

**MANUAL OF INFORMATION  
AND INSTRUCTION FOR  
CANDIDATES FOR  
COMMISSIONS**

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Manual of Information and Instruction for Candidates for Commissions by Alfred Downes

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**ALFRED DOWNES**

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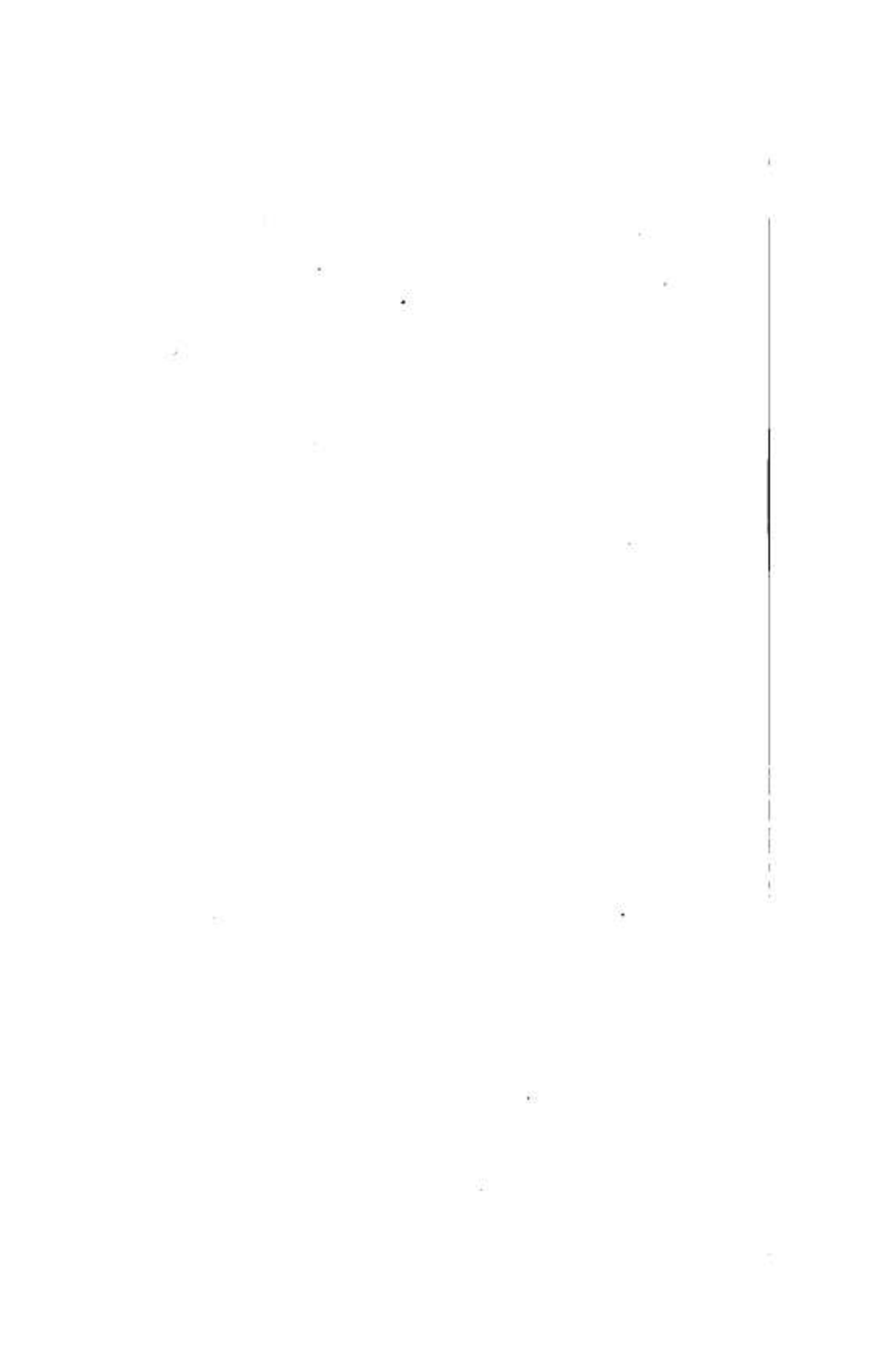
**By ALFRED DOWNES.**



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*231. C. 113.*



## INTRODUCTION.



THIS work is intended to supply the place of oral tuition, at a time when locality or other circumstances render it difficult to obtain instruction. That it should be a very indifferent substitute, is the necessary consequence of dispensing with the judgment of the teacher, as applied to the particular wants of the learner, and supplying its place by general directions applicable to all minds alike; but by shewing how to begin the task, it may at least prevent the entire loss of time, and obviate that extreme discouragement which misdirected labour is apt to produce.

There are very few who have the good fortune to obtain a commission so early in life as to allow them to pass at once from the school-room to the army; more commonly there is an interval, during which the candidate is said to be waiting for his commission, and which he is apt to employ in ways by no means calculated to extend and arrange his school education; if any thing contained in these pages can induce him to apply himself to the study of his profession, and can facilitate his progress, the purpose with which they were written will be fully answered.

It may be well to forewarn the reader, that nothing like a system of "*cramming*" has been attempted, if by

that term be understood a device for slipping through the examination, upon the least possible stock of information. Whatever conclusions private experience may have led me to draw, I have not felt myself at liberty publicly to assume that any candidate for the army deliberately lays himself out to defeat the intentions of the authorities, and to evade the spirit of the first order he receives from his military superiors. The directions given will always be based upon the supposition, that time is to be economised, but the work to be done thoroughly. A few remarks will usually be found upon branches somewhat higher than are required for the examinations; these are intended for the guidance of such enterprising students as desire to become not only successful candidates, but accomplished officers.

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CHAP. I.—LANGUAGES.

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CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF CLASSICAL LANGUAGES NOT TO SUPERSSEDE THE STUDY OF ANCIENT LITERATURE—MEANS OF REPAIRING A DEFECTIVE EDUCATION—PRACTICE OF THE LATE DOCTOR LEYDEN—USE AND ABUSE OF TRANSLATIONS—IMPORTANCE OF ATTENTION TO COMMON INFLECTIONS—PARSING—THE MODERN LANGUAGES—OLLENDORF'S SYSTEM—CONVERSATION—READING POETRY ALOUD—HABIT OF THINKING IN A FOREIGN TONGUE.

**A**LTHOUGH to military men the modern languages are undoubtedly more useful than the ancient, I shall give to the latter their prescriptive right of precedence, the more readily that the class to whom these pages are addressed, have, for the most part, been prepared by early education for their discussion, and possess a fair insight into their elementary construction.

By the industry of many generations of scholars, the system of classical education has been brought to a surprising completeness, and is now as much valued for a training in the art of critical analysis as for the literature it places in our hands. It may be doubted, however, whether one of these branches has not of late years encroached too much upon the other; and whether classical schools have not rather neglected the treasures bequeathed by ancient civilization in favor of the vehicle in which they are conveyed. If the time consumed in learning and applying minute grammatical constructions, and in the composition of thousands of verses, were devoted to