

**A COURSE IN GERMAN
COMPOSITION, CONVERSATION
AND GRAMMAR REVIEW: FOR
USE IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

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A Course in German Composition, Conversation and Grammar Review: For Use in Schools and Colleges by Wilhelm Bernhardt

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WILHELM BERNHARDT

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IN
GERMAN COMPOSITION, CONVERSATION
AND
GRAMMAR REVIEW

FOR USE IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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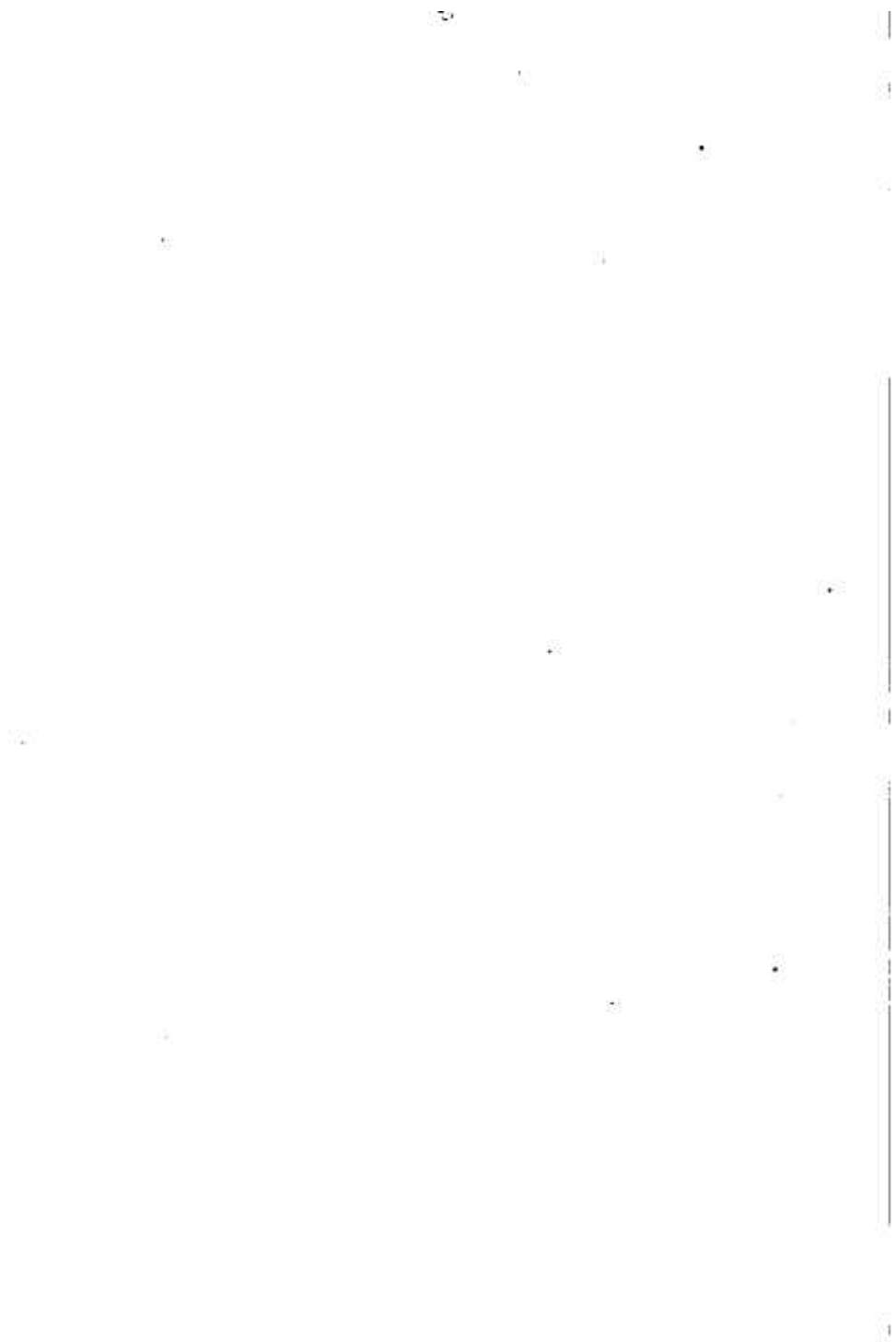
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TO

Dr. Lambert Sauveur

THE DISTINGUISHED PEDAGOGUE AND PRESIDENT OF THE SCHOOL OF
LANGUAGES, WITH WHOM, FOR SIXTEEN SUMMERS, THE AUTHOR
HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED IN THE TEACHING OF LANGUAGES
AT BURLINGTON, VT., OSWEGO, N.Y., ROCKFORD, ILL.,
AND AMHERST, MASS.,
THIS BOOK IS INSCRIBED
AS AN EXPRESSION OF THE AUTHOR'S HIGH ESTEEM.



INTRODUCTION.

EVER since, in 1882, German was added as a course of study to the high school curriculum of this city, the so-called Natural Method has been and is still used, with (since 1885) Bernhardt-Boisen's „Deutsches Sprach- und Lesebuch“ as text-book. In that book only the essential and most puzzling features of German grammar are introduced, and that, too, without being arranged according to the traditional principles of scientific grammar, but with sole reference to the immediate needs of the average beginner. They consist in inferences or conclusions arrived at by observing and comparing the expressions in the object lessons which form the nucleus of the whole system and the center of all instruction.

In the Washington high schools this plan has proved a decided success, and, judging from the fact that the Sprach- und Lesebuch within these twelve years has reached its thirty-fifth edition, it would seem that elsewhere, too, this honest attempt to found linguistic study upon the laws of mind has met with the approval of both teachers and students of German.

Already, at an early date, these gratifying results led the author of the present volume to conceive the idea of founding a preparatory course in German composition upon a similar rational method. An opportunity, however, for

experimenting in this line was not offered before 1888, when special academic classes were organized, which, in the last two years of their quadrennial course, had to study German with the view of being fitted for colleges or scientific schools.

The author, when assuming charge of two of these classes in the central school, examined half a dozen or more courses in German composition; but, not being able to find in the market a book corresponding to his ideas of a guidebook for his classes, he was compelled to arrange for himself such a manual as he deemed best fitted for his particular wants. Thus, after the *Sprach- und Lesebuch* had been used exclusively for about six months, one of the five weekly recitations allotted to German was set aside for composition work. Once a week a short narrative, conspicuous for interesting contents as well as for beauty and clearness of language, was dictated to the pupils, who were given a whole week to make themselves thoroughly familiar with its contents, vocabulary, and phraseology. The next recitation would then be devoted partly to the deduction of grammatical principles from the narrative, and partly to the application of these observations to composition and conversation; in other words, to a written and oral test of the thoroughness with which the students had made the matter their own. Each lesson was terminated by a drill on the words contained in the narrative, and an entry, into the notebook of each student, of the proper rules given by the teacher in the phraseology of Joynes-Meissner's grammar.

In spite of all the drudgery to which, for want of a textbook, teacher and pupils were subjected, the plan as a whole worked so well and the results were so encouraging

that year after year it was taken up anew with only slight innovations and improvements. At last, in 1896, before retiring from active teaching, after a twenty-six years' experience in German and American schools, the author, being convinced that his course in German had been sufficiently tested in the class-room as to its practicability and usefulness, made up his mind to give it book form in order to make it accessible to teachers who, laboring under such difficulties as he himself had once encountered, might perhaps welcome a work of such scope and purpose. This is, in its main features, the history of the present volume, which is herewith offered to teachers and students of German and to the public at large.

Of the reading matter at the disposal of the author, thirty-two pieces have been selected for this volume as the groundwork for just as many lessons, which the author thinks can be thoroughly studied in one school year of thirty-six weeks, allowing one recitation at the end of each quarter for reviewing, sight reading, or extempore writing.

The *German selections* include narrative, epistolary, descriptive, and easy essay styles, and, being carefully graded, they rise from the light and pleasing mystery of the nursery tale to the sober disquisition of the scientific theorem. For this reason, and since no two of these selections have come from the pen of the same writer, they naturally differ greatly in regard to diction and phraseology, a feature not to be underrated in a book purporting to serve as an introduction to composition work.

As to the arrangement of the *grammatical material*, a method has been devised consistent with the author's experience and the latest state of educational science. We know now that grammar in the abstract does not appeal to the