

and renders ignorance of them inexcusable. It is to the former of these that the *Review* directs our attention.

One cannot but ask as to the nature of the difficulty complained of, and how it came to exist. It is, partly at least, to be traced to the rules of syllabication enacted by certain grammarians and accepted by learners as of unquestionable authority, but which are purely *arbitrary*, and have as little foundation in the structure of the language as they have in reason.

Let us examine this point for a moment from one or two familiar examples. In such a word, for instance, as *caput*, a leading rule would make the first two letters constitute a syllable, and the last three another. This, as we pronounce, would render the *a* of the first syllable *long*, whereas it is *short*. If we would observe the true pronunciation, we must disregard the rule of syllabication, and divide the word between its third and fourth letters. This would make the first syllable short, as it is in Latin verse, which is our only authority for quantity. A like remark would apply to hundreds of similar words, and among them to the two instanced by the *Review*. The grievance or difficulty complained of would seem to be not a very formidable one, for we have seen how easily it can be removed. The common and incorrect pronunciation is expressed by the syllabication *bo-nus*, *be-ne*; the correct and extremely rare pronunciation, by *bon-us*, *ben-e*. It need not be mentioned that the quantity is ordinarily exhibited in another manner, that is, by certain signs placed over the vowels in question.

So there is a rule in some of the grammars which discriminates among the accidents of nouns, etc., assigning a different pronunciation to the corresponding syllables of the different cases. Thus, in *navis*, in which the first syllable is *long*, and is so pronounced in the other cases, in the dative and ablative plural we are instructed to give it the *short* sound. The same guides would have us pronounce the antepenult of *amabimus* and *amabitis* as if it was short; whilst in the corresponding syllable of the other forms of the tense they kindly allow us to observe the proper quantity.

From what has been said it will appear how unfounded is the statement so often met with in the grammars, when dealing with this subject, that the accenting of a syllable necessarily renders it long. To so assert argues a confusion of thought remarkable indeed, as the peculiar stress of voice, denominated accent, may fall on any syllable indifferently, whether long or short. The *a* in *dominus* is as much accented as is the *au* in *audire*; and yet in the first case the syllable is short, while in the last it is long. I hope

I shall be excused for having adduced such simple and homely illustrations, for the language does not furnish anything less simple and less homely.

The lesson taught by the above is sufficiently obvious. It is, to disregard all rules of grammars or other authorities, which, if followed, would falsify the quantity, or lead to an incorrect accentuation of the words; and for this reason, among others, that it may be so easily known what is the true quantity and accentuation of all Latin words with the few exceptions of those that are not found in the Latin poets, or whose pronunciation can not be determined by analogy. If this were done there would be no longer the inconvenience and discomfort that attend the babel of sounds with which our ears are tortured by the conflicting systems or usages of discordant schools.

WOLFEH N S

PHILOMATHES.

For the Review.

TO NATURAL SCIENTISTS.

Two years since, the writer was engaged in exploring timber lands on the Bonaventure river, which discharges its waters into the Bay of Chaleur. Early in March, when the snow was four feet deep, we had ascended the river many miles, as its snow-covered surface afforded free scope to our portagers, who were carrying food, bedding and cooking utensils on three toboggans. Everything went smoothly until we came within a mile or two of the Forks; then the ice, which had previously shown no symptoms of weakness, began to give evidence that it was not to be relied on, and finally, when we were, by estimation, from one and a half to two miles from the Forks, we found an open river, whose clear green waters were bounded on either side by white banks of snow. The river was rapid and its waters shoal. On either side there was a small strip of beach. On this we saw a robin or two (*Turdus Americanus*) hopping about and gathering up such food as the bright waters had cast on the shore. There were also a few ducks to be seen. Leaving the river we cut our way through the woods to the Forks, where we camped that night. The left branch we found all open and entirely free from ice. This we crossed the next morning by means of a long cedar which we felled, after which we ascended the right-hand branch, which was solid, a distance of sixteen miles, or so far as we dare, travelling becoming dangerous; indeed, in many cases we could hear the water roaring beneath the high up-raised shelly ice over which we were hauling our toboggans. But to return to the Forks, where I saw what interested me much: An article whose name I am ignorant of, and only know by the fire