

**HINTS AND HELPS
FOR LATIN
ELEGIACS**

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Hints and helps for Latin elegiacs by H. Lee-Warner

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HINTS AND HELPS
FOR
LATIN ELEGIACS

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AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

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P R E F A C E.

THE object of this selection is to supply interesting English poetry for boys in the higher forms of Public Schools. The mistake usually made is to set boys English to turn into Latin Verse, which is quite unlike the kind of Latin that they read in ordinary selections from Ovid. A boy who has gone through such a book as Taylor's Stories from Ovid in Elegiac Verse, is quite at sea when turned on to the sentimental love-pieces, or languid descriptions of scenery, which form the usual staple of a Latin Verse Exercise Book. He is at once met by two difficulties. The first is that the English does not inspire him. The second is that the Latin poetry which he has hitherto read is not at all in the same style. Now it is not contended that Ovid is the most inspiring of poets. That he is the most easy of imitation, however, may fairly be assumed. If it is a good mental exercise to put English into Latin Verse at all, there is no style so easy to catch as that of Ovid. The stupidest of boys can learn to break up the ideas in an English couplet and to rearrange them in short Ovidian sentences, as in the panels of a triptych, if only there are any ideas in the English to begin with. The very excesses of such a style will teach boys to reflect, and they will acquire judgment by beginning Verse on so obvious a system. In studying Ovid they will notice that they study a poet who gives to a single idea more turns and transitions than any other Latin author. For if Ovid fails in judgment he is a master of invention, and in learning the first canons of

criticism it is perhaps well for boys to have to deal with a poet whose faults and virtues they can see so clearly.

The selection here offered is the result of many years of experience in teaching Latin Verse by one who has never quite convinced himself that Latin Verse teaching is desirable for all boys in any form of a Public School. It is true that much that is said about the drudgery of such exercise is based on ignorance of boy-nature. Once the metre is learnt—and the learning of that is one of the incidents in reading Latin Verse—to do prepared Latin Verses is after all no more difficult than to write correct Latin, using the metre as a key, and if sufficiently helped and enlivened in the process, a boy distinctly likes the puzzle. Meanwhile it teaches him to keep his eyes on two things at once; it teaches him orderliness: and he has the pleasant satisfaction of feeling that he will never be called upon to deal with too involved constructions. Still it must be confessed that there is always one boy at least in twenty to whom the attempt to learn metre is intolerable waste of time. For such boys the least that schoolmasters can do, so long as the system of teaching Latin Verse is maintained, is to sweeten their labours by bringing them face to face with interesting English poetry. This is the aim of the present selection. The author has always found the *Prosody in the Public School Latin Primer* the best and shortest introduction to the learning of Quantity and Metre, and he has not attempted to rival it. He has, however, inserted a few hints to which reference is made in the pieces which are rendered into English prose, and other hints are appended as need arises. The renderings are intended to be used, or not, at the choice of the teacher. With the exception of a few, for which he is indebted to his friend Mr. Arthur Sidgwick, every piece in the book has been turned by the

author himself into Latin Verse in two different ways, and in doing so he has especially avoided those exceptional usages which boys are apt to think that teachers allow to themselves though not to their pupils. This may involve a certain monotony, but that is probably compensated by the confidence with which rules given are accepted.

The pieces selected are arranged, so far as may be, in order of difficulty, beginning with a few that are given with English complete. In such cases as, for instance, in setting the adaptation of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* which begins the book it is intended that the teacher should first read the original poem to the pupils.

A vocabulary is added at the end, including all words needed in the course of the exercises. Indeed for the first half of the book it will probably be all-sufficient, though it is not intended to supersede the ordinary dictionaries or *gradus*. The use of the *Latin-English Dictionary* ought never to be superseded by any *English-Latin Vocabulary*, and the teacher who encourages boys to trust wholly to such *Vocabularies* invariably damages their Latin. The author has only to add that he will be very thankful to any person who uses the book who will point out mistakes or suggest corrections.

A *KEY* has been provided, which will be supplied to teachers only.

