

THE BEGINNER'S LATIN BOOK

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Longum iter est per praecepta, breve et efficax per exempla.

SENECA.

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1887.

PREFACE.

THE aim of this book is to serve as a preparation for reading, writing, and, to a less degree, for speaking Latin. It is designed primarily for boys and girls who are to begin the study of Latin at an early age; but as all who would get from Latin the best mental discipline, or lay a broad and firm foundation for Latin scholarship, must traverse pretty much the same road, and as Latin is begun in this country by most learners before any other foreign language is studied, a beginner's Latin book for those who take up the study at the age of ten or twelve need not be essentially different from one designed for learners of fourteen or fifteen. The most important difference would lie in the knowledge of the terminology and principles of English grammar that might be deemed an indispensable prerequisite. As a matter of fact, children come to the study of Latin with all degrees of ignorance of English grammar, and the minimum of necessary knowledge for the beginner is unquestionably very small. What minimum is considered essential for those who use this book, is indicated on page 6. It is hoped, therefore, that the contents of the book will justify its title; that it does not assume too much, and is not too difficult for the least mature who are likely to use it, and that it will not be found too much simplified,—too juvenile, for those who begin Latin in high schools and academies. Simplicity, clearness, and directness have been studied throughout. The system of inflected forms, which is seldom mastered, but the mastery of which is an indis-

pensable condition of further pleasant, successful, and profitable study, is slowly but very fully developed, with the addition of abundant and varied exercises. For convenience, as well as on educational grounds, the paradigm of the verb is given in one block, instead of in fragments detached and dispersed, and everywhere the active and passive forms are placed side by side, to be compared, and learned as they are treated, simultaneously.

The idea underlying and controlling the plan is the maximum of practice with the minimum of theory, on the principle that the thorough acquisition of the elements of Latin must be more of art than science,—more the work of observation, comparison, and imitation, than the mechanical following of rules, or the exercise of analysis and conscious inductive reasoning.

The book contains :—

1. A brief introduction explaining the Roman and English methods of pronunciation, the necessary paradigms, an outline of the most important principles of syntax, and a large number of exercises for translation into English and into Latin, accompanied by short explanatory notes.

2. About twenty-five simple Latin dialogues, added to as many chapters. Some of these are on subjects of the lessons, and include a good many grammatical terms; some are on various topics of school and holiday life; and others on subjects historical and mythological.

3. Easy selections for translation, consisting besides a number of fables, of extracts from *Viri Romæ*, *Nepos*, *Ovid*, *Catullus*, *Cæsar*, and *Cicero*, some interspersed with the lessons, others added at the end of the book.

Those who seek in a first Latin book a complete presentation of the facts and principles of the Latin language, will not be satisfied with this volume. But, in the opinion of the authors, there is no error in elementary instruction in Latin more common and more deplorable than that of failing to

discriminate between the relatively important and unimportant; between what is suited to the beginning and what to the more advanced stages of the study. It is not too much to say that a very great part of the barrenness and futility of the teaching and study of Latin in schools is due to this lack of discrimination, and to a false conception of thoroughness. It is not intended to imply that a hard and fast line can be drawn, still less is this book offered as a realization in this respect of the ideal. The ideal is never realized. But it has been the constant aim to make just this distinction: to determine everywhere, in the light of much observation and reflection and of long experience, what should be made the subject of immediate study, and what should be postponed; what is entitled to prominence, and what ought to be subordinated. Some excellent teachers think that the subjunctive mood should have no place in a preparatory Latin book; and undoubtedly the syntax of the subjunctive does involve too many and too great difficulties for such a work, if anything more than an outline of some commoner uses is attempted. On the other hand, the learner can hardly read any Latin without encountering forms of the subjunctive. The best way then seems to be to construct a large number of very short sentences for practice on the forms, which shall exhibit, in the briefest compass, some important and most frequently recurring uses of the mood, more especially because the ways of translating the subjunctive cannot be illustrated from the isolated forms in the paradigms, as in the other moods. This idea has been worked out in part in Chapter LIV., the forms having been previously left untranslated.

The *colloquia* have been added, not as an integral and necessary part of the lessons, but to serve as an incentive to the moderate use of Latin orally in recitation, and to afford convenient exercises for training the ear and for enlarging the vocabulary of the learner. The grammatical terms have

been drawn chiefly from the *Institutiones* of Rudimann. The *colloquium* on page 5 has been borrowed from Dr. H. Meurer's *Lateinisches Lesebuch*, and suggestions and parts of the materials for a very few others have been derived from the same source; also two or three of the passages for translation, and here and there some sentences in the exercises. Whoever examines these *colloquia* with a critical eye, will find some words which are confined to the vocabularies of grammarians and commentators, and a very few others employed in senses for which it would be embarrassing to be required to cite classical authority. For example, the word *pensum* is used often in the sense of a schoolboy's task, something to be done or learned, a lesson. This word doubtless meant strictly a spinner's task. But in classical Latin it had already approached the meaning *task* in general, and it is but a very slight extension of its application to employ it as it is in the *colloquia*. Such a moderate decanting of new wine into old bottles, it is hoped may be excused. Still if any teacher thinks that the Latinity of his pupils will be injured by the use of the *colloquia*, it is optional with him to omit them altogether, without losing the continuity of the lessons.

The complaint is very common, and its justice must be acknowledged, that first Latin books are often excessively and needlessly arid and wooden. Accordingly an effort has been made, while following a rigorously scientific method in the development of the successive subjects, to impart something of attractiveness, interest, freshness, and variety to the study of the elements of Latin by means of the *colloquia*, the choice of extracts for translation (introduced as early as possible), and the mode of treatment in every part, extending even to the choice of Latin words, and to the construction of many of the exercises.

Usage is not fixed in respect to the so-called principal parts of verbs, a few of the later school manuals giving the

nominative masculine of the perfect participle, instead of the supine, except in the case of neuter or intransitive verbs. It has been thought better in this book to follow the prevailing practice, only to treat the form that has been called the supine in this connection, not as the supine, — which in most cases it is not and cannot be, since, as is well known, only about 230 verbs can be proved to have a supine, — but as the neuter of the perfect participle.¹ Thus the learner is guarded against errors and is spared the perplexity of having to memorize now one, now another form.

It is hoped that this book can be finished and reviewed by the average learner in a year, and that the transition then to *Viri Romae*, *Nepos*, or *Cæsar* will not prove too difficult. More than two-thirds of the words used belong to the vocabulary of *Cæsar*, and only a trifle less than two-thirds to that of *Nepos*. In the case of young pupils it may be advisable to omit the translation of the English exercises into Latin, beginning with Chapter LV., till after the selections for translation at the end of the book have been read.

It remains to acknowledge the generous assistance of several scholars. Professor George M. Lane, of Harvard University, Professor George L. Kittredge, of Exeter Academy, N.H., George F. Forbes, A.M., and D. O. S. Lowell, A.M., both of the Roxbury Latin School, and Marshall W. Davis, A.B., of Thayer Academy, Braintree, read and criticised the work in manuscript. Mr. Forbes and Mr. Lowell also read the proof-sheets and made important suggestions and corrections. The authors feel especially indebted to John Tetlow, A.M., Head-Master of the Boston Girls' High and Latin Schools, and author of *Inductive Lessons in Latin*, for critically reading the proof-sheets, and for materially contributing to the improvement of the book by

¹ This plan has been followed by Dr. R. F. Leighton in his *First Steps in Latin*.

the correction of errors, and by the suggestions of his conscientious and exact scholarship.

Thanks are due to Mr. J. S. Cushing, under whose personal direction the book has been printed, for the patience, care, and skill which he has constantly exercised to make the work typographically as faultless as possible.

WM. C. COLLAR.

M. GRANT DANIELL.

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