

**ELEMENTS OF  
LATIN HEXAMETERS  
AND PENTAMETERS**

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Elements of Latin Hexameters and Pentameters by Robert Bland

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**ROBERT BLAND**

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OF  
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AND  
PENTAMETERS.

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BY  
THE REV. ROBERT BLAND.

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..... possum præcepta referre  
Ni refugia, tenuisque piget cognoscere curas.

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THE FIFTEENTH EDITION, ACCURATELY REVISED AND  
CORRECTED THROUGHOUT.

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MDCCCL.

440.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

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Having been requested by Messrs. Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., the Proprietors of Bland's Work on Latin Hexameter and Pentameter Verse, to revise the Work accurately throughout, I have gone through both that and the Key with great care, and I am enabled to say, that the work, as it now stands, is entirely free from the errors, such as transpositions of words and false metres, which were to be found in the former edition.

J. A. GILES.

*Windslesham, Aug., 1840.*



## INTRODUCTION.

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WHEN Hexameters and Pentameters are arranged alternately the verse is termed Elegiac. This style of writing is used in subjects of a didactic, moral, or plaintive nature, and also in poetical epistles. It will be useful in this place to lay down the rules which should be observed in the composition of these metres when used separately, and also when combined alternately as above mentioned. Verses may be written in accordance with the strictest rules contained in the grammar, and yet may be utterly deficient in that elegance which gives value to versification. When a writer has once formed his style by rigid adherence to the best models, he may occasionally deviate and adopt a few licences, in which he will find himself supported by the authority of the best poets themselves. But these licences are so sparingly used by the ancients, and the temptation to fall into them is so great, that the beginner should on no account deviate from the following rules, which may be considered as landmarks to guide him in his course.

1. The last syllable of a word ending with a vowel or *m* is cut off by the figures *Synalæpha* and *Echthipsis*, if the next word begin with a vowel. In this rule, the learner is to guard against the introduction of too many elisions in the same verse, and is on no account to imitate the following line of Virgil:—

*Manstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum.*



Having once formed his style and taste by a diligent rejection of every licence during his non-age, the writer of Latin verse may begin to introduce a few liberties, supported by the authorities of those great poets whom he will make the objects of his imitation. But those who have been trained to observe the rule and the usage most scrupulously will be most cautious in availing themselves of a privilege which should be accorded only to talent and facility.

The *beginner* then is on no account permitted to violate the following restrictions and usages, which may be considered as a supplement to his prosody. Although instances occur, in the best Latin poets, of deviations from them, which prevent them from passing into rules, yet are these liberties so sparingly scattered through the most admired works even of the greatest length, that learners should by no means be encouraged to adopt them.

## CAUTIONS

ADDRESSED TO BEGINNERS\*.

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*Introduction to the Fifth Edition.*

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THE rules of prosody are within the reach of every learner of Latin verse. But metrical exercises, so necessary to the formation of that tact, by which alone the graces and more exquisite beauties of language are felt, may be written in perfect conformity with the more absolute laws contained in the grammar, without yet attaining to elegance, or even to correctness. Not to canvass the degree of licence in which a scholar may be entitled to indulge, it will not be denied that *beginners* should be trained to the observance, not merely of positive rules, but also of the most approved usages, the violation of which, if not, strictly speaking, erroneous, is at least ungraceful.

\* Some alterations in the introduction to the fourth edition have been rendered necessary by the changes in the work as it stands at present.

It will also be equally inelegant to adopt the practice of Lucretius, who sometimes, instead of eliding the final *m*, makes the syllable short; as

Corporum officium est quoniam premere omnia deorsum.

2. The more ancient Latin poets sometimes elided *s*; as

Tum laterali' dolor, certissimu' nunciu' mortis.

Since, however, this licence had become exploded in the time of Virgil and Horace, it is not to be imitated by the pupil, although some modern scholars have occasionally made use of it, in express imitations of Lucretius and the old poets.

3. Neither will it be wise for the pupil to elide a vowel at the end of a line in consequence of the next verse beginning with a vowel; as in the following of Virgil:—

Sternitur infelix alieno vulnere, calumpne  
Aspicit.

4. The ancients sometimes retained a final vowel before a word beginning with a vowel, and in this case, if the vowel was long and did not stand as the first syllable of a foot so as to receive the *ictus*, they made it short: thus—

Ter sunt conati imponere Pelio Ossam—  
Et bis Is Arethusa' Is Arethusa vocavit.

As this licence is only used under certain circumstances, and gives a great harshness of sound to the verse if used injudiciously, it is to be avoided by the pupil.

5. The figure *Synæresis* (or *Crasis*), by which two syllables are contracted into one, is also to be avoided; as in the following:—

Sint Mæcenates non dæerunt, Flacce, Marones.  
Et sœtraum varios rerum sentire colores.