

comparatives, as in the following sentence : "For neither if we eat, are we *the* better ; neither if we eat not, are we *the* worse." How could the formation of *the* before *better* and *worse* be explained to a class of young pupils knowing nothing of Latin nor of any other inflected language? Its explanation would be attended with some difficulty. But a mere smattering of Latin on the part of the class would enable the teacher to make this use of *the* before comparatives perfectly plain, by showing its correspondence with *eo*, the ablative neuter of *is*, *ea*, *id*, in the same situation. But if the class were to begin with Anglo-Saxon grammar instead of modern English, a resort to Latin would be unnecessary; *the* would be at once recognized as the ablative *the* or *thy* of the Anglo-Saxon demonstrative adjective pronoun, *se*, *seo*, *that*, (corresponding with the Latin *is*, *ea*, *id*), representing, in its old pronominal character, the two propositions, "we eat," and "we eat not," and as an ablative of cause or means, qualifying or limiting, adverbially, *better* and *worse*. "For neither if we eat, are we *the* (that is) on *that* account, namely, that we eat) better ; neither if we eat not, are we *the* (that is, on *that* account, namely, that we eat not) worse."

Sometimes phrases occur in the most familiar, every-day English, which are totally unexplainable in any other way than by a resort to their original forms. Take, for example, the expression "a forty foot rope." No one would say "a forty feet rope," and yet how is the apparent inconsistency of uniting the numeral "forty" with "foot" to be explained? Only by going back to the original Anglo-Saxon construction, which required nouns denoting measure, weight, value, &c., and also when used after large numerals, to be put in the genitive. The genitive plural of nouns and adjectives in Anglo-Saxon invariably ended in -a, which, in the gradual dropping off of inflections, dwindled into an obscure -e, and this was finally displaced by the predominant ending

-es or -s of the nominative and accusative plural (derived from Anglo-Saxon -as, of the 2nd declension), which became the common ending of all cases in the plural. But in the expression "forty foot," "foot" is the remains of the old genitive plural "fōta." There is a small class of nouns in Anglo-Saxon, to which fōt, *foot*, belongs, that, instead of inflection, undergo a vowel change in the dative singular and in the nominative and accusative plural ; e.g., fōt, *foot*, bōc, *book*, gōs, *goose*, tōth, *tooth*, lūs, *louse*, mūs, *mouse*, etc. ; dative singular and nominative and accusative plural, fēt, bēc, gēs, tēth, lēs, mēs, respectively. But in the genitive plural, the vowel of the nominative singular is always retained ; fōta, *of feet*, bōca, *of books*, gōsa, *of geese*, tōtha, *of teeth*, lūsa, *of lice*, mūsa, *of mice*. And this explains the apparently singular form of "foot," in the expression, "a forty foot rope," which is the genitive plural after "forty," with the ending dropt. The expression in Anglo-Saxon would be "rāp feowertig fōta lāng," a rope forty of feet long, or "a forty of feet long rope, or, by an ellipsis of "long," a forty of feet (fōta] rope.

But to explain the modern English verb to a class of young learners is attended with still greater difficulties—difficulties not real, but resulting from the attempt to study the language at the wrong end ; and that part of the verb which is generally the least understood is the infinitive. What is the infinitive form of a verb? It is its name or nominative form, that form by which an act is designated. It is, in fact, an abstract noun, being the name given to an act conceived apart from an actor. Hence we find it used in all languages as a noun, in the character of a subject of a proposition, and of a complement of a predicate. When we turn to the parent language, we find that our modern infinitive is derived from an oblique case of the old infinitive. The old infinitive ended invariably in -an, as *bindan*, *to bind*, *drifan*, *to drive*, *standan*, *to stand*,