

## ORTHOËPY.



THE other day I heard a gentleman say that in the Roman Universities where Latin is the official language, the continental students cannot control their risible faculties when they hear a mispronunciation. Indeed a change of accent does sometimes turn the sublime into the ridiculous. For instance "Fidelium omnium Conditor et Redemptor" should be sufficient excuse for momentarily yielding to an inclination to smile. But I am told that even where the meaning remains unchanged the unfortunate who makes a slip in quantity, is made to feel a little uncomfortable. However, it is not my object to praise those students for their accurate knowledge of Latin prosody, nor to reprimand them for what seems to be a breach of politeness. I was reminded that a mispronunciation in England, if it does not tend to excite laughter, at least grates unpleasantly on the ear. Indeed I am pretty sure that an English-speaking student at Rome would be disposed to forgive the seeming rudeness of the punctilious Italians if he heard them called *Eyetalions*. Nor is it the punctilious or fastidious only, who dislike to hear a word mispronounced. Rogers said that "*côntemplate* is bad enough but *bâlcony* makes me sick." The fact that *bâlcony* has now superseded *balcôny* does not affect the question. You will invariably find that men accustomed to speaking correctly are pained by mistakes in orthoëpy. I thought therefore that I "might make a few remarks" which may be productive of a little good to those who are not irrefragable in this respect. My highest object is to call their attention to the matter in the hope that they may be induced to consult some of the easily accessible books which treat of this subject. Without any attempt to reverse the famous principle "from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous," I give merely a rehash of some admonitions which, though often repeated, are often neglected.

At the risk of producing nausea, I shall say a word about the "u" sound. No one pronounces *few*, *foo*, yet many pronounce *new*, *noo*. *Institoot* and *instiitootion* are

occasionally heard among the *stooðents*. Those who are endeavoring to give the long u its proper sound should remember that it is composed of *e* (or *i*) and *oo'*. Thus *pursue* is neither *pursoo* nor *purshoo*. The two simple sounds are slightly separated after *s*, *t* and *d*: *pur-se-oo*, the *e* sound being barely perceptible, and of course not forming a separate syllable; *duty* is neither *dooty* nor *jooty*, *literature* neither *literatoor* nor *literachoor*. The preceding consonant preserves its proper sound. A gentleman being asked by his neighbor for his *noose-paper* promptly handed him his marriage certificate.

The consonant which has the misfortune to be at the end of a word is often grossly neglected, especially if the next word begins with the same letter. Gray's bard loses all his dignity when we hear it said of him :

"His beer descending swept his aged breast."

*Ann* is by the very careless called *Ann*. *Ann* is not unfrequently placed in some very embarrassing situations. And what wonderfully versatile powers she possesses. She is "He," "She" and "It." I have heard of "Ann the wife," "Ann the priest," "Ann the devil," and *Ann* in a hundred other capacities. At times it is the initial letter of the next word that is sacrificed to haste and carelessness. Your friends are not chaffing you when they ask you if you arrived by the *last rain*. "*Chaste Stars!*" has a meaning entirely different from *Chase tars*. The context generally enables one to know that he is not exhorted to *study deceit* when the speaker or reader should have said *studied deceit*.

Words ending in *ts* are seldom pronounced correctly. An old teacher of mine said that he once heard a preacher fervently exclaim "Would that all difference of sex were at an end!" At another time he quoted from "the Axe of the Apostles!" I heard that word *apostles* repeated very often in a sermon, and to give the *t* (which should be silent) greater prominence he said *apostols*. The *apostols* figured very frequently in the sermon, and about the only thing that remains of the discourse, in my memory, is *apostols*.