

**PRO PATRIA: A LATIN STORY FOR
BEGINNERS, BEING A SEQUEL TO
'ORA MARITIMA', WITH
GRAMMAR AND EXERCISES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649047383

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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E. A. SONNENSCHN

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MONVMENTVM·IN·MEMORIAM
FREDERICI·HVGONIS
SHERSTON·ROBERTS·
AD·TVGELAM·FACTVM·

PRO PATRIA: A LATIN STORY
FOR BEGINNERS, BEING A
SEQUEL TO 'ORA MARITIMA,'
WITH GRAMMAR AND EXERCISES
BY E. A. SONNENSCHN, D.LITT.,
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VERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

*Qui procul hinc, the legend's writ,
The frontier grave is far away,
Qui ante diem perit;
Sed miles, sed pro patria.*

HENRY NEWBOLT;
'Clifton Chapel.

LONDON
SWAN SONNENSCHN & CO., LIM^D
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN CO

1907

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563
Lanc
Dept.

FIRST ISSUE, 1903 ; REPRINTED 1907.

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Preface

THE idea on which my *Ora Maritima* and its sequel, the present volume, are based, is that an interesting narrative may be a better vehicle for teaching the elements of a language than a collection of isolated grammar sentences, provided that the interesting narrative is so constructed and graduated as to constitute in itself a basis for the systematic study of grammar. My object, then, has been to write a book which should not only appeal to the minds of pupils through the interest of its subject matter, but also form as complete a grammatical ladder as the driest of dry exercise books. *Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci.*

In carrying out this programme for *Pro Patria* I have adhered to the ideal which I set up for myself in *Ora Maritima*, that the Latin text should be 'classical in form, but modern in setting.' The scene is laid in a country house on the coast of Kent, and afterwards at Winchester, and the time of the action is the period from September 1899 to June 1900. I have thus been enabled to give unity of action to the two parts into which the narrative falls. The first part is taken up with a study of Roman Britain in connexion with a visit to Richborough Castle; the second with the Boer War, the first news of which arrives soon after the conclusion of the summer holidays. It is my hope that my young readers may find in the first part a more vivid picture of the condition of Britain under the Romans than is contained in most school histories of England; and in the treatment of the Boer War I have endeavoured to bring out its dramatic interest and heroic incidents. Party politics are, of course, kept out of view.

The amount of grammar covered by *Pro Patria*¹ may seem to some teachers disproportionately small; and, no doubt, if it had been my object simply to teach grammar, I might have made the text shorter. But a long experience in teaching Latin to pupils of very various ages and stages has made me sceptical as to the value of a skin-deep knowledge of grammar. It is one thing to learn declensions and conjugations out of a grammar or from grammar sentences, and quite another thing to know them as they appear in actual life. How many boys and girls leave school without having acquired any real mastery even of the simplest kind of Latin or the power of making any practical use of the grammatical facts which they have so laboriously learned! That is the sort of educational result on which the present outcry against Latin in schools is largely based. The great mistake seems to be that the elementary stages of learning are turned into a purely grammatical discipline and that the grammar is hurried over before the study of the language proper and the literature are commenced. Declensions and conjugations learned in this fashion find no real lodgment in the mind; or, at best, the outcome of the tedious process is that the pupil 'holds the parts in his hand,' but misses 'the spirit that binds them together.'² It is against this abstract method of teaching that *Ora Maritima* and *Pro Patria* are a protest. It has been my object to write for the use of the beginner a 'real book,' which shall have a literary as well as a linguistic interest of its own, and from which the pupil shall gain something more than a bowing acquaintance with Nouns and Verbs. I have, therefore, not shunned repetitions; and I have deliberately aimed at providing a certain

¹ The point from which *Pro Patria* starts is that which is reached in *Ora Maritima*, and the pupil is carried on to the end of the regular accidence.

² *Dann hat er die Teile in seiner Hand;
Fehlt, leider! nur das geistige Band.*

—GOETHE, *Faust*,

mass of easy Latin from which he may acquire the habit of reading, as distinct from construing, Latin. If, at the end of two¹ years' work, the pupil has acquired this, together with the fundamentals of Latin grammar, he will have spent his time to some purpose, and will be in a position to begin the study of a classical author and of the more difficult parts of the grammar with some hope of a happy issue. Or if, on the other hand, he drops the study of Latin at this point, he will still have acquired a working knowledge of the language up to a certain level. This is an aspect of the matter on which I desire to lay some stress. There are many schools, or modern sides of schools, in which only a limited amount of time can be devoted to Latin; and the problem is how can that time be spent so as to produce the most profitable result. It is my hope that the present book may contribute to the solution of this problem.

It is not my intention that an equal amount of time and attention should be bestowed on all the sections of the text. Some of them (marked with a †) are unnecessary from the purely grammatical point of view; they exist for the purpose of carrying on the story and providing material for rapid reading; and where time presses they may be translated by the teacher to the class. The exercises and conversations are intended to be used as the needs of particular classes may demand. For translation into Latin alternative passages are given, from which the teacher may select what best suits his purpose. Some of them may be worked on paper, some *viva voce*, some may be omitted altogether. I have thought it better to give too much rather than too little.

One of my young friends who was learning from this book made a criticism of it which will probably pass through the minds of other readers. "The Romans," he said, "knew nothing of South Africa." Exactly; but it is possible that the best

¹ It is intended that *Ora Maritima* and *Pro Patria* shall occupy one year each.

way to learn an ancient language is to study it as written at the present day in connexion with a subject matter which is familiar or easily intelligible to the modern reader. This is, of course, only a means to an end ; but there are many ends which are better attained indirectly than directly.

I have ventured on some novelties in the realm of grammar teaching, among which the use of the term 'Injunctive,' side by side with 'Subjunctive,' calls for a word of explanation. The new term expresses the fundamental idea of what is commonly called the 'Subjunctive Mood' ; it is the mood of *desire*, and should be introduced to the pupil in the first instance in connexion with sentences like 'God save the King.'¹ For such meanings the term Subjunctive is quite inappropriate, and a fruitful source of error ; it comes in, however, so soon as the mood appears in a subordinate clause. And if the pupil subsequently abandons the term *Injunctive* altogether, it will nevertheless have served its purpose in introducing him to a right conception of the mood—a conception which will serve him in good stead afterwards.

My best thanks are due to Dr. J. E. Sandys, Public Orator in the University of Cambridge, for permission to quote some verses which originally appeared in his Latin speeches to the University,² and for his great kindness in reading my proof sheets of the text and making many valuable suggestions.

E. A. S.

THE UNIVERSITY, BIRMINGHAM,

July, 1903.

Note to the New Issue.—No changes have been made in the present issue, with the exception of the correction of a few misprints and the addition of a Summary of Grammatical Rules (pp. 182 ff.)

¹ See Preparations, §§ 48, 49, 50.

² These are acknowledged in their places in the "Preparations."