

**VIE LATINA AN  
EASY  
LATIN READER**

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Vie Latina an Easy Latin Reader by William C. Collar & Clarence W. Gleason

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**WILLIAM C. COLLAR & CLARENCE W. GLEASON**

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AN

EASY LATIN READER

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## P R E F A C E.



THE Latin problem, so far as it relates to secondary schools, remains but partially solved. The beggarly results of much study of Latin in preparation for college are not denied, and cannot be, for they are patent. In 1896 nearly a third of the applicants for admission to Harvard failed on the final examination in Latin, and in 1895 a little more than one-third. But it is very well known that the pass mark on the entrance examination is very low. It is said to be no more than forty per cent, and there are indications that it is sometimes lower. If one-third fail to obtain the lowest admissible mark, probably it would be safe to assume that another third do not get higher than from forty to sixty per cent, leaving only a third of the entire number who are able to pass the Harvard test in a creditable, or even satisfactory, manner.

One might appeal to the experience of teachers. How many are there who do not find what seem reasonable expectations and hopes disappointed? How many who do not often contemplate with amazement and mortification the wretched fruit of honest study and sound instruction? It must be sorrowfully admitted that our boys and girls do not learn to speak Latin, or to understand it, or to write it, or even to read it.

What is the secret of this failure, disappointment, and discontent? I believe the answer is to be found in the

prevailing underestimate of the difficulty of learning Latin. Latin was never an easy language, but it was certainly easier for the generations that did not question its educational value, than for this, that questions and doubts everything. Not recognizing its inherent difficulty, we commit two capital mistakes. We do not allow sufficient time, and we do not provide for an easy and gradual progression.

Both these errors are glanced at in the report of the Latin Conference to the "Committee of Ten" in 1892. In recommending a lengthening of the Latin preparatory course, the Conference says: "The aggregate of one thousand or twelve hundred hours is much below the average in the schools of England, France, and Germany. The explanation of the undeniable fact that, in the countries just named, Latin has been more successfully employed than with us as an instrument for training the mind to habits of intellectual conscientiousness, patience, discrimination, and thoroughness, — in a word, to habits of clear and sound thinking, — doubtless lies partly in the more liberal allowance of time."

Touching the second error, the Conference deprecates the immediate transition from a first-year book of forms and simple constructions to the reading of a classic author in Latin, and especially the absurdity of a plunge at once into the *Gallic War*. It recommends the use of easy reading to prepare the learner, by an enlarged vocabulary and practice in translating Latin not beyond his powers, for the severer task that confronts him when he takes up *Nepos*, *Caesar*, or *Ovid*.

If these suggestions of the Conference were carefully carried out, the study of Latin with us would be revolu-

tionized. Why should it not be? What could with more certainty predetermine failure in any subject than to give to it no more than two-thirds, or even half, the time needed for its mastery? How can we hope to do in four or five years what foreign schools, taught by accomplished scholars and trained teachers, need eight or nine years to achieve? If it is worth while to study Latin at all it must have a larger allotment of time. How is this possible with our present crowded programmes? There is only one way. Latin must be begun one, two, or even three years earlier than is common in this country. Instead of beginning at fourteen, the average age now, the study should not be deferred beyond the eleventh or twelfth year.

Here, I say, is our first capital error, but we aggravate it by another, as has been already indicated. We do not mount our Hill of Difficulty by a winding way and a gentle incline. No, we strike a bee line for the top, regardless of obstacles, over height and hollow,

"Thorough bush, thorough brier,"

with the natural result of waste of time, weariness, disgust, and defeat.

We rightly aim to teach our pupils to read, that is, to understand, Latin, as well as to translate into pure English, because such are the means for acquiring power through the best training. Training in reading is training in insight; and insight is to be gained by the learner's application of his powers to texts that are not too easy, of which there is little danger in Latin, nor too stubborn and complicated. It is a question of grading difficulties, of suiting the task you set the pupil to his capacity at



successive stages. Just here lies the *nodus* of the problem that must be worked out to a practical solution. If we succeed, there will be a two-fold gain,—a more rapid advance, and increased pleasure for the learner, not because less effort will be required of him, but because with the same effort he will be carried forward so much farther.

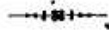
To find and prepare suitable reading to follow the first half year or year in a Latin course is not easy. A reading book for that stage should fulfill three conditions : it should not be too hard, it should be interesting, and it should lead by a gradual ascent to the level of one or another of the classic authors usually taken first. Furthermore, it should be designed and used for rapid reading, not for analysis and parsing. It should accordingly be annotated with a view to make the learner quick to observe and compare different meanings of the same word, and synonymous and contrasted words, to the end that the first and greatest difficulty, that of the Latin vocabulary, may be partially surmounted. Not that this should be the sole purpose, but it should be put first.

Many teachers have found that *The New Gradatim* fulfills all these conditions ; but for those who do not use that book, as well as for those who do, but who are of the opinion that additional *ad interim* reading is desirable, this Reader has been prepared.

WM. C. COLLAR.

ROXBURY LATIN SCHOOL,  
April 2, 1897.

## VIA LATINA.



### THE ARGONAUTS.

*The celebrated voyage of the Argonauts was brought about as follows. Pelias had expelled his brother Æson from his kingdom in Thessaly, and had attempted to take the life of Jason, the son of Æson. Jason, however, escaped, and grew up to manhood in another country. At last he returned to Thessaly, and Pelias, fearing that he might attempt to recover the kingdom, sent him to fetch the Golden Fleece from Colchis, supposing this to be an impossible feat. Jason, with a band of heroes, started in the ship Argo (called after Argus, its builder), and after many adventures reached Colchis. Here Æetes, king of Colchis, who was unwilling to give up the Fleece, set Jason to perform what seemed an impossible task, namely, to plough a field with certain fire-breathing oxen, and then to sow it with dragon's teeth. Medea, the daughter of the king, however, assisted Jason by her skill in magic, first to perform the task appointed, and then to procure the Fleece. Medea then fled with Jason, and, in order to delay the pursuit of her father, sacrificed her brother Absyrtus. After reaching Thessaly, Medea caused the death of Pelias, and, with her husband, was expelled from Thessaly. They removed to Corinth, and here Medea, becoming jealous of Glauce, daughter of Creon, caused her death by means of a poisoned robe. After this, Medea was carried off in a chariot sent by the sun-god, and Jason was soon afterwards accidentally killed.*

## 1. The Wicked Uncle.

Erant olim in Thessaliā duo frātrēs, quōrum alter Aesōn, alter Peliās appellātus est. Hōrum Aesōn primum rēgnum obtinuerat, at post paucōs annōs Peliās, rēgni cupiditate adductus, nōn modo frātrem suum expulit, sed etiam in animō habēbat, Iāsonem, Aesonis filium, interficere. Quidam tamen ex amicis Aesonis, ubi sententiam Peliae intellēxerunt, puerum ē tantō periculō ēripere cōstituērunt. Noctū igitur Iāsonem ex urbe abstulērunt et cum posterō diē ad rēgem rediissent ei renūtiāvērunt puerum mortuum esse. Peliās, cum haec audisset, etsi rē vērā māgnū gaudium percipiēbat, speciem tamen dolōris praebuit et quae causa esset mortis quaesivit. Illi tamen, cum bene intellegerent dolōrem eius falsum esse, nēsciō quam fābulam de morte pueri finxērunt.

## 2. A Careless Shoe-String.

15 Post breve tempus Peliās, veritus nē rēgnum suum tantā vi et fraude occupātum amitteret, amicum quendam Delphōs misit, qui orāculum cōsuleret. Ille igitur quam celerrimē Delphōs sē contulit et quam ob causam venisset dēmōstrāvit. Respondit orāculum nullum esse in praesentiā periculum; monuit tamen Peliam ut, si quis veniret calceum unum gerēs, eum cavēret. Post paucōs annōs accidit ut Peliās māgnū sacrificium factūrus esset; nūntiōs in omnīs partis dimiserat et certum diem conveniendi dixerat. Diē cōstitutō māgnus numerus hominum 25 undique ex agris convēnit; inter aliōs autem venit etiam

6 sententiam: cōsiliūm.

11 percipiēbat: sentiēbat.

12 praebuit: ostendit.

14 nēsciō quam: aliquam.

18 quam ob causam: cūr.

19 in praesentiā: nunc.