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XXXIII.

ON THE PRONUNCIATION OF GREEK.

So much has been written, and well written, concerning Greek pronunciation, in regard to accent, quantity, rhythm, and the quality of the sounds, that it is probably impossible to produce any thing new. Yet the opposite opinions which still occasionally appear in highly respectable quarters, prove that the controversy is not exhausted; or else, that all which has been established is not yet familiar even to some of our best scholars. In illustration, a note may be adduced from the late Sir Daniel Sandford, and a very deliberately-written passage by Dr. R. G. Latham. The former says (p. 89 of his Translation of Thiersch's *Gr. Gram.*): "As to reading Greek by accent, which the author here recommends, I never heard it practised without a complete sacrifice of the proper emphasis; and consequently of the sense, as well as of the quantity. The Greek accent consisted in the mere *elevation* or *depression* of the tone, and therefore did not interfere with quantity. But our accent consists in the *stress* of the voice, and therefore [therefore!] cannot be applied to a short syllable without altering its quantity."

The last words shew that Sir D. Sandford was accustomed to understand by a *short*, an unemphatic syllable; which is a fundamental misconception. It is a vulgar error to use the words long and short in regard to English syllables, where accented and unaccented should be said; as, to say that "pity" has the first syllable *long*. The true statement is, that the word is in quantity a Pyrrhic (˘˘), but in regard to accent a Trochee, *i. e.* accented on the first. Evidently Sir D. Sandford errs in imagining, that when we put a *stress* of the voice on the first syllable, we alter the *quantity*, *i. e.* the time.

No one can hear the modern Greeks speak, without observing that the musical elevation of voice on the accented syllables is greater with them than with us; yet they accompany that *elevation* with a *stress* equal to ours. On the other hand, a

careful study of our accent will, it is believed, shew, that although its *stress* chiefly catches the ear, it is ordinarily accompanied by *elevation*; though the amount of elevation is determined entirely by oratorical considerations. No essential difference, therefore, can be established between English accent and Greek accent, although the threefold state of acute, grave, and circumflex indicates a nicer vocabular discrimination than either the modern Greeks or the English admit. *Some* change in this respect has passed on the language, since there is no longer any difference heard between κῆρ and κήρ, φῶς and φός. Since the English circumflex is purely oratorical, we undoubtedly cannot execute such a sound upon a vowel without seriously affecting the sense of a passage. So much may be admitted to Sir D. Sandford. But if with the modern Greeks we consent to merge the sound of the three accents in one, the difficulty which he complains of vanishes. In fact, he would appear to have confounded *vocabular* with *oratorical* accent. The former alone is written by the Greeks, every word in a sentence (except so far as the enclitics and the *grave* accent affect the question) being denoted precisely as in a dictionary or grammar. Elocution preserves this accentuation in the main, but modifies it so as to mould the parts of a sentence into a single whole.

Dr. Latham, in his learned work on the English language, prints the following passage twice over; pp. 130, 372: "The incompatibility of the classical metres with the English prosody lies in the fact, that the classic writer measures quantity by the length of the syllable taken altogether; while *the Englishman measures it by the length of the vowel alone.*"

If Dr. Latham means to say that English readers manage to hurry over consonants in less time than an Italian would approve, that may be conceded: but in that case we *count* the time shorter merely because it *really is* shorter: there is nothing arbitrary in our measurement. But the passage most strangely implies that our metres are determined by questions of quantity or time. On the contrary, nothing, one might think, could be more notorious, than that the mechanical part of English versification depends wholly on accent; though the melody and the expressiveness are exceedingly influenced by quantity. Pope certainly knew this, and exemplified
couplet:

III.

2 E

“ When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
The line too labours, and the words move slow.”

The pure *metre*, being accentual, would be the same if he had written,

“ When Aíās aims ä röcký máss to thrów :”

But the *expression* of the short syllables would be widely different from that of the long ones. Dr. Latham surely cannot mean to tell us, that Pope “measured” *aks str* (in the words “Ajax strives”) by the mere vowel *a* with which it begins.

What then is the difference between English and Greek, or between the ancient Greek and the modern? Plainly this, that the old poetry was made to be *sung*, but the modern to be *read*. Now, in singing to a tune, time is more important than accent; hence the old versification took cognizance only of time: but in reading, as in oratory, emphasis is far more influential, and time cannot be accurately measured; hence modern verses, Greek or English, are made with reference solely to accent. Such, we may say dogmatically, is the outline of the case: yet it is not to be dissembled that difficulties lie beneath; nor is it imagined that they will all be removed in the present paper. Nevertheless, it will be something to have pointed out distinctly wherein they consist, and how far our positive knowledge extends.

No obscurity whatever, it is believed, hangs over the enunciation of Attic *prose*, except, first, our uncertainty concerning the threefold accent; secondly, the oddity sometimes introduced by enclitics. As to the former point, we may conjecture that the grave accent differed from the acute (*i. e.* *τυμή* from *τυμή*, *τις* from *τίς*), just as the weaker from the stronger accent in *Determination*, *Énginéer*, in which the stronger has also the greater elevation of voice. But no junction of the two into a circumflex, such as grammarians describe, can be executed, without deviating (in the judgment of an English ear) into the domain of *oratorical* accent. In regard to enclitics, a series of accented but unimportant syllables, as in *εἰπέ μοι τίς τίς*, certainly sounds to us very ridiculous, but involves no physical difficulty.

Some able scholars of our country have imagined it impossible to pronounce such words as *ἄνθρωπος*, *ἐπειτα*,—*proparoxytons* long in the penultima. Mr. Blackie, in vol. 1. of

this work, p. 364, and elsewhere, has expounded the true theory of the general subject, but has not turned his attention to this one point. In fact, so much confusion of thought is current concerning accent and quantity, that it is not useless to reiterate truisms. We say then, that we have in English, as in Greek, the most complete separation of accent and quantity in numerous words; that our spondees may be accented on either syllable; that so may our iambs; so may our trochees. Let the following parallels be considered:

1. Spondee, accented on first syllable: *μύθους, πέμπω, χοϊνίξ, cóntrite, fémale, cónpact, úmpire, básement, E'gypt, &c.*

2. Spondee, accented on last syllable: *αὐτοῦς, αἰδώς, τιμήν, τιμῶ, compáct, contént, disdatn, outgó, outwént, foregó, upbráid, unbind, &c.'*

3. *Iambs accented on first syllable: φίλους, γράφω, fóllo, méadow, béllows, sháadows, Híttite, &c.*; in which we must not allow the eye to mislead us, as if we sounded double the consonants which we write double.

4. *Iambs accented on second syllable: θεά, κενούς, βέneáth, bélong, préténd, détain, &c.*

5. *Trochees accented on first syllable: οὔλος, μῶμος, πῆghty, plénty, &c. &c.*

6. *Trochees accented on second syllable: ἑλπίς, ἐνίς, tomít, fulfil, undóne, outrún.* (We have no words ending in an accented short vowel, as *εἰπέ, πορέ*; but the Turks say, *Mirzá*, and it is easy to us to execute the sound.)

If this has been understood, it will be clear that to form a word like *ἄνθρωπος*, we have only to add a short syllable, *πος*, to the sound of *ἄνθρω*; and there is nothing in this annexation which *forces* us to shorten the *ω*. In fact, if we pronounce the *ω* as *au, av*, with the modern Greeks, we cannot help lengthening it. No Englishman will experience *difficulty* in sounding "ánthrawpos," but, from mere impatience, he wishes to hurry it into "ánthrāpos," exactly as the Irish say *grándfèther*, for *grándfather*: which precisely expresses the corruption of long vowels into short which has taken place in modern Greek, now that they no longer school their pronunciation to the times of the lyre. Our *tendency*, no doubt, is to shorten a penultimate vowel so placed; but it is only a tendency, not a necessity, and is shared by the Greeks themselves with us.

Compare *κάλλιστε, βέλτιστε* with *industry, grácelessnéss*

and ἀνθρωρε with *contritely*, οὐτπῶριγ, and it will be clear that the Greek has nothing in the slightest degree peculiar or questionable. And with this, the subject of the *prose* accentuation may be here dropped.

But on approaching the question, how the Greeks pronounced their *poetry*, serious difficulties at once appear. If their accent consisted of musical elevation, it must have utterly vanished, or even have been reversed, when words were sung to a tune, unless the melody took cognizance of the accent; which, by comparison of Strophes and Antistrophes in the unknown metres, and by the ascertained laws of known metres, we are positively assured was not the case. Nay, if their music had such a thing as *time* and *bars*, it had also a periodic stress marking the bars,—and clearly indeed it is said to have had an *ictus metricus*,—which would equally interfere with the accent of words, in so far as that accent consisted in a *stress*. Between the two, the *προσῳδία* would seem to have been wholly sacrificed in singing, so that *θεα* and *θεά* would be sounded alike. Is this to be admitted?

It is certainly a startling concession, but one difficult to refuse. To bring the question to a practical trial, the most decisive method seems to be, either to set Greek words to a modern air, or to invent a tune to correspond to a known Greek metre. Tried in either way, the result will be found inevitable, that the true prose accent was utterly lost in singing poetry.

To apply the test alluded to, I first took a well-known ode of Moore's, which he has adapted to a strongly-marked national tune of the Tyrolese; and translated it into Greek, so as to suit the same music, having regard *solely* to quantity or time. I give Moore's words and the translation; the music is too well known to need being printed here.

1.

Merrily every bosom boundeth,
 Merrily oh, merrily oh,
 Where the song of Freedom soundeth,
 Merrily oh, merrily oh.
 There the warrior's arms | Shed more splendour,
 There the maiden's charms | Shine more tender.
 Every joy the land surroundeth,
 Merrily oh, merrily oh.

2.

Wearily every bosom pineth,
 Wearily oh, wearily oh,
 Where the chain of slavery twineth,
 Wearily oh, wearily oh.
 There the warrior's dart | Hath no fleetness
 There the maiden's heart | Hath no sweetness.
 Every flower of life declineth,
 Wearily oh, wearily oh.

3.

Cheerily then from hill and valley,
 Cheerily oh, cheerily oh,
 Like your native fountains sally,
 Cheerily oh, cheerily oh.
 If a glorious death | Won by bravery
 Sweeter be than death | Sigh'd in slavery,
 Round the flag of Freedom rally,
 Cheerily oh, cheerily oh.

1.

ἰλαρὰ πᾶν κέαρ πέκαλται,
 ἰλαρογηθῆς, ἰλαρογηθῆς,
 ἐνθ' ἐλευθέρῃ βοῶται
 στόματι παιᾶν θρασυμενῆς.
 ἀνδρὸς ἔπλ' ἐκεῖ | γοργὰ λάμπει
 χάρις ἐκεῖ κόρης | σιλῶσει ἀβρά.
 καλὸν ἅπαν τέθλη, χώρας
 ὑπὲρ ἐκείνης περιχυθῆν.

2.

σμυγερὰ πᾶν κέαρ τέτηκεν,
 σμυγεροβριθῆς, σμυγεροβριθῆς,
 ἐνθα δεσπότου πέπλεκται
 ἄλυσις, οἴμοι, ἀπότροπος.
 νωθρόν ἐστ' ἐκεῖ | παλτὸν ἀνδρὸς
 κῆρ ἐκεῖ κόρης | οὐ ποτεινόν.
 κατὰ δὲ πᾶν ζοῆς ὄλωλεν
 φθιμένον ἄνθος φθιμένον αἶ.

3.

κατ' ἄρ' ὄρους διέκ φαράγγων,
 ἀτρομόθυμοι, ἀτρομόθυμοι,
 πάτριον ὡς ὕδωρ χαραδρῶν,
 ἄθροοι ὀρμαῖθ', ἰλαροὶ ᾤ.

θάνατος εἰ καλῇ | κτητὸς ἀλκιῇ
 δουλιῶν γούων | φιλιτερον γούων,
 ὑπὲρ ἑλευθέρως ἀπαντες
 διαμάχεσθε πατρίδος οἴ.

But it may be said, the tune chosen is by far too marked, and too quick. Such tunes in the decline of the Greek drama, were objected to by the judicious, as leading to a sacrifice of the true pronunciation to the exigencies of the music. A grave and slow tune should be selected, without rapid transitions from high to low, or a very strong beat at the beginning of the bar, as best representing the melodies used by the primitive classics. In deference to this argument, let us take our air of "God save the Queen," which it is believed, is quite unobjectionable on any of these heads. The first verse runs thus :—

God save Victoria,
 God save our noble Queen,
 God save the Queen ;
 Send her victorious,
 Happy and glorious,
 Long to reign over us,
 God save the Queen !

This may be freely rendered to suit the music in regard to *time* :—

Χαίροις, Βικτωρία,
 γενναία, παντελής,
 θεία βουλῇ !
 δῆων ἀτρέστος οὐσ',
 ἀρχαῖς παμμήκεσιν
 σεμνῶς τιμωμένη,
 δαρόν θάλλοις !

Here it is manifest, that in singing we are forced to accent (i. e. *emphaticize*) the syllables as follows :—

Χαίροις, Βικτώρια,
 γένναια, πάντελης,
 θεία βουλῇ !
 δῆων ἀτρέστος οὐσ',
 ἀρχαῖς παμμήκεσιν
 σέμνωσ τιμώμενη
 δάρον θαλλοῖς !

In other words, the stress at the beginning of the bar (or ictus metricus?) thoroughly overpowers and annihilates the prose accentual stress, except where they accidentally coincide. If I do not mistake, this is equivalent to saying, that by *scanning* our verses after the manner of schoolboys, we make the nearest approach which can be made without knowing the real tune, to the actual singing practised by the Greeks.

One more question suggests itself; ought not the Greeks, if they desired perfection in this matter, so to have constructed their poetry as to suit at once the times and the ictus of the melody, without losing the true accent of the words? or was this impossible? It clearly was impossible to retain the pure *προσῳδία*, i. e. the musical elevation; but it was only difficult, not impossible, to retain the ictus, as will immediately be shewn; but perhaps, since they could not retain in the accent that element which more peculiarly struck the Greek ear, they felt it not worth while to cramp their poetry for the sake of this partial gain. To test this also, I selected the Portuguese air, as giving a metre not unlike those which are familiar in Greek, and attempted to write verses which should agree syllable by syllable to the longer or shorter notes, at the same time leaving the prose accentual stress uninjured by the ictus of the music. The words which Moore has set to the melody are as follows:—

1.

Flow on thou shining river!
 But ere thou reach the sea,
 Seek Ella's bow'r, and give her
 The wreaths I fling o'er thee.
 And tell her thus, if she'll be mine,
 The current of our lives shall be
 With joys along their course to shine,
 Like those sweet flow'rs on thee.

2.

But if, in wandering thither,
 Thou find'st she mocks my pray'r,
 Then leave those wreaths to wither
 Upon the cold bank there.
 And tell her thus, when youth is o'er,
 Her lone and loveless charms shall be
 Thrown-by upon life's weedy shore,
 Like those sweet flow'rs from thee.

The English is by no means slavishly in accordance with the music, which, as I happen to have it, is set thus, for a bass voice.



The Greek has been adapted by me quite slavishly, except that by inadvertence I have made the first syllable of the 6th verse in the stanza long. As it is a mere *anacrusis*, this is very unimportant. Semiquavers are here taken as short syllables, quavers and every thing longer as long syllables.

1.

ὦ σπεῦδε, ῥέεθρον σιλβον
 πρὶν ὠκεανὸν δέ σ' ἤκειν,
 κομίζοις θάλαμον ἐς Ἑλλης
 πλοκάς, ὡς ῥίπτω σοί.
 εἰπεῖν δ', ὅτ' ἔσται γ' ἠδ' ἐμῆ,
 αὐτίκα βίου ἀνά γλυκεράς βοάς
 νευσεῖσθαι ὄλβον νῦν ἀβρόν,
 ὡς ἄνθη ταῦτ' ἐν σοί.

2.

ἀλλ' ἦν, νεόμενον κεῖσε,
 ὄρᾳ σφε γελᾶν λιγαῖς μου,
 ἐπ' ὄχθης πρόβαλε ταῦτ' ἄνθη
 μαραινέσθαι ψυχρᾶς.
 εἰπεῖν δ', ὅθ' ἦβη κέκλιται,
 ὡς χάρις ἄφαρ ἄχαρις ἀπόλλυται
 φουκῶδη εἰς ἀκτὴν ζωῆς,
 ὡς ἄνθη ταῦτ' ἐκ σοῦ.



The constraint thus put upon a versifier is, however, unendurable except in a short piece; for a full half of the words in the language is excluded by the laws of the metre. At the same time any composer would readily set the music differently so as to lessen the rather eccentric demands made by the tune in its present form. In short, the first three lines are all nearly reducible to the law of an Anacreontic, and the 5th, 6th, and 7th to a diameter Iamb, as regards mere time.

This consideration is suggestive. It is difficult to repress the belief that this simple tune would have been felt by Æschylus or Anacreon quite appropriate for their poetry. If however they had wished to write verse to it, they would neither have regarded the accent in so doing, nor have subjected the metre to the minor flourishes of the music. It can hardly be doubted that they would have produced lines more in the following style:—

1.

ὦ σκεῦε, νᾶμα λαμπρόν
 πρὶν δ' εἰς θάλασσαν ἐλθεῖν,
 πρόφαι' ἐς ὅμιν Ἑλλης
 ἃ σοι βίατω στέφη.
 αἶε' ὡς, ὅτ' ἴσται γ' ἦδ' ἐμῆ,
 ἐκ τοῦδε νῦν βίου βοαῖς
 χλωρὰς χαρὰς ἀπανγάζειν,
 τάδ' ὡς ἐν σοὶ στέφη.

2.

ἀλλ' ἦν, ἐκεῖσε κλέζον,
 ὄρῃς μάτην με δεῖσθαι,
 ψυχρᾷ σὺ γῆ φθαρήναι
 πλοκάς τάσδ' ἐμβάλοις.
 αἶπ' ὡς, ὅθ' ἦβη κέκλειται,
 τὸ κάλλος ἀκλείς ἄλλοιαι
 φυκῶδη εἰς ἔχθην ζοῆς,
 τάδ' ὡς ἐκ σοῦ στέφη.

The evidence here offered will impress different minds differently; but we are brought by this tune so naturally into metres quite familiar to the ancients, as apparently to shew that we are treading in their steps. Once more; trial shews that to sing the lines involves their scanning, and to scan them is a rude substitute for singing, while in any case the accent of the books vanishes from the ear.

It would be tedious to pursue this subject from the other side; —*viz.* by devising tunes to correspond to known ancient verses, —were there not a certain intrinsic interest or amusement in the latter subject. At different times I have with more or less success invented melodies suitable to various metres myself, and I have also engaged friends better versed in the theory and practice of music to give me help in the same direction. The result is always the same as I have already denoted; as will appear from the following specimens of music intended to illustrate the genuine Greek Sapphic and the Horatian Sapphic. The former might be thrown, like the latter, into *two-four* time; but I leave it as I composed it. The latter is from a friend possessed of high musical taste, and the accompaniments to both are from a lady.

Andante Pianissimo.

Sapphic Metre.

ποι - κι - λó-θρον' á - θάν-αρ' Α - φρό-δι - τα

παϊ Δι - óς δο - λóκ - λο - κε λίσ - σο - μαί σε

μη μ' ἀ - σαι - σι, μη μ' ἀ - γι - αι - σι

δάμ - να, πέρ - ρι - α, θῦ - μον.

HORATIAN STANZA.

*Sapphic
Metre.*

Jam sa - tis ter - ris nivis at - que di - ra

Gran - di - nis mi - sit Pater et ru - ben - te

The first system of music consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is written in a bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. It features a series of eighth and quarter notes, with two accents (V) placed above the notes for 'ni' and 'te'. The piano accompaniment is written in grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

Dex - te - rã sa - cras ja - cu - la - tus

The second system of music continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has a sharp sign above the note for 'ã' in 'rã'. The piano accompaniment maintains the same rhythmic pattern as the first system.

ar - ces , Ter - ru - it ur - bem.

The third system of music concludes the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has an accent (V) above the note for 'ces' and a fermata over the final note 'bem.'. The piano accompaniment ends with a final chord in the right hand and a sustained note in the left hand.

It is, indeed, contended by certain learned men, that when the Greeks wished to execute a trochee in the time of a spondee, or a dactyl in the time of a trochee, they did not effect it, as we do, by substituting ♩ · ♩ for ♩ ♩ or again ♩ ≡ for ♩ ♩; but, leaving to the notes of each foot their due mutual proportion, they slackened or quickened them so that the entire foot should have the time required. On this subject Mr. Blackie gave very full details in an interesting and elaborate paper several years back¹. But whatever the value of such nicety to the Greek ear, it does not seem to affect our general question. Let it be admitted that our music is not precisely identical with that of a Greek lyrist; it is still close enough to illustrate and test principles.

If all that has been *thus far* advanced be conceded, we have a paradoxical fact, *viz.* that the Greeks must have been contented to listen to melodious sounds very difficult to understand, since the confusion of η ἦ, ἦ ἦ ῆ, εἰ εἰ, and numerous others, would be peculiarly catching; but we have nothing obscure in the theory. In modern singing, also, the true pronunciation is constantly sacrificed to the music, and most peculiarly so in the slowest psalms or the most solemn chants. In the chants we hear twelve words rapidly run over (one may often say, *gab-bled*), and the three or four last spun out to a prodigiously disproportionate length. Nothing which we are now imputing to the ancients can well have been more unnatural and remote from common speech than this. In the psalm tunes, we generally sing to duplicate time verses made by alternate accents, and often composed (as to quantity) of trochaic and iambic feet. The lines were made to be recited, without any idea of the tune to which they were to be sung, or even that they were to be sung at all: hence short syllables are frequently made very long, and that, syllables of most subordinate meaning. We are moreover accustomed to commence (accentual) iambic lines with an (accentual) trochee; this pleases us in recitation, but in singing it throws the ictus of the melody on an unaccented foot with a great breach of propriety. Yet it is endured, and no one cries out against it. All these enormities are combined

¹ *Foreign Quarterly Review*, vol. XXI. pp. 241—294.

in the first lines of the well-known Evening Hymn, which, according to the tune appropriated to it, are thus pronounced :—

Glōry' tō thēé, m̄y Gōd', thīs nīght,
Fōr āll' thē blēssings ō'f thē līght : &c.

The only short note in the music is the first, and this is long in the poetry. Out of two lines we see so many as *seven* short unaccented and unimportant syllables turned into long ones, and two of them over and above receive a strong accent; viz. the *y* of *glory*, and *of* in the second line. *This* and *of* may, indeed, be called long by position. With such evidence of the extreme difficulty of reconciling the claims of music and of elocution, there is the highest presumption that the Greeks, as we, habitually sacrificed in singing the legitimate utterance.

But when we leave their lyrical poetry, and approach that which was recited without music—though no doubt with a certain chant, such as we name *recitative*—new difficulties arise. The characteristic phænomenon in all these metres, whether the heroic hexameter, the elegeiac, the iambic senarian, the trochaic tetrameter, or the anapæstics—is a peculiar *law of Cæsura*. Necessary cæsuras occur also in some of the lyrical verses, but are then for the most part readily explained by the musical *rest*; as in

Mæcenas, atavis | edite regibus.

No one² who has once admitted that the ancient music had *bars*, or equable divisions of time, will doubt that after *atavis* the voice paused for a time equivalent to a long syllable, so as to complete the bar, as follows :—



which removes nearly all difficulty. But this explanation, which holds equally good in the pentameter line, quite fails in the hexameter; and in all the others; in which, the time is complete without a rest, and the rest in fact is scarcely endurable. Another solution suggests itself out of the observed fact (see Zumpt's *Latin Gram.* p. 560, Schmitz's trans.), that several of

² On this whole subject Mr. Blackie's article may be consulted: as well as that in vol. 1. of the *Classical Museum*.

the secondary rules to the hexameter seem intended to make the prose accent *at its close* agree with the ictus of the metre. What is called a *cæsura* does not necessarily imply a rest, but in *Latin* does, in certain cases, determine the accentuation. We can understand, that, as in the modern chant the last words are more distinctly heard than the beginning, so in the Latin hexameter peculiar care may have been bestowed to reconcile the ictus and the accent in the close, where also (as in the iambic senarian) the metre has least liberty. But it is very difficult to imagine why, in the earlier part of the verse, it should³ *sometimes* be a positive offence, if the same reconciliation is effected; much less is it clear why words like *qui periturus* should not close an epic verse. To a mere tiro, who has learned only the mechanical rules, such a line as :

“Calchas nolens quemquam certæ opponere morti :”

appears to be more satisfactory than

“Nolebat quemquam Calchas opponere morti :”

Nor does it seem possible to silence his scruples, when it is remembered that lines so formed do not offend the tragedians, with whom the following are good for singing *to music* :

τοιαυτε Καλχας σὺν μεγαλοῖς ἀγαθοῖς ἀπεκλαγγεν—
 πρὸς σε γενειάδος, ὦ φίλος, ὦ δοκιμωτάτος Ἑλλάδι,
 ἀντομαὶ ἀμφικιπνόντα το σὺν γόνυ καὶ χερα δειλαῖα—

But here a fresh difficulty springs up. The Greek hexameter, in its more cultivated form, tended to receive the same laws of *cæsura* as the Latin, although in common with the pentameter, it had always more liberty in its mode of closing. Nevertheless the Attic accentuation is in so great contrast to that of Latin, and is commonly so different even in two lines which have the same *cæsura*, as to throw all these thoughts into confusion. For instance,

Μῆνιν δειδε, θεᾶ, Πηληϊάδew Ἀχιλλῆος—
 εἰπέ, σὺ Μοῦσα, πάθη, Λαερτιάδης δὲ κόνησε—

have both the same *cæsuras*, but no two accents alike : and yet each would have been equally approved. This appears to

³ Yet not always. In the *feminine* *cæsura* the ictus and accent often coincide; as, *Spergens dulcis mella, soror-* *viferumque paraver;* and nearly in *Ἔσπετε νῦν μοι, Μοῦσαι, Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι.*

involve us in an inextricable net. To cut boldly through its meshes, a theory might be advanced;—1. That Homer used the Æolic accentuation, which nearly approached to that of Latin;—2. That the Sicilian accentuation of Theocritus was in substance the same, but that his learned editors, to make him more generally intelligible, have accommodated the accentual marks to the pronunciation current in the literary circles of Greece proper;—3. That to the Attics, as to the modern Greeks and ourselves, the Homeric versification was a system past and dead, although they could easily imitate it mechanically, and imagined that they understood its melody. Whether the second part of the theory is contrary to fact, others perhaps may be able to decide. Meanwhile, the same difficulty rises on us in a new form, and under circumstances which do not admit of a similar solution, when we approach the iambic senarian. The utterance of this ought to have been nearly the same as in common speech, if Horace rightly styled it,

— populares

Vincentem strepitus, et natum rebus agendis—

Moreover, it was thoroughly native to the Athenians; yet not only is the ictus of the metre opposed to the accent, but its law of cæsura became increasingly uniform with cultivation, and stands in no relation whatever to the accent. We cannot imagine a rest, without a violation of the musical time; and although by the liberty of *rallentando* a rest be allowed, this does not explain why it should be enforced. In English poetry we have absolutely nothing analogous, nor is it obvious from what quarter we are to look for illustration⁴. One remark may be added, only because it is generally overlooked, that some of the anomalies deemed objectionable by critics, are to the English ear justified by the Attic accent, as,

Θρήκην περάσαντες μόγις πολλῆ πόνῳ—
 στρατὸς περᾶ κρυσταλλοπέγα διὰ πόρον—
 Πιέρης δ' ἀνώμωξεν, κακῶν ὄρων βάθος—

⁴ A bold discussion of this very perplexing subject will be found in the Proceedings of the Philological Society for 1842-4, p. 128, from the pen of Dr.

Latham. His remarks concerning the meaning of the Greek accent would perhaps be remodelled, after listening to the pronunciation of modern Greeks.

yet it is most probable that in all these the poet purposely threw a peculiarity into the metre to attain expression.

Lastly, when it is observed that the cæsura of the anapæstic diameter reverses all that is laid down in dactylic lines, although *to the eye* anapæsts may even become dactylic,—as in :

ἀσπιδοφέρμονα θίασον εὖπλον
ἀντίπαλον κατὰ λαϊνὰ τείχεα.
ἢ δεινὰ τις Ἔρις θεός, ἃ τὰδε
μήσατο πῆματα γᾶς βασιλεῦσιν
Λαβδακίδασιν πολυμόχοις :

where nothing but the last line convinces us that we are dealing with anapæsts ;—it seems to follow that no one can explain to us the meaning of the cæsura, who cannot *sing to us one or more recitatives suitable to the particular metre*. If modern musicians would condescend to conceive of any thing so simple, or, rather, so meagre, poor, and monotonous, as the music of Orpheus and the recitatives of Archilochus must have been, they, and they only, could enliven the rules of these dead metres. We want, for instance, for the hexameter, at least as many recitatives as there are cæsuras essentially differing ; and it is to be presumed that the reciter followed one or other according to the cæsura of the line to be read.

Gathering up the conclusions from all that has been written, it is maintained that we shall most closely imitate the ancient Athenians, if, in reading their *prose* we utter their accent as our own,—if, in their *lyrical poetry*, we read by scansion,—and if, in their *epic and tragic poetry*, we adopt some uncertain mingling of the two methods. The last part of the subject alone appears to the writer to involve any obscurity at all. Without disrespect to a few able writers who doubt whether the acute accent, as uttered by the modern Greeks, substantially expresses the pronunciation of their ancestors, he cannot but believe that such a doubt arises from mere want of information, prejudice, or some other human infirmity. Our school method of pronouncing Greek is as untenable in argument, and as inconvenient in practice, as it is inexpressibly ludicrous to the ear of a cultivated native. Assuredly it is difficult for us now to alter it ; nay, without combination, it is impossible ; but our public schools might effect the change in half a generation, if the teachers were convinced of its importance ; on which topic I

proceed to urge the following considerations turning on utility.

The present system inflicts on pupils a great additional effort, and entails a prodigious mass of blundering and confusion. They are allowed to see accents, which they are not allowed to utter. They become habituated to inobservance concerning those marks, insomuch that it is a perpetual difficulty to enforce the utterance even of the *spiritus asper*, which is a true constituent letter of words. It would be better to forbid accentuation in school-books, than, as now, practically to teach thoughtlessness and silence inquiry. When the time comes for "learning the accents," which ought to have gone on *pari passu* with the words of the language, pupils are subjected to the debasing process of *learning artificial rules for right pronunciation, without the least intention of ever pronouncing aright*. A mind thus tampered with, if it be active, resents the infliction, and cavils against the teacher; if it be inactive, rests satisfied in a dull, formal system, and imbibes a spirit opposed to all living and feeling research.

It will, perhaps, be said, that the accents *must* be learned, to avoid the confusion of like words. Granted! then they ought to be learned *from the very beginning, and by the ear*. The very first time a boy recites *λόγος, λόγου, λόγῳ, λόγον, and θεός, θεῶ, θεῶ, θεόν*, he should be required to pronounce the words with their own accent. If this were systematically done, no new difficulty would be added to the elements, and the after-learning of accents would be superseded. The only uncertainty remaining would be, when to mark with the circumflex; which is nearly always easy to decide by fixed rule.

Nor is there any weight in the oft-repeated assertion, that the quantities will be neglected if the accents are attended to. *The quantities are vilely neglected in our present pedantic pronunciation*; as when we assign the same sound to *καῶλος* in Homer and *κάλος* of the Attics—to *cāno*, I sing, and *cāno*, hoary—to *dūcis*, thou leadest, and *dūcis*, of a leader; and in a thousand other cases. In fact, *our received rules pay no attention to the quantity of vowels in any foot, except the penultima, and often not even there*. We must remodel our whole vowel-utterance, before we can make any approach either to the true Greek (or Latin) sounds, or to correct quantity. As regards the solitary danger of shortening a long penultima when the accent is on

the antepenultima, it is easily obviated in the case of \bar{a} η ω and the diphthongs, by demanding their broad sound. Long ι and \bar{u} alone are peculiarly liable in this case to be merged into \bar{i} and \bar{u} . If no language had greater difficulties of pronunciation than this petty point entails, of which so much is made, we might, indeed, felicitate ourselves. We now make confusion by pronouncing wrongly, and then commit to memory tedious rules for *knowing* the fault, but not *correcting* it.

It must not be imagined that the writer desires to recommend the vowel sounds of the modern Greeks, by whom η ϵ ν ϵ α ν are all merged in one, to the enormously increased trouble of teacher and learner, and in manifest opposition to the primitive utterance. Many well-informed writers have proposed modes of pronouncing, which are at any rate excellent approximations to truth, and practically convenient; and the only obscurity is that which hangs over the imperfect diphthongs. Without discussion, it may be allowed here to assign a system on the whole unexceptionable. Pronounce :

\bar{a} as in English *mān*, or (better) as in French *avoir*.

\bar{a} as in *fāther*.

ϵ as in *bēd*, *bērry*—(never as \bar{y} in *plenty*).

η as in *thère*, *hāre*, *bēar*.

ι as in *sīn*, or \bar{y} in *plenty*.

i as in *seen*, *machīne*.

o as in *dōg*, or (better) as in French *sōn*, *bōn*.

ω as in *bawł*, *hāll* (not as in *bōne*).

\bar{u} and \bar{u} as short and long French u .

α as in *hāts*; Latin and German α .

α as in *aye*; broad Italian αi ?

ϵ as in *bite*; German ϵi .

η as $\bar{e}y$ (y being a consonant)?

α as Latin and German α , nearly French eu .

φ as oy in *boy*?

$\alpha\nu$ as in *out*.

$\bar{\alpha}\nu$ as broad Italian au ? i. e. *foo*.

$\epsilon\nu$ as in *dew*, *new*.

$\eta\nu$ as $\bar{e}w$ (w being a consonant)?

ou as in *fōol*, *yōu*; occasionally as in *füll*, *bōok*.

ωu quite doubtful. As \bar{o} in *boat*?

ν as \bar{v} followed by the consonant y .

In the improper diphthongs, there seems no doubt that, *when*

a consonant followed, the latter vowel was dropped out of utterance by the later classics; so that *ἰππης* and *ἰπτης*, *Θρακις* and *Θρακες*, *εφηνε* and *εφνηε*, *θωυμα* and *θωμα*, were sounded alike. But when a vowel followed, as in *μυια*, *Θυιας*, *Δρανεира*, the *ι* must surely, once at least, have been our consonant *y*; Thiersch, moreover, has remarked, that the version of *Ἄρπυια* into *Harpyiæ* shews that *υ* and *ι* retained their appropriate sounds, and that *comædia*, *tragædia* indicate the same of *ω* and *ι* in *κωμωδία*, *τραγωδία*. The nearest Latin sound to express *ογ* in *βογ* was their *æ*.

If a right accentuation and approximate vowel-sounds have been attained, the right pronunciation of consonants becomes of secondary importance. The point most neglected among ourselves—neglected even in the careful and able discussion of Mr. Blackie—is the pronunciation of a consonant when reiterated. We ought not on any account to utter *καλος* and *καλλος* alike; nor yet to make any difference in the vowels. The northern nations habitually omit to sound double consonants in a single word, yet we find no physical difficulty. Neither tongue nor ear ever confounds *τῶν ναυτῶν* with *τῶν αὐτῶν*, *her rise* with *her eyes*, *nice size* with *nice eyes*; and if we wish to sound *Πελοποννησος*, *καλλος*, correctly, we have only to read them as we should if they were printed *Πελοπον νησος*, *καλ λος*, in two words. Nothing but our impatience interferes with this. People call it a “tedious and drawling” pronunciation, which is another way of stating that it *adds time* to the syllable—the precise thing which it ought to do, and the want of which violates the true quantity. Another strange result of our neglect in this matter is the current notion, that *if we shorten a vowel*, as in *καλλος*, “shadow,” *we ipso facto double the following consonant!* Akin to this, yet contrary, is the erroneous statement, that “vowels are made long by position.” It is the *syllable*, not the *vowel*, which gains time by the accumulation of consonants clogging its end; and this, because a new musical note is not heard until a new vowel begins.

It is every way desirable to forbid a confusion of *χ* with *κ*. The German *ch* is now so familiar to schools, that it might nearly always be introduced with ease, as the only pronunciation permitted for *χ*. In any case the English *ch* (*tch*) would be a better substitute for *χ* than our *k*, since it is one of the sounds of *χ* in modern Greek, and is quite distinct from that of *κ*. It

may be suspected indeed that $\sigma\sigma$ was once sounded as our *tch* but the surmise has not enough proof to act upon. How we ought to sound ζ , involves a doubt: our own *z* is not a double letter. Professor Key's⁵ opinion that Latin G and Greek Z were *originally* sounded like J (dj), has a high probability; but since verbs in $-\zeta\omega$ of more recent formation make the future $\sigma\omega$, it may be suspected that a new pronunciation came in at an early period. What was its utterance in the mouth of Plato, is a very perplexing question. Some controversy also exists as to the sound of $\beta \gamma \delta \phi$; but however it may be determined, it does not seem to have any interest in the view which we are at present taking.

But while it is confidently maintained that (with a just vocal pronunciation) prose Greek should by all means be sounded as the written accents dictate; the writer also suggests, that, until the invention of suitable chants, all Greek poetry would be better *read by scansion*. He is conscious, that by scanning of Greek choruses he has learnt in an hour what dry rules could not teach in a month, and has gained a feeling for the lyrical metres, second only to that which is imbibed by actual singing; for which it seems to be our only substitute. Nor ought we to be prejudiced against it as "a schoolboy method," even in regard to epic and tragic lines. It must be remembered that the Greek drama was not, like the English, an imitation of real life: its music was not cut sharply off and set between the acts; but pervaded the whole piece. The acting was less like real elocution, and more like singing, than ours: and if we could hear Æschylus reciting one of his own dramas, it is more than possible that we should pronounce it monotonous and puerile. If, however, scansion is forbidden, because of its marking the metre too strongly, then let no one refuse to admit the prose accentuation into verse. To flee to the arbitrary device of *pronouncing Greek by the laws of Latin accent* (lest, forsooth, we should lose some portion of the Greek melody!) is truly ridiculous, and almost an infatuation.

The practical pronunciation is settled by our public schools. The universities, having more important matters to attend to, would never interfere with the pronunciation which their students brought with them, if it were self-consistent and based on

⁵ Penny Cyclopædia, under the letter Z.

a true knowledge of quantity. From Charter-house School alone have proceeded peculiarities of pronunciation, which have, more or less, affected the grammar-schools in all England: and if the masters of a single Public School were systematically to enforce pronouncing prose Greek with Greek accent and with old Greek vowels, this would win its way, far and wide, before many years are past, from the great additional facilities which it would give to learners.—Nor is the pains, taken in making boys pronounce foreign sounds accurately, all thrown away. To exercise their articulation in reading aloud a Latin or Greek sentence distinctly and perfectly, not only prepares them for speaking other European tongues, but is in itself useful, as giving fuller command of the organs of speech. Mr. Blackie has well remarked, in the article already referred to (vol. i.), that the English language is defective in breadth of vocalization. This, in fact, is an evil which keeps growing upon us, and makes the words of a public speaker less audible as well as less melodious. It would in part be counteracted by the habit of reciting, with the antique sonorous vowels, select portions of the ancient classics: and, though in a smaller matter, the public schools might thus fulfil a genuine conservative function, of not allowing good things to become obsolete.

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