

LEIGH PERCIVAL

THE COMIC LATIN
GRAMMAR: A NEW AND
FACETIOUS
INTRODUCTION TO THE
LATIN TONGUE

Percival Leigh
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A new and facetious
introduction to the Latin tongue

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ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE SECOND EDITION

The Author of this little work cannot allow a second edition of it to go forth to the world, unaccompanied by a few words of apology, he being desirous of imitating, in every respect, the example of distinguished writers.

He begs that so much as the consciousness of being answerable for a great deal of nonsense, usually prompts a man to say, in the hope of disarming criticism, may be considered to have been said already. But he particularly requests that the want of additions to his book may be excused; and pleads, in arrest of judgment, his numerous and absorbing avocations.

Wishing to atone as much as possible for this deficiency, and prevailed upon by the importunity of his friends, he has allowed

a portrait of himself, by that eminent artist, Mr. John Leech, to whom he is indebted for the embellishments, and very probably for the sale of the book, to be presented, facing the title-page, to the public.

Here again he has been influenced by the wish to comply with the requisitions of custom, and the disinclination to appear odd, whimsical, or peculiar.

On the admirable sketch itself, bare justice requires that he should speak somewhat in detail. The likeness he is told, he fears by too partial admirers, is excellent. The principle on which it has been executed, that of investing with an ideal magnitude, the proportions of nature, is plainly, from what we observe in heroic poetry, painting, and sculpture, the soul itself of the superhuman and sublime. Of the justness of the metaphorical compliment implied in the delineation of the head, it is not for the author to speak; of its exquisiteness and delicacy, his sense is too strong for expression. The habitual pensiveness of the elevated eyebrows, mingled with the momentary gaiety of the rest of the countenance, is one of the most successful points in the picture, and is as true to nature as it is indicative of art.

The Author's tailor, though there are certain reasons why his name should not appear in print, desires to express his obligation to the talented artist for the very favourable impression which, without prejudice to truth, has been given to the public of his skill. The ease so conspicuous in the management of the surtout, and the thought so remarkable in the treatment of the trousers,

fully warrant his admiration and gratitude.

Too great praise cannot be bestowed on the boots, considered with reference to art, though in this respect the Author is quite sensible that both himself and the maker of their originals have been greatly flattered. He is also perfectly aware that there is a degree of neatness, elegance, and spirit in the tie of the cravat, to which he has in reality never yet been able to attain.

In conclusion, he is much gratified by the taste displayed in furnishing him with so handsome a walking stick; and he assures all whom it may concern, that the hint thus bestowed will not be lost upon him; for he intends immediately to relinquish the large oaken cudgel which he has hitherto been accustomed to carry, and to appear, in every respect, to the present generation, such as he will descend to posterity.

PREFACE

A great book, says an old proverb, is a great evil; and a great preface, says a new one, is a great bore. It is not, therefore, our intention to expatiate largely on the present occasion; especially since a long discourse prefixed to a small volume, is like a forty-eight pounder at the door of a pig-stye. We should as soon think of erecting the Nelson Memorial in front of Buckingham Palace. Indeed, were it not necessary to show some kind of respect to fashion, we should hasten at once into the midst of things, instead of trespassing on the patience of our readers, and possibly, trifling with their time. We should not like to be kept waiting at a Lord Mayor's feast by a long description of the bill of fare. Our preface, however, shall at least have the merit of novelty; it shall be candid.

This book, like the razors in Dr. Wolcot's story, is made to *sell*. This last word has a rather equivocal meaning – but we scorn to blot, otherwise we should say to be sold. An article offered for sale may, nevertheless, be worth buying; and it is hoped that the resemblance between the aforesaid razors, and this our production, does not extend to the respective *sharpness* of the commodities. The razors proved scarcely worth a farthing to the clown who bought them for eighteen-pence, and were fit to shave nothing but the beard of an oyster. We trust that the “Comic Latin Grammar” will be found to *cut*, now and then,

rather better, at least, than that comes to; and that it will reward the purchaser, at any rate, with his pennyworth for his penny, by its genuine bonâ fide contents. There are many works, the pages of which contain a good deal of useful matter – sometimes in the shape of an ounce of tea or a pound of butter: we venture to indulge the expectation, that these latter additions to the value of our own, will be considered unnecessary.

Perhaps we should have adopted the title of “Latin in sport made learning in earnest” – which would give a tolerable idea of the nature of our undertaking. The doctrine, it is true, may bear the same relation to the lighter matter, that the bread in Falstaff’s private account did to the liquor; though if we have given our reader “a deal of sack,” we wish it may not be altogether “intolerable.” Latin, however, is a great deal less like bread, to most boys, than it is like physic; especially *antimony*, *ipécacuanha*, and similar medicines. It ought, therefore, to be given in something palatable, and capable of causing it to be retained by the – mind – in what physicians call a pleasant vehicle. This we have endeavoured to invent – and if we have disguised the flavour of the drugs without destroying their virtues, we shall have entirely accomplished our design. There are a few particularly nasty pills, draughts, and boluses, which we could find no means of sweetening; and with which, on that account, we have not attempted to meddle. For these omissions we must request some little indulgence. Our performance is confessedly imperfect, but be it remembered, that

“Men rather do their broken weapons use,
Than their bare hands.”

The “Comic Latin Grammar” can, certainly, never be called an *imposition*, as another Latin Grammar frequently is. We remember having had the whole of it to learn at school, besides being – no matter what – for pinning a cracker to the master’s coat-tail. The above hint is worthy the attention of boys; nor will the following, probably, be thrown away upon school-masters, particularly such as reside in the north of England. “Laugh and grow fat,” is an ancient and a true maxim. Now, will not the “Comic Latin Grammar,” (like Scotch marmalade and Yarmouth bloaters) form a “desirable addition” to the breakfast of the young gentlemen entrusted to their care? We dare not say much of its superseding the use of the cane, as we hold all old established customs in the utmost reverence and respect; and, besides, have no wish to deprive any one of innocent amusement. We would only suggest, that flagellation is now *sometimes* necessary, and that whatever tends to render it *optional* may, now and then, save trouble.

One word in conclusion. The march of intellect is not confined to the male sex; the fairer part of the creation are now augmenting by their numbers, and adorning by their countenance, the scientific and literary train. But the path of learning is sometimes too rugged for their tender feet. We pretend not to strew it

for them with roses; we are not poetically given – nay, we cannot even promise them a Brussels carpet; – but if a plain Kidderminster will serve their turn, we here display one for their accommodation, that thus smoothly and pleasantly they may make their safe ascent to the temple of Minerva and the Muses.

INTRODUCTION

Very little introductory matter would probably be sufficient to place the rising generation on terms of the most perfect familiarity with a “Comic Latin Grammar.” To the elder and middle-aged portion of the community, however, the very notion of such a work may seem in the highest degree preposterous; if not indicative of a degree of presumptuous irreverence on the part of the author little short of literary high treason, if not commensurate, in point of moral delinquency, with the same crime as defined by the common law of England. It is out of consideration for the praiseworthy, though perhaps erroneous, feelings of such respectable personages, that we proceed to make the following preliminary remarks; wherein it will be our object, by demonstrating the necessity which exists for such a publication as the present, to exonerate ourselves from all blame on the score of its production.

When we consider the progress of civilization and refinement, we find that all ages have in turn been characterized by some one distinctive peculiarity or other. To say nothing of the Golden Age, the Silver Age, the Iron Age, and so forth, which, with all possible respect for the poets, can scarcely be said to be worth much in a grave argument; it is quite clear that the Augustan Age, the Middle Ages, the Elizabethan Age, and the Age of Queen Anne, were all of them very different, one from the other,

in regard to the peculiar tone of feeling which distinguished the public mind in each of them. In like manner, the present (which will hereafter probably be called the Victorian Age) is very unlike all that have preceded it. It may be termed the Age of Comicality. Not but that some traces of comic feeling, inherent as it is in the very nature of man, have not at all times been more or less observable; but it is only of late years that the ludicrous capabilities of the human mind have expanded in their fullest vigour. Comicality has heretofore been evinced only, as it were, in isolated sparks and flashes, instead of that full blaze of meridian splendour which now pervades the entire mechanism of society, and illuminates all the transactions of life. Thus in the Golden Age, there was something very comical in human creatures eating acorns, like pigs. The Augustan Age was comical enough, if we may trust some of Horace's satires. Much comicality was displayed in the Middle Ages, in the proceedings of the knights errant, the doings in Palestine, and the mode adopted by the priests of inculcating religion on the minds of the people. In the Elizabethan Age several comic incidents occurred at court; particularly when any of the courtiers were guilty of personal impertinence to their virgin queen. It must have been very comical to see Shakspeare holding stirrups like an ostler, or performing the part of the Ghost, in his own play of Hamlet. The dress worn in Queen Anne's time, and that of the first Georges, was very comical indeed – but enough of this. Our concern is with the present time – the funniest epoch, beyond all

comparison, in the history of the world. Some few years back, the minds of nations, convulsed with the great political revolutions then taking place, were in a mood by no means apt to be gratified by whimsicality and merriment. Furthermore, certain poets of the lack-a-daisical school, such as Byron, Shelley, Goethe, and others, writing in conformity with the prevailing taste of the day, threw a wet blanket on the spirits of men, which all but extinguished the feeble embers of mirth, upon which 'shocking events' had exercised so pernicious an influence already: or, to change a vulgar for a scientific metaphor, they placed such a pressure of sentimental atmosphere on the common stock of laughing gas, as to convert it into a mere fluid, and almost to solidify it altogether. It is now exhibiting the amazing amount of expansive force, which under favourable circumstances it is capable of exerting. Many causes have combined to bring about the happy state of things under which we now live. Amongst these, the exertions of individuals hold the first rank; of whom the veteran Liston, the late lamented Mr. John Reeve, the facetious Keeley, and the inimitable Buckstone, are deserving of our highest commendation. And more especially is praise due to the talented author of the Pickwick Papers, whose genius has convulsed the sides of thousands, has revolutionized the republic of letters (making, no doubt, a great many *sovereigns*) and has become, as it were, a mirror, which will reflect to all posterity the laughter-loving spirit of his age.

But it is not (as we have before remarked) in literature alone,

that the tendency to the ludicrous is shewn. In many recent scientific speculations it is strikingly and abundantly obvious – some of those on geology may be quoted as examples. The offspring of the sciences – those pledges of affection which they present to art, almost all of them, come into the world with a caricature-like smirk upon their faces. Air-balloons and rail-roads have something funny about them; and photogenic drawings are, to say the least, very curious. The learned professions are all tinged with drollery. The law is confessedly ridiculous from beginning to end, and what is very strange, is that no one should attempt to make it otherwise. Medicine is comical – or rather tragi-comical – the disparity of opinion among its professors, the chaotic state of its principles, and the conduct of its students being considered. No one can deny that the distribution of church property is somewhat *odd*, or can assert that the doings – at least of those who are destined for the clerical office, are now and then of rather a strange character. Political meetings are very laughable things, when we reflect upon the strong asseverations of patriotism there made and believed. The wisdom of the legislature is by no means of the gravest class, particularly when it offers municipal reforms as a substitute for bread. The debates in a certain House must be of a very humourous character, if we may judge from the frequent “hear hear, and a laugh,” by which the proceedings there are interrupted. Our risible faculties are continually called into action at public lectures of all kinds; and indeed, no lecturer, however

learned he may be, has much chance now-a-days of instructing, unless he can also amuse his audience. Nor can the various public and even private buildings, which are daily springing up around us, like so many mushrooms, be contemplated without considerable emotions of mirthfulness. The new style of ecclesiastical architecture, entitled the Cockney-Gothic, affords a good illustration of this remark; but the comic Temple of the Fine Arts, in Trafalgar Square, is what Lord Bacon would have called a “glaring instance” of its correctness. The occurrences of the day bear all of them the stamp of facetiousness. The vote of approbation, lately passed on a certain course of policy, is a capital joke; the tricks that are constantly played off upon John Bull by the Russians, French, Yankees, and others, though somewhat impertinent to the aforesaid John, must seem very diverting to lookers on. The state of the Drama may also be brought forward in proof of our position. Tragedies are at a discount; farces are at a premium; lions, nay goats and monkeys, are pressed into the service of Momus. Even the various institutions for the advancement of morals have not escaped the influence of the prevailing taste. To mention that respectable body of men, the Teetotallers, is sufficient of itself to excite a smile. In short, look wherever you will, you will find it a matter of the greatest difficulty to keep your countenance.

The truth is, that people are tired of crying, and find it much more agreeable to laugh. The sublime is out of fashion; the ridiculous is in vogue. A turn-up nose is now a more interesting

object than a turn-down collar; and if it should be urged that the flowing locks of our young men are indicative of sentimentality by their *length*, let it be remembered that they are in general quite unaccompanied by a corresponding quality of face. It has been said that the schoolmaster is abroad: – true; but he is walking arm and arm with the Merry-Andrew; and the members, presidents, and secretaries of mechanics' institutions, and associations for the advancement of everything, follow in his train. Nothing can be taught that is not palatable, and nothing is now palatable but what is funny. That boys should be instructed in the Latin language will be denied by few (although by some eccentric persons this has been done); that they can be expected to learn what they cannot laugh at will, to all reflecting minds, especially on perusing the foregoing considerations, appear in the highest degree unreasonable. To conclude: – let all such as are disposed to stare at the title of our work, ponder attentively on what we have said above; let them, in the language of the farce, “put this and that together,” and they will at once perceive the beneficial effect, which holding up the Latin Grammar to ridicule is likely to produce in the minds of youth. So much for the satisfaction of our senior readers. And now, no longer to detain our juvenile friends, let us proceed to business, or pleasure, or both: – we will not stand upon ceremony with respect to terms.

COMIC LATIN GRAMMAR

Of Latin there are three kinds: Latin Proper, or good Latin; Dog Latin; and Thieves' Latin, Latin Proper, or good Latin, is the language which was spoken by the ancient Romans. Dog Latin is the Latin in which boys compose their first verses and themes, and which is occasionally employed at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, but much more frequently at Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Glasgow. It includes Medical Latin, and Law Latin; though these, to the unlearned, generally appear Greek. Mens tuus ego – mind your eye; Illic vadis cum oculo tuo ex – there you go with your eye out; Quomodo est mater tua? – how's your mother? Fiat haustus ter die capiendus – let a draught be made, to be taken three times a day; Bona et catalla – goods and chattels – are examples.

Thieves' Latin, more commonly known by the name of slang, is much in use among a certain class of *conveyancers*, who disregard the distinctions of meum and tuum. Furthermore, it constitutes a great part of the familiar discourse of most young men in modern times, particularly lawyers' clerks and medical students. It bears a very close affinity to Law Latin, with which, indeed, it is sometimes confounded. Examples: – to prig a wiper – to steal a handkerchief. A rum start – a curious occurrence. A plant – an imposition. Flummoxed – undone. Sold – deceived. A heavy swell – a great dandy. Quibus, tin, dibs, mopuses, stumpy

– money. Grub, prog, tuck – victuals. A stiff-'un – a dead body – properly, a subject. To be scragged – to suffer the last penalty of the law, &c.

All these kinds of Latin are to be taught in the Comic Latin Grammar.

If Toby, the learned pig, had been desired to say his alphabet in Latin, he would have done it by taking away the W from the English alphabet. Indeed, this is what he is said to have actually done. The Latin letters, therefore, remind us of the greatest age that a fashionable lady ever confesses she has attained to, – being between twenty and thirty.

Six of these letters are called what Dutchmen, speaking English, call fowls – vowels; namely, a, e, i, o, u, y.

A vowel is like an Æolian harp; it makes a full and perfect sound of itself. A consonant cannot sound without a vowel, any more than a horn (except such an one as Baron Munchausen's) can play a tune without a performer.

Consonants are divided into mutes, liquids and double letters; although they have nothing in particular to do with funerals, hydrostatics, or the General post office. The liquids are, l, m, n, r; the double letters, j, x, z; the other letters are mutes.

“Hye dum, dye dum, fiddle *dumb*– c.” – Sterne.

A syllable is a distinct sound of one or more letters pronounced in a breath, or, as we say in the classics, in a jiffey.

A diphthong is the sound of two vowels in one syllable. Taken collectively they resemble a closed fist – i.e. a bunch of *fives*.

The diphthongs are au, eu, ei, æ, and œ. Of the two first of these, au and eu, the sound is *intermediate* between that of the two vowels of which each is formed. This fact may perhaps be impressed upon the mind, on the principles of artificial memory, by a reference to a familiar beverage, known by the name of half-and-half. In like manner, ei, which is generally pronounced i, and æ and œ, sounded like e, may be said to exhibit something like an analogy to a married couple. The human diphthong, Smith female + Brown male, is called Brown only.

The reason, says the fool in King Lear, why the seven stars are no more than seven – is a pretty reason – because they are not eight. This is a fool's reason; but we (like many other commentators) cannot give a better one, why the Parts of Speech are no more than eight – because they are not nine. They are as follow:

1. Noun, Pronoun, Verb, Participle – declined.
2. Adverb, Preposition, Conjunction, Interjection – undeclined. Most schoolboys would like to decline them altogether.

OF A NOUN

A noun is a name, – whether it be a Christian name, or a sur-name – the name of a prince, a pig, a pancake, or a post. Whatever is – is a noun.

Nouns are divided into substantives and adjectives.

A noun substantive is its own trumpeter, and speaks for itself without assistance from any other word – *brassica*, a cabbage; *sartor*, a tailor; *medicus*, a physician; *vetula*, an old woman; *venenum*, poison; are examples of substantives.

An adjective is like an infant in leading strings – it cannot go alone. It always requires to be joined to a substantive, of which it shows the nature or quality – as *lectio longa*, a long lesson; *magnus aper*, a great *boar*; *pinguis puer*, a fat boy; *macer puer*, a lean boy. In making love (as you will find one of these days) or in abusing a cab-man, your success will depend in no small degree in your choice of adjectives.

NUMBERS OF NOUNS

Be not alarmed, boys, at the above heading. There are numbers of nouns, it is true, that is to say, lots; or, as we say in the schools, “a precious sight” of nouns in the dictionary; but we are not now going to enumerate, and make you learn them. The numbers of nouns here spoken of are two only; the singular and the plural.

The singular speaks but of one – as later, a brick; faba, a bean; tuba, a trump (or trumpet); flamma, a blaze; æthiops, a nigger (or negro); cornix, a crow.

The plural speaks of more than one – as lateres, bricks; fabæ, beans; tubæ, trumps; flammæ, blazes; æthiopes, niggers; cornices, crows.

Here it may be remarked that the cynic philosophers were very *singular* fellows.

Also that prize-poems are sometimes composed in very *singular numbers*.

CASES OF NOUNS

Nouns have six cases in each number, (that is, six of one and half a dozen of the other) but can only be put in one of them at a time. They are thus ticketed – nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, vocative, and ablative.

The nominative case comes before the verb, as the horse does before the cart, the “lieutenant before the ancient,” and the superintendant of police before the inspector. It answers to the question, who or what; as, Who jaws? *magister jurgatur*, the master jaws.

The genitive case is known by the sign of, and answers to the question, whose, or whereof; as, Whose breeches? *Femoralia magistri* – the breeches of the master, or the master’s breeches.

The dative case is known by the signs to or for, and answers to the question, to whom, or to or for what; as, To whom do I hold out my hands? *Protendo manus magistro* – I hold out my hands to the master.

In this place we are called upon to consider, whether it be more agreeable to have Latin or the ferula at our *fingers’ ends*.

Observe that *dative* means *giving*. Schoolmasters are very often in the dative case – but their generosity is chiefly exercised in bestowing what is termed monkey’s allowance; that is, if not more kicks, more boxes on the ear, more spats, more canings, birchings, and impositions, than halfpence.

The accusative case follows the verb, as a bailiff follows a debtor, a bull-dog a butcher, or a round of applause a supernatural squall at the Italian Opera. It answers to the question Whom? or What? as, Whom do you laugh at? (behind his back) *Derideo magistrum* – I laugh at the master.

The vocative case is known by calling, or speaking to; as, *O magister* – O master; an exclamation which is frequently the consequence of shirking out, making false concords or quantities, obstreperous conduct in school, &c.

The ablative case is known by certain prepositions, expressed or understood; as *Deprensus magistro* – caught out by the master. *Coram rostro* – before the *beak*. The prepositions, in, with, from, by, and the word, than, after the comparative degree, are signs of the ablative case. *In angustiâ* – in a fix. *Cum indigenâ* – with a native. *Ab arbore* – from a tree. *A rictu* – by a grin. *Adipe lubricior* – slicker than grease.

GENDERS AND ARTICLES

The genders of nouns, which are three, the masculine, the feminine, and the neuter, are denoted in Latin by articles. We have articles, also, in English, which distinguish the masculine from the feminine, but they are articles of dress; such as petticoats and breeches, mantillas and mackintoshes. But as there are many things in Latin, called masculine and feminine, which are nevertheless not male and female, the articles attached to them are not parts of dress, but parts of speech.

We will now, with our readers' permission, initiate them into a new mode of declining the article *hic*, *hæc*, *hoc*. And we take this opportunity of protesting against the old and short-sighted system of teaching a boy only one thing at a time, which originated, no doubt, from the general ignorance of everything but the dead languages which prevailed in the monkish ages. We propose to make declensions, conjugations, &c., a vehicle for imparting something more than the mere dry facts of the immediate subject. And if we can occasionally inculcate an original remark, a scientific principle, or a moral aphorism, we shall, of course, think ourselves sufficiently rewarded by the consciousness – *et cætera, et cætera, et cætera*.

Masc. hic. Fem. hæc. Neut. hoc, &c

The nominative singular's hic, hæc, and hoc, —
Which to learn, has cost school boys full many a knock;
The genitive 's hujus, the dative makes huic,
(A fact Mr. Squeers never mentioned to Smike);
Then hunc, hanc, and hoc, the accusative makes,
The vocative – caret – no very great shakes;
The ablative case maketh hôc, hac, and hôc,
A cock is a fowl – but a fowl 's not a cock.
The nominative plural is hi, hæ, and hæc,
The Roman young ladies were dressed à la Grecque;
The genitive case horum, harum, and horum,
Silenus and Bacchus were fond of a jorum;
The dative in all the three genders is his,
At Actium his tip did Mark Antony miss:
The accusative 's hos, has, and hæc in all grammars,
Herodotus told some American crammers;
The vocative here also – caret – 's no go,
As Milo found rending an oak-tree, you know;
And his, like the dative the ablative case is,
The Furies had most disagreeable faces.

Nouns declined with two articles, are called common. This word common requires explanation – it is not used in the same sense as that in which we say, that quackery is common in

medicine, knavery in the law, and humbug everywhere – pigeons at Crockford's, lame ducks at the Stock Exchange, Jews at the ditto, and Royal ditto, and foreigners in Leicester Square – No; a common noun is one that is both masculine and feminine; in one sense of the word therefore it is *uncommon*. Parens, a parent, which may be declined both with hic, and hæc, is, for obvious reasons, a noun of this class; and so is fur, a thief; likewise miles, a soldier, which will appear strange to those of our readers, who do not call to mind the existence of the ancient amazons; the dashing white sergeant being the only female soldier known in modern times. Nor have we more than one authenticated instance of a female sailor, if we except the heroine commemorated in the somewhat apocryphal narrative – Billy Taylor.

Nouns are called doubtful when declined with the article hic or hæc – whichever you please, as the showman said of the Duke of Wellington and Napoleon Bonaparte. Anguis, a snake, is a doubtful noun. At all events he is a doubtful customer.

Epicene nouns are those which, though declined with one article only, represent both sexes, as hic passer, a sparrow, hæc aquila, an eagle, – cock and hen. A sparrow, however, to say nothing of an eagle, must appear a doubtful noun with regard to gender, to a cockney sportsman.

After all, there is no rule in the Latin language about gender so comprehensive as that observed in Hampshire, where they call every thing *he* but a tom-cat, and that *she*.

DECLENSION OF NOUNS SUBSTANTIVE

There are five declensions of substantives. As a pig is known by his tail, so are declensions of substantives distinguished by the ending of the genitive case. Our fear of outraging the comic feelings of humanity, prevents us from saying quite so much about them as our love of learning would otherwise induce us to do. We therefore refer the student to that clever little book, the Eton Latin Grammar, strongly recommending him to decline the following substantives, by way of an exercise, after the manner of the examples there set down. First declension, Genitivo æ. Virga, a rod. – Second, i. Puer, a boy. Stultus, a fool. Tergum, a back. – Third, is. Vulpes, a fox. Procurator, an attorney. Clien, a client. – Fourth, ûs – here you may have, Risus, a laugh at. – Fifth, ei. Effigies, an effigy, image, or Guy.

The substantive face, facies, *makes faces*, facies, in the plural.

Although we are precluded from going through the whole of the declensions, we cannot refrain from proposing “for the use of schools,” a model upon which all substantives may be declined in a mode somewhat more agreeable, if not more instructive, than that heretofore adopted.

Exempli Gratiâ

Musa musæ,
The Gods were at tea,
Musæ musam.
Eating raspberry jam,
Musa musâ,
Made by Cupid's mamma,
Musæ musarum,
Thou "Diva Dearum."
Muis musas,
Said Jove to his lass,
Musæ musis.
Can ambrosia beat this?

DECLENSIONS OF NOUNS ADJECTIVE

Some nouns adjective are declined with three terminations – as a pacha of three tails would be, if he were to make a proposal to an English heiress – as bonus, *good*– tener, *tender*. Sweet epithets! how forcibly they remind us of young Love and a leg of mutton.

Bonus, bona, bonum,
Thou little lambkin dumb,
Boni, bonæ, boni,
For those sweet chops I sigh,
Bono, bonæ, bono,
Have pity on my woe,
Bonum, bonam, bonum,
Thou speak'st though thou art mum,
Bone, bona, bonum,
“O come and eat me, come,”
Bono, bonæ, bono,
The butcher lays thee low,
Boni, bonæ, bona,
Those chops are a picture, – ah!
Bonorum, bonarum, bonorum,
To put lots of Tomata sauce o'er 'em
Bonis – Don't, miss,

Bonos, bonas, bona,
Thou art sweeter than thy mamma,
Boni, bonæ, bona,
And fatter than thy papa.
Bonis, – What bliss!

In like manner decline tener, tenera, tenerum.

Unus, one; solus, alone; totus, the whole; nullus, none; alter, the other; uter, whether of the two – make the genitive case singular in *ius* and the dative in *i*.

RIDDLES

Q. In what case will a grain of barley joined to an adjective stand for the name of an animal?

A. In the dative case of unus – uni-corn.

Uni nimirum tibi rectè semper erunt res.
Hor. Sat. lib. ii. 2. 106.

Q. Why is the above verse like all nature?

A. Because it is an *uni*-verse.

The word *alius*, another, is declined like the above-named adjectives, except that it makes *aliud*, not *alium*, in the neuter singular.

The difference of *unus* from *alius*, say the London commentators, like that of a humming-top from a peg-top, consists of the *'um*.

N.B. *Tu es unus alius*, is not good Latin for “You’re another,” a phrase more elegantly expressed by “*Tu quoque*.”

There are some adjectives that remind us of lawyer’s clerks, and, by courtesy, of linen-drapers’ apprentices. These may be termed *articled* adjectives; being declined with the articles *hic*, *hæc*, *hoc*, after the third declension of substantives – as *tristis*, sad, *melior*, better, *felix*, happy.

It is not very easy to conceive any thing in which sadness and comicality are united, except *Tristis Amator*, a sad lover.

Melior is not *better* for comic purposes. *Felix* affords no room for a *happy* joke.

Decline these three adjectives, and others of the same class, according to the following rules:

If the nominative endeth in *is* or *er*, why, sir,
The ablative singular endeth in *i*, sir;
The first, fourth, and fifth case, their neuter make *e*,
But the same in the plural in *ia* must be.
E, or *i*, are the ablative’s ends, – mark my song,
While *or* to the nominative case doth belong;
For the neuter aforesaid we settle it thus:
The plural is *ora*; the singular *us*.
If than *is*, *er*, and *or*, it hath many more enders,
The nominative serves to express the three genders;
But the plural for *ia* hath *icia* and *itia*,
As *Felix*, *felicicia* – *Dives*, *divitia*.

COMPARISONS OF ADJECTIVES

Comparisons are odious —

Adjectives have three degrees of comparison. This is perhaps the reason why they are so disagreeable to learn.

The first degree of comparison is the positive, which denotes the quality of a thing absolutely. Thus, the Eton Latin Grammar is *lepidus*, funny.

The second is the comparative, which increases or lessens the quality, formed by adding *or* to the first case of the positive ending in *i*. Thus the Charter House Grammar, is *lepidor* – funnier, or more funny. – The third is the superlative, which increases or diminishes the signification to the greatest degree, formed from the same case by adding thereto, *ssimus*. Thus the Comic Latin Grammar is *lepidissimus*, funniest, or most funny. A Londoner is *acutus*, sharp, or 'cute, – a Yorkshireman *acutior*, sharper, or more sharp, 'cuter or more 'cute – but a Yankee is *acutissimus* – sharpest, or most sharp, 'cutest or most 'cute, or tarnation 'cute.

Enumerate, in the manner following, with substantives, the exceptions to this rule, mentioned in the Eton Grammar.

Sonus, good. Melior, better. Optimus, best.
A plain pudding. A suet pudding. A plum pudding.

Malus, bad. Pejor, worse. Pessimus, worst.
A caning. A spatting. A flogging.

&c. &c.

Adjectives ending in *er*, form the superlative in *errimus*. The taste of vinegar is acer, sour; that of verjuice acrior, more sour; the visage of a tee-totaller, acerrimus, sourest, or most sour.

Agilis, docilis, gracilis, facilis, humilis, similis, change *is* into *llimus*, in the superlative degree.

Agilis, nimble. – Madlle. Taglioni.

Agilior, more nimble. – Jim Crow.

Agillimus, most nimble. – Mr. Wieland.

Docilis, docile. – Learned Pig.

Docilior, more docile. – Ourang-outang.

Docillimus, most docile. – Man Friday.

Gracilis, slender. – A whipping post.

Gracilior, more slender. – A fashionable waist.

Gracillimus, most slender. – A dustman's leg.

&c. &c.

If a vowel comes before *us* in the nominative case of an adjective, the comparison is made by *magis*, *more*, and *maximè*, *most*.

Pius, pious. – Dr. Cantwell.

Magis pius, more pious. – Mr. Maw-worm.

Maximè pius, most pious. – Mr. Stiggins.

Sancho Panza called Don Quixote, Quixottissimus. This was not good Latin, but it evinced a knowledge on Sancho's part, of the nature of the superlative degree.

OF A PRONOUN

A pronoun is a substitute, or (as we once heard a lady of the Malaprop family say), a *subterfuge* for a noun.

There are fifteen Pronouns.

Ego, tu, ille,

I, thou, and Billy,

Is, sui, ipse,

Got very tipsy.

Iste, hic, meus,

The governor did not see us.

Tuus, suus, noster,

We knock'd down a coster-

Vester, noster, vestras.

monger for daring to pester us.

To these may be added, egomet, I myself; tute, thou thyself, idem the same, qui, who or what, and cujas, of what country.

DECLENSION OF PRONOUNS

Pronouns concern *ourselves* so much, that we cannot altogether pass over them; though a hint or two with regard to the mode of learning their declension is all that we can here afford to give. We are constrained now and then to leave out a good deal of valuable matter, for the reason that induced the Dublin manager to omit the part of Hamlet in the play of that name – the length of the performance.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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