

**SELECTIONS FROM OVID:
AMORES, TRISTIA,
HEROIDES,
METAMORPHOSES**

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Selections from Ovid: Amores, Tristia, Heroides, Metamorphoses by A. J. Maclean

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With English Notes



BY THE

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PREFACE.

THE object of this selection from the works of OVID may be told in few words. It is intended to afford an introduction, at once easy and unobjectionable, to a knowledge of the Latin language, after a boy has become well acquainted with the declensions of nouns and pronouns and the ordinary forms of verbs, and to supersede the use of the *Delectus* and inferior Latin writers in the lowest classes of schools. It will be found that in the pieces selected, especially the first, the constructions are with scarcely an exception of the simplest kind, and the ideas such as any child may readily comprehend and take an interest in. To give a boy, if possible, an interest in what he is reading is an obvious duty incumbent on the teacher; but no entertainment was ever extracted from the crude and unconnected fragments contained in a *Delectus*, nor any real notion of the language intended to be taught, which is only to be derived from the authors who wrote in that language. The mere combination of words without any further association is a task so dry and purely empirical that the mind of a child, accustomed to be amused, revolts from it; and though a certain amount of empiricism is unavoidable in the teaching of languages, and constitutes perhaps an important part of their value as the medium of education, the exclusion of all that can attract the mind and relieve the difficulty of such tasks is both impolitic and unnecessary. Any one who has contrasted the anima-

tion which lights up the face of an intelligent boy when a reasonable explanation, or an idea he can understand, is presented to him, with the dull and perplexed countenance with which he tries to remember and repeat what has no meaning or reasonableness for his mind, will admit the truth of this remark.

The constructions of poetry are easier than those of prose, and the language of Ovid is simple and elegant. If an occasional allusion or phrase occurs more difficult than usual, the teacher may readily explain it.

When a boy shall have gone through one piece in this selection, if pains have been taken in teaching him, he will be well acquainted with the commonest elementary rules of syntax, and will be familiar with most of the prepositions and their government, and with a considerable number of words, and will have had an opportunity of applying again and again his knowledge of the declensions and conjugations. In short, he will have acquired a good elementary knowledge of the Latin language and an acquaintance with one of its most elegant writers; and by the time he has gone through the whole book, he will be, or ought to be, competent to take up any tolerably easy passage, free from particular allusions, in any Latin author, and translate it readily; for he will have learnt by observation every ordinary rule of syntax, with a very large number of words and their forms and etymology. He will also have acquired such a familiarity with the structure of Latin verses, hexameter and pentameter, that he ought to be able to apply his knowledge with no great difficulty to the composition of such verses himself.

To realise this end much patient and systematic teaching is required. The master must lead his class forward, and simplify their work as much as he can consistently with the object of fixing what they learn upon their memory. Let him construe the lesson to his pupils, and teach them to make and learn by heart a vocabulary of all the words

and list of all phrases they are not already acquainted with ; in repeating which, let them give him the Latin for the English, and the English for the Latin. Let him miss no opportunity of drawing attention to the simplest rules of syntax as illustrated by the lesson, until they are indelibly and implicitly written upon the mind ; let him make short exercises out of each lesson, and practise the boys in them orally as well as on paper ; and written exercises let him carefully correct. Let him make known the rules of prosody, as the boys proceed, and accustom their ear to the quantity of vowels ; and when their knowledge is sufficiently advanced, let him, where etymology or analogy offers a clue to the quantity, draw attention to this fact. Let him be careful to point out the usual characteristics of the tenses, and explain any apparent anomaly in any particular verb, so as to shew how seeming irregularities are reconcilable with the ordinary rules of formation. Let him be particular in shewing the meaning and government of prepositions, and draw attention to the collocation of words in a sentence, and teach his pupils to follow this order in their construing, as far as the difference of idiom will admit ; and never allow the false notion that any arrangement will do, provided the necessary words are there and the verse will scan ; an error very common with beginners, and very difficult to correct.

With reference to this point it may be observed, that the careful exclusion of erroneous notions from the minds of young students is an imperative duty, the neglect of which leads to half the difficulties they have to encounter afterwards. Absurd forms of words, crude English given as an equivalent for Latin, confusion of idioms, and in short most of the blunders that are made by older school-boys, arise not merely from want of diligence in the early part of their course—for the diligent are almost as liable to them as the idle—but from positive error having got possession of their minds, through loose construing, faulty

exercises ill corrected, and ideas of the language formed from their own unassisted impressions, and gradually wrought into the mind and implicitly received as truth.

Another and great obstacle to subsequent success and grasp of the language is the lack of a *copia verborum*, arising out of early neglect and the unlimited dependence upon dictionaries instead of the memory of the learner. This defect is such, that probably most boys will hesitate if asked to construe offhand even a simple sentence composed of words and phrases they have met with a hundred times. It has probably been thought enough if they have known a word at the time they have met with it in a particular lesson,—that is to say, if it has made a slight passing impression upon their memory for a momentary purpose, leaving little or no trace behind to meet the next occasion on which the word presents itself, and then the dictionary has to be consulted again, with as little prospect of leaving any real impression. If a boy has been taught to compile and learn his own dictionary as he proceeds, instead of consulting others which he does not know how to use, and which often only perplex and mislead him; if he has had the peculiarities of each word pointed out to him, its etymology explained, its seeming eccentricities reduced to rule, its analogy to other words (previously known) and its connexion with familiar English words exhibited, and finally, has been made to learn by heart the lesson of each day, the length of which may be regulated with reference to this object;—when all this has been done, he will have a stock of words and phrases which he can hardly fail to remember, and will have no difficulty in producing when wanted for composition,—his attempts at which usually bring out, in the clearest way, a boy's real ignorance of the Latin language.

There is no reason why the whole of this small selection from Ovid should not be familiarly and accurately written on the memory of every boy before he rises above the

fourth form; and with such a stock of knowledge well inculcated, it may be safely said that he will be a better Latin scholar than many who carry to the University the crude results of a long school education.

A selection of poetry has been made rather than of prose for the reason formerly stated, namely, that the constructions are more simple, and the sentences shorter. It may be as well that some degree of familiarity with the language, as here represented, should be attained before a boy passes on to the study of prose writers, of which study more will not be said in this place.

That the art of writing Latin verses will be much facilitated by the course of instruction proposed in these remarks is evident. Some persons underrate that art; perhaps some over-estimate its value. Thus much however most will admit, that while in its perfection it is itself the fruit of a close study of the Latin poets, in the acquiring of it that study is promoted and assisted; that while the reading of Ovid in the way here proposed will bring a boy almost naturally to write verses, in writing them his attention will be more closely fixed upon the book. So far therefore few teachers would do otherwise than encourage their pupils in this species of composition; and when the mechanical difficulties are overcome, and a considerable stock of ideas and words and phrases are stored in their minds, and they have learnt in some measure to think in the language of Ovid, the transition to a wider and more original field of composition is too natural to be avoided.

No notes have been appended to the pieces in this selection. It is not intended that the learner should be left to his own resources in making out the sense of the author, but that the master should assist him over every real difficulty; and difficulties must be estimated according to the circumstances of the learner. That which is and must be a difficulty to a boy at one stage of his studies