

**THE MASTERY
SERIES LATIN**

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The Mastery Series Latin by Thomas Prendergast

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THOMAS PRENDERGAST

**THE MASTERY
SERIES LATIN**

Gutta cavat lapidem NON VI SED SÆPE cadendo.

THE MASTERY SERIES.

LATIN.

BY

THOMAS PRENDERGAST,

LATE OF THE CIVIL SERVICE AT MADRAS:

Author of

'THE MASTERY OF LANGUAGES, OR THE ART OF SPEAKING
FOREIGN TONGUES IDIOMATICALLY.' 'HANDBOOK TO THE MASTERY SERIES'
AND MANUALS OF HEBREW, GERMAN, FRENCH, AND SPANISH.

THIRD EDITION.



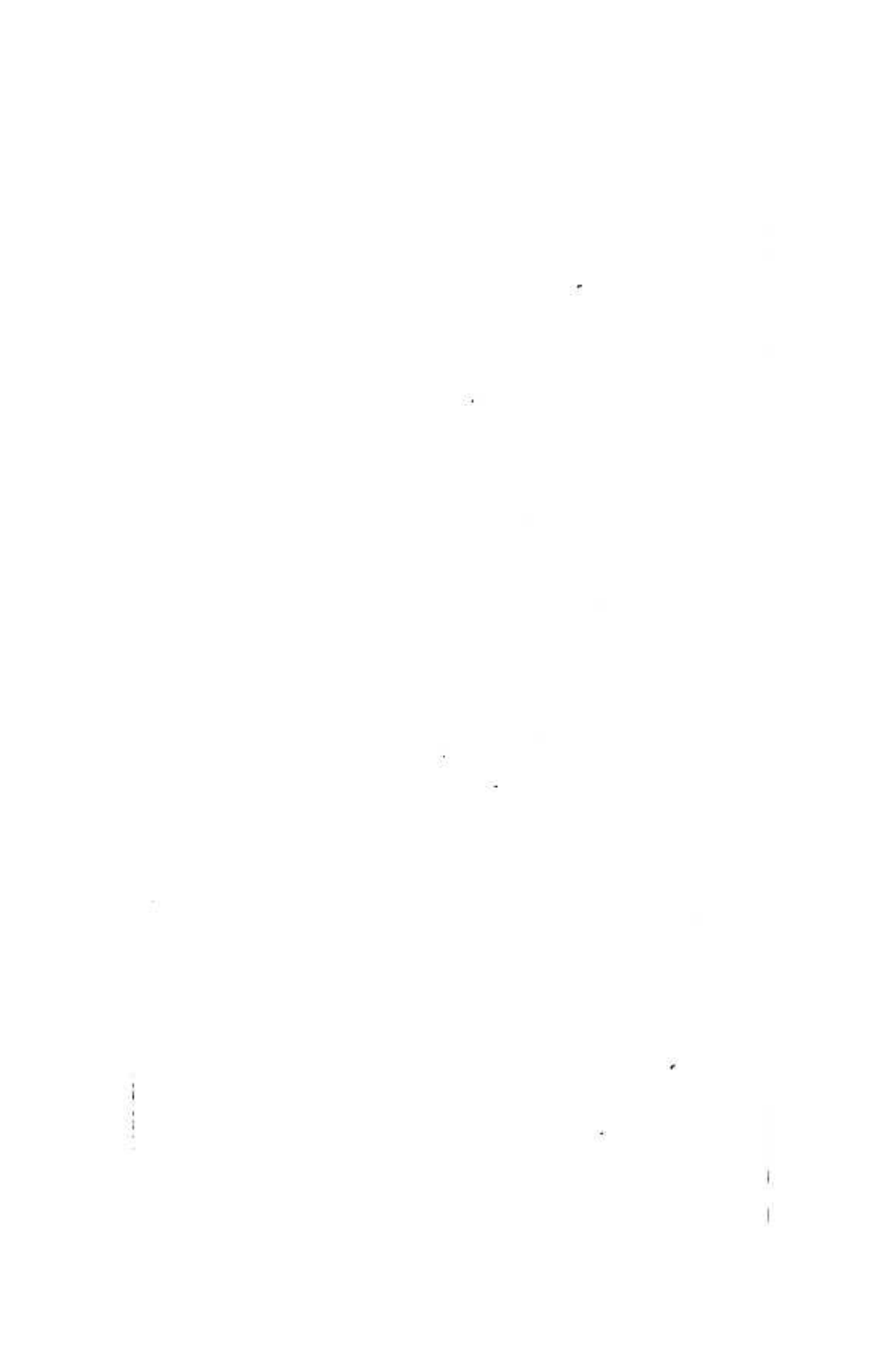
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PREFACE
TO
THE THIRD EDITION

THE ORIGINALITY of this Method consists in adapting sentences to each other so that one page shall yield hundreds of exercises, planned to enable beginners to practise vivâ voce composition without blundering. Secondly. In arranging typical sentences with analytical variations so devised as to disclose the latent constructions, and to perform with their English versions the duty of explaining the meaning of each word and of each inflection when recurring in different combinations.

Thirdly. In requiring that every sentence committed to memory shall be reproduced with perfect fluency, accuracy, and readiness, at sight of its English version; that all the back lessons shall be daily rehearsed in ever-varying order of succession; and that they shall always be read aloud before each rehearsal.

Fourthly. In exercising and developing the lingual faculty, by means of vivâ voce composition very cautiously conducted, and exacting perfect facility in the diversification of every mastered sentence, in order to make it correspond with the alteration of one word at a time in the English version thereof.

The Science of Grammar, with its quaint, grotesque, technical terms, is far too abstruse a study for children, and although many of its truths are so simple and obvious that no explanation can make them clearer than they are, some are rendered even more obscure by the grammarian's efforts to expound them. There is no construction in common use which is not employed by children 8 years old so freely and appropriately that we can neither challenge the correctness of

the phrase, nor call in question the intelligence of the speaker. Mastery, therefore, is quite suitable for boys of that age, if they are fit to learn grammar.

This method is devised to enable beginners to obtain a real, practical, and applied knowledge, and a free command over those puzzling constructions which, when idealised by the grammarian, are not intelligible to the uninitiated. No blame is imputed to him on this account, seeing that he is not a teacher of language, but an expounder of a science, and that he addresses not the unlearned, but the learned.

Mastery is designed to teach grammar indirectly, and to render it more intelligible, by enabling the learner to naturalise sentences which illustrate the rules of Syntax, and thus to master the principles thereof in the concrete.

Latin was of yore a spoken language, and there is no reason apparent why it should not be naturalised now, on a small scale, if only we deal rationally with it, not using it colloquially, but for the practice of *vivâ voce* composition. The natural method consists substantially in the mastery and diversification of sentences, for, unless we believe in the supernatural, such is and such must be the process pursued after a few weeks by every child living abroad who teaches himself a foreign language unassisted.

In this scheme composition is made the primary object, because the prevailing mode of teaching proves that an intimate acquaintance with the Accidence and Syntax may coexist with complete helplessness, in respect to the power of framing sentences grammatically. One obvious reason for this is the lavish, reckless, cramming of the memory with hundreds of case-endings and tense-endings, with rules and exceptions, with anomalies and incongruities, whilst construing and all other exercises are carried on as if with a view to the accumulation of many words, rather than the Mastery of Typical Sentences. The fact is, that all words which do not cohere with one another in the memory as integral parts of a sentence, subside into a confused mass of detached words.

In the present mode of teaching there is great prodigality instead of economy of time and labour. It was established at a period when the study of the classics constituted the whole

education of an Englishman, and then 10 years were devoted exclusively to that course. Other studies are beginning to jostle Latin Grammar out of the way, and there is a general demand for a more expeditious mode of teaching it at first.

At present no symptoms of the Mastery of Latin can be detected in schoolboys. Their knowledge is unreal, unpractical, and unapplied, because they have never been exercised in *vivâ voce* composition; but this defect may be remedied at *any* stage by diversifying mastered sentences, or the Couplets and Triplets. See p. 73.

Mastery can never fail to be successful, if the prescribed conditions be fulfilled; and the only risk of failure lies in the childish impatience of the pupil, and the weakness or remissness of the teacher in leaving sentences unmastered at the outset.

This method shows that, in the very midst of all the various paths trodden by learners, there is one track which has not only escaped general observation, but has even remained undetected by the learned, although it lies on the very surface, and children may be seen treading it every day. In truth, Mastery is the process unwittingly adopted by every person who has ever learned to speak any language idiomatically, and it is a mere truism to say, that no language ever has been, or ever can be, mastered except by Mastery.

The daily habit of evoking mastered sentences from the memory through the medium of their English versions, will render Latin as familiar as a modern language becomes to boys living abroad, and the process will be equally efficacious, if the law of Frequency be observed.

The Mastery Exercise, confined within the narrow limits of this Manual, may seem to be insufficient for its purpose, but if persistently utilised, it must of necessity lead to facility in construing and in other Exercises.

Economy of time and labour will be best secured by taking frequent lessons in Mastery. It will then be proved that the memory will work more successfully in the mastery of foreign sentences, when 3 lessons of 10 minutes each are taken daily during the year, than when a whole hour is devoted continuously to the same work; but teachers are left quite unfettered by rules.