

**EXERCISES ON  
THE GERMAN  
GRAMMAR**

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Exercises on the German Grammar by Franz C. F. Demmler

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**FRANZ C. F. DEMMLER**

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BY  
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"NE QUID NIMIS."

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## INTRODUCTION.

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A WIDE distinction ought to be made between translating into a language, and speaking and writing it. Many a good scholar and able writer will find it by far more difficult to translate into his own language from a foreign tongue with which he may be thoroughly acquainted, than it would be for him to write an original composition. The difficulty of translating into a foreign language must, of course, even be greater. The fact is, that the faculty of translating rests on a talent of as special a character as the gift of mimicry or portraiture. Those who do not possess the special talent of imitating one language in the other will never be able to do more than string words and phrases together which may be grammatically correct but devoid, if not altogether of sense, at all events of the spirit of the language in which they purport to be written.

Yet, how very few of the many English persons who now study German will be called upon by the business of practical life to translate English into German? Probably not one in a hundred. On the other hand, how very many find occasion to speak the foreign language, and to write in it such a thing as a simple letter on the ordinary concerns of life! This most useful acquirement of expressing his own thoughts and wants in a plain German style is within the reach of every student of average

ability, who will not shrink from the exertion of mastering, not all the minute rules and exceptions of grammar, nor all the recondite phrases and idioms of the language, but simply the declensions and conjugations, the principles of construction, and a very few indispensable rules of speech. It is a matter of course, that he is to lay in a sufficient stock of words.

With this view, the following Exercises have been arranged so as first to give an extensive Vocabulary, comprising the verbs, substantives, and adjectives of most common use, with the adverbs and phrases which are necessary in expressing time, locality, direction, and mode of action. The student is not expected to learn them off at once; but they are meant to serve for the purpose of verbally practising the primary grammatical points and rules; such as the declensions, conjugations, and the order of words. He will, therefore, have plentiful opportunity to learn them by degrees; and as the words are sorted in groups, the whole list will be found very handy for repetition. Too much attention cannot be paid to the adverbs of time, locality, and direction. A thorough knowledge of them is a most powerful aid in speaking the language; the greatest care has, therefore, been bestowed on setting them forth in the Vocabulary as explicitly as possible.

The first Section of the Exercises is practically by far the most important. Although preceding the others, it should not be considered as merely rudimentary. The rules on which it treats are indispensable; you cannot move a step without them. The student is to return to them again and again; and the same task will take a different shape for him according to his different

stages of progress, just as a man and a boy may tell the same story, but will tell it in a different style. But the boy will be understood as well as the man; and thus the beginner also, when fairly put to it, will soon find, that he is able to tell his tale in the foreign language, if not in an elaborate style and choice phraseology, yet plainly and intelligibly, which after all is the principal thing.

The three other sections are for translating into German, verbally or in writing, just as it may suit the convenience of necessities of the teacher and student. They comprise all the necessary rules besides a great many grammatical niceties, which the student may meet with in reading. Let it be well understood, that they are not meant *in themselves* to teach the student how to write German, but merely to serve as a guide in analysing and adopting phrases and constructions, which he will find in the course of his reading. It sounds like a truism, and, yet it seems necessary to urge it again and again on teachers and students, that, to acquire a practical knowledge of a language, you must practise it, that is to say, you must read it as much possible, you must speak it as far as you have an opportunity, and you must write in it not merely the thoughts of others, but your own.

To understand German it is indispensable thoroughly to master the principal points of Grammar, which, after all, is not a very great matter. Without this knowledge you are never sure of correctly making out even the most simple piece of German. But on the other hand, it is absurd to expect a mere theoretical knowledge of the Grammar to be of any practical use; it is foolish and dishonest, under the vile pretence of rendering the matter