

**AN INTRODUCTION  
TO LATIN LYRIC  
VERSE COMPOSITION**

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An Introduction to Latin Lyric Verse Composition by J. H. Lupton

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TO

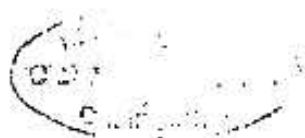
LATIN LYRIC VERSE COMPOSITION

AN INTRODUCTION  
TO  
LATIN LYRIC VERSE  
COMPOSITION

BY

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TO

THE REV. BENJAMIN HALL KENNEDY, D.D.

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THE UNIVERSITY  
OF CAMBRIDGE

THIS LITTLE WORK IS

BY PERMISSION

MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED



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## PREFACE

IN the previous *Introduction to Latin Elegiacs*, drawn up three years ago, I had chiefly in view the requirements of learners in my own class at St. Paul's. The present little work has been prepared with an eye to what such boys would be likely to require, when entering on the work of a higher form. My horizon has thus been a very limited one; and the only compensating advantage that can be looked for, is some reasonable familiarity with what lies within it. Whether, on this account, the book may be such as to prove serviceable to others, I do not hazard any opinion.

While reading—often with the liveliest admiration—the imitations of ancient poets by modern classical scholars, I have been increasingly struck with what seems to me a defect, pervading the work of all but the finished masters of the art,—a defect, not in the execution, but in the materials used. It is said to have been the judgment of Porson upon certain *Pro-lusiones*, that they contained “plenty of Horace and

Virgil, but nothing Horatian and nothing Virgilian." If I might presume to adapt this censure to the changed circumstances of our later time, I would say that with plenty of the Horatian and Virgilian spirit, there is too little of Horace and too little of Virgil. There is, at least,—and this is the more correct way of stating the matter—a not infrequent admixture of baser materials.

To confine myself to the subject specially in hand, Latin lyrics. If we remember the great sobriety of judgment Horace himself showed in introducing fresh words into his language,

*In verbis etiam tenuis cantusque serendis,—*

skilful, indeed, to the last degree, in giving some new turn or shade of meaning to an existing word or phrase, but chary of devising new ones,—it is strange to see his modern imitators so venturesome. Without going so far as to say, that no Latin ode should go beyond the vocabulary of Horace, or no Latin elegiac beyond that of Ovid, it may be safely maintained that anything heterogeneous in such work is a blemish. Every term used, so far as possible, should be of contemporary style and character. To use Waltz's illustration from Horace himself, it should be, "*signatum praesente nota.*" If, for example, we find freely admitted into modern Latin lyrics what are essentially

prose words, or poetical compounds of a later date, or diminutive forms, we are justified in saying that, no matter how great the constructive skill, there are flaws in the materials.

A few specimens will best show what I mean. They are all taken from a collection of Latin lyrics, justly held in the highest esteem for the excellent work it contains, and one which, while fully conscious of my own temerity, I single out on that very account. A gleaning by no means thorough has brought away from it the following :—*Caelitus, stirpitus, praedocuit, proeliatos, pronuntiavi, perlustrans, pervehi, transvehi, transigitur, jactitat, admirumurantem, praecaveant, repululant, ingenitae, occidentalis, parasiticae, scrobs* and *dese* (as nominatives), *caritas, tarditas*. In one short piece alone are : *perpete, exoletis, resarciantur*.

It is proverbially hard to prove a negative ; but I think none of these is used by an Augustan poet. They are strictly prose words ; their use by the comic poets, in some instances, not affecting that character. If we could suppose an educated Roman of Horace's age reading an ode with such words in it, as the production of the poet of Vennsia, the effect on his mind would surely have been akin to what is now produced by a peculiar species of American humour—enjoyable enough in its way—which turns on the introduction into poetry of words the most unpoetical. Such a