

Milton worthy of attentive study in our schools, but if anyone attempted to argue that we should adopt the pronunciation of two or three hundred years ago we should consider the claim absurd. Usage is the law of correct speech; and when there is a question of correct pronunciation we usually refer to some recognized centre of converse, where good usage has fixed the mode of speech, such as Paris, or Dublin, or Florence for the respective languages used there. The recognized centre of the Latin language, as far as it is a *spoken* and living idiom, is Rome. From Rome and to Rome lead all the roads in which the Latin language is heard, sung and spoken, in the elegant phrase of the classic scholar or in the medieval simplicity of the friars' jargon. Is it then strange that we should suit our speech to the manner of that great centre?

To say that it has changed some of its sounds is arguing nothing against its legitimate use. What language has not changed in two thousand years? Is there any that has changed so little? And if so, is it not due to the fact that the Latin Church, which claims the right of its present pronunciation, has spoken it all these centuries and preserved its living character?

On the other hand, the dilettante, the antiquarian, the student who pursues language as a literary curiosity or as a help to thoughtfulness, has a perfect right to inquire how Cicero or Chaucer or Shakespeare spoke, and to imitate the diction of these authors in all particulars. Their wisdom is misplaced only when they wish to force their views on the old Church and her habits. She was in possession long, long ago; she cultivated that language — the language of the Church by common consent — for practical living use, neglecting neither the classic grace of its golden age, as exemplified in Hilary of Poitiers, or Damasus, or Gregory, nor the rustic simplicity which made it an easy means of intercourse with the unlettered. Leo XIII. to-day imitates with matchless power the sweetly flowing *aleaics* of Horace, and gives them at the same time that originality which stamps their worth as separate works of art. To accept the Pope's Latin is as natural as to accept the Queen's English.

So let the collegians have their archaic way; but we shall claim the speech of our great city, Rome, as by right and title that of the Latin Republic in letters or out of them. For the rest, the matter has never troubled the Church, who has left each one to indulge his peculiar taste.

[For "Roman" in the third line read "modern Roman" or "Italian." The pronunciation of Latin which is supposed to have obtained in the Augustan age is now commonly spoken of as the "Roman."—ED. EX.]