

**A PRONOUNCING GERMAN READER,
TO WHICH IS ADDED, METHOD OF
LEARNING TO READ AND UNDERSTAND
THE GERMAN LANGUAGE, WITH OR
WITHOUT A TEACHER**

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A Pronouncing German Reader, to Which Is Added, Method of Learning to Read and Understand the German Language, with or without a Teacher by James C. Oehlschlager

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JAMES C. OEHLSCHLAGER

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In comparing the different German-English Dictionaries, it was found that all of them were deficient in their vocabulary of foreign words, which now act so important a part not only in scientific works, but also in the best classics in the reviews, journals, news papers, and even in conversational language of ordinary life. Hence we have endeavored to supply the desired words required in Chemistry, Mineralogy, Practical Art, Commerce, Navigation, Rhetoric, Grammar, Mythology, both ancient and modern. The accentuation of the German words, first introduced by Hermsius and not a little improved by Hilpert and his coadjutors, has also been adopted, and will be regarded as a most desirable and invaluable aid to the student. Another, and it is hoped not the least, valuable addition to the volume, are the synonyms, which we have generally given in an abridged and not unfrequently in a new form, from Hilpert, who was the first that offered to the English student a selection from the rich store of Eberhard, Mass, and Gruber. Nearly all the Dictionaries published in Germany having been prepared with special reference to the German student of the English, and being on that account incomplete in the German-English part, it was evidently our vocation to reverse the order for this side of the Atlantic, and to give the utmost possible completeness and perfection to the German part. This was the proper sphere of our labor.

Morning Courier and New-York Enquirer.

The Appletons have just published a *Dictionary of the German Language*, containing English names of German words, and German translations of English words, by Mr. Anax, Professor of German in the University of the City of New-York.

In view of the present and rapidly increasing disposition of American students to make themselves familiar with the Language and Literature of Germany, the publication of this work seems especially timely and important. It is in form a large, substantial octavo volume of 1400 pages, beautifully printed in clear and distinct type, and adapted in every way to the constant services for which a lexicon is made. The purpose aimed at by the editor cannot be more distinctly stated than in his own words, quoted from the preface, in which he states that he sought "to embody all the valuable results of the most recent investigations in German Lexicography, so that his work might thus become not only a reliable guide for the practical acquisition of that language, but one which would not forsake him in the higher walks of his pursuits, to which its literary treasures would naturally invite him." All who are in any degree familiar with German, can bear witness to the necessity that has long been felt for such a work. It is needed by students of the language at every stage of their progress. None of those hitherto in use have been satisfactory—the best of them, that published in Philadelphia, in 1843, lacking very many of the essentials of a reliable and serviceable lexicon. From a somewhat close examination of its contents, we are satisfied that Mr. Anax's Dictionary will be universally regarded as the best extant. Its great superiority lies in its *completeness*, no word in any department of science or literature being omitted. We cannot doubt that it will become at once the only German lexicon in use throughout the country.

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JAMES C. OEHLISCHLÄGER,
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P R E F A C E.

THAT the learning of a language is a task, a tedious and a difficult task, will be admitted by all those who have learned, and by those who have taught languages. Great progress has, however, of late been made in the teaching of modern languages; several systems, such as that of Manesca or of Ollendorff, that of Robertson, have been widely introduced, and have almost driven out the old theoretical system of teaching. But Ollendorff's system, though, according to my opinion, the safest to learn to speak a language, requires considerable time before the pupil begins to read and understand. I have myself for the last nine years made use of Manesca's and Ollendorff's books, but I have always commenced reading and translating into English the very first lessons, so that many of my pupils, when they have gone through the first twenty lessons in Ollendorff's Grammar, are able to translate an easy German book by the aid of a dictionary.

Too much stress has always been laid upon what is called the grammar of a language. Does not a child learn to read and understand what it is reading, without

knowing grammar? Do not thousands of people, who cannot parse a sentence, enjoy the prose and poet writers of Germany, France and England? Did not the people in Rome, at the time of Cæsar, listen to and understand their great orators, without being all grammarians? Go into a large school and see which pupils know Grammar best: certainly the most intelligent, the most industrious; but which of them speak their language best? Those who hear it spoken at home in its greatest purity.

I have always been of the opinion, and twenty years of professional practice have confirmed this opinion, that to read and understand a language requires but a very slender knowledge of special grammar.

A number of German Readers have been published, which contain extracts from Schiller, Goethe, Lessing and other great writers, for the avowed purpose of introducing pupils to the literature of the language; but I believe all of them were compiled under the supposition, that the student had already spent a considerable time in the study of the language, before he attempted to read. I have tried to make use of these books for the last 16 years, but have almost always found it necessary to have recourse to other works; for even pupils who had already some knowledge of the language, required still too much assistance. Many of the first pieces in these books could be read and understood by a Ger-

man child; but what is easy for a child, when reading its native language, is not generally so for a stranger who is beginning to study that language; for the former the subject requires to be simple although the language should be very idiomatical; whilst, for the latter, the idiom should agree as nearly as possible with that of his own language, though the subject itself were difficult. Fables have been generally selected for the first reading lessons, but fables are by no means easy; take the following sentence, which is the first sentence in one of these Readers: „Ein Löwe würdigte einen Hasen seiner nähern Bekanntschaft.“ The verb in this sentence has no parallel in English and must be paraphrased. There is however another objection to the early introduction of pieces taken from first-rate authors. When the pupils, after much labor and patience has been spent, or through the assistance of the teacher, obtain some idea of what the author intended to convey, can it be said that they understand, that they feel the author? that the words, the sound, the weight of every syllable has produced its effect upon their minds? And what is the consequence? The piece has lost its novelty; they may afterwards never feel what they would have felt, if they had come better prepared to the feast. I have always found that the more gradually the pupil is introduced into the literature of any language, the surer is his progress, and the greater his ultimate success. The