ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION OF LATIN

TWO methods of pronouncing Latin are now in extended general English use: one, the so-called English method, follows in general the analogies of English pronunciation according to certain formal rules; the other, the so-called Roman method, attempts to follow more or less closely, as far as it is known, the pronunciation of the Romans themselves at the height of their civilization (about B.C. 50 to A.D. 50).

The English method was until recently used in teaching Latin in both England and America, but has been almost entirely replaced for that purpose by the Roman method in American schools and colleges within recent years, and now to some extent in England also. The English pronunciation is still used, however, almost exclusively in the pronunciation of Latin scientific words in English, for Latin and Greek proper names in English context, for legal Latin phrases, and for familiar phrases and quotations in English context. The English pronunciation applies to the plural forms as well as the singular of Latin nouns: so we say an *alumnus*, but the *alumni*; an *alumna*, but the *alumnae*. Thus:

- *i*, when the final sound of a word, always has its long sound (as in *ice*), as *a-lum-ni*;
- *a* is always a diphthong unless separated by diaeresis. It is pronounced as *e* would be in the same position; as, *alumnae* (*a-lum-ne*)

Thus it will be seen that the final syllables of *alumni* and *alumnae* when used in English context have exactly the opposite pronunciation to that of the Roman.

Examples in English like *alumnae* are *Aeolian* (*é-o-li-an*), *Cesar* (*se-zar*), *egis* (*é-jis*), *formulae* (*é*), and *antenna* (*é*).

Examples like *alumni* are *foci* (*fo-si*), *loci* (*lo-si*), *fungi* (*fun-ji*).

It is also a rule in the English pronunciation of Latin words that *c* and *g* are soft before *e*, *i*, *y*, *ce*, *ce*; elsewhere *c* and *g* are hard.

Another method of pronouncing Latin is the so-called Continental method, developed from the modern languages during the Middle Ages and widely used by the Roman Catholic Church. By this method the vowels have their general Continental values (practically as by the Roman method) but the consonants are pronounced as in the language of the speaker. Thus *Cicero*, as a Latin name, would be pronounced in German as *tsē-tsē-rō*, in Spanish *thē-thā-rō* or *sē-sā-rō*, in Italian *ché-chā-rō*, in French *sē-sā-rō*, in English *sē-se-rō*.

Molière's *Les Femmes Savantes*, in an English version, was the commencement play at the Harrisonburg State Teachers College in June.