTERS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER DRAWN UP BY ALEXANDER J. ELLIS, ESQ., F.R.S., F.S.A., ETC.

The Glossic letter is placed first in capitals, and is followed by the palaeotype equivalent in parenthesis, then by Mr. Melville Bell's Visible Speech name (except for the diphthongs), one or two exemplificative words which are supposed to have the received English pronunciation, and the number of the list containing it, where the introductory remarks should be consulted. Long vowels in accented syllables have the accent mark (·) placed immediately after the vowel; in unaccented syllables the long vowel is sometimes marked long, as [ēe]. The short vowel in an accented syllable is always