

**LOCKSPEISE; OR,  
INDUCEMENT TO  
THE STUDY OF THE  
GERMAN LANGUAGE**

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Lockspeise; or, Inducement to the study of the German language by Nelson

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**NELSON**

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# LOCKSPICE

OR

INDUCEMENT TO THE STUDY OF THE GERMAN LANGUAGE  
BY THE REMOVAL OF THE LAST SERIOUS DIFFICULTY  
IN THE WAY OF A BEGINNER.

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“What is gained in Time is lost in Power;  
What is lost in Time is gained in Power.”

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BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NELSON,

OF THE

CORPS OF ROYAL ENGINEERS.

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1855.

*303. v. 22,*

## CORRIGENDA.

Introduction, page x, line 14; for "Modern Form," read Middle Form.

Page 15, line 10; for "Āśbict," read Āśbict.

— in note 3; for "Sancrit or Zend," read, Sanscrit, Zend or the remaining patriarchs of the Arian family.— See Max Muller's remarkably interesting sketch of the Relations of the Languages of the present Seat of War in the East.

Page 16, to the feminine compounds of *Ṙutġ* add *Ānmutġ*—Pleasantness, and *Āngmutġ*—Forbearance. For the masculine nouns so ending, see page 22: the whole giving an excellent illustration of the peculiarly *notional* character of the basis on which the genders of German nouns have been determined,—not very creditable to our 'Cheruscan' sires, or their progenitors.

Page 16, line 18; for "*Ījnʹ*," read *Ījnʹ*.

„ 18 „ 23; for "*Īnʹel*," read *Īnʹel*.

„ 25 „ 3; transfer "*Ānāvre*" to list N, page 32.

„ 27 List G, nouns like *Īiertel*, *Īrittel*, &c., are also neuters as abbreviations of *Doš vierte Īheil*, *doš dritte Īheil*, &c.

„ 30 to the masculine of list L, add *Aargau*. To the feminines, add *Āarf*.

„ 34 last line: for *doš*, read *doš*.

## INDEX.

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As the name imports—the object of this little work is to allure and encourage those to the study of German, who have been hitherto scared away by the idea, that for even the purposes of every day life, it is too difficult to repay the requisite outlay of time and labour: until of late years, there was much truth in this; but on reading the following prefatory passages, it is hoped, now that the way has been so much opened, smoothed, and generally improved by the exertions of such men as Grimm, W. Von Humboldt, Becker, &c., &c.,—that any one who still shrinks from any remaining impediment may fairly congratulate himself as being quite unworthy of the designation of *STUDENT*.

It is rarely advisable to write in the first person singular: it has however been occasionally done in the present instance, not from egotism,—but from the desire of giving a character of freshness, fact, and genuineness, generally allowed to the records and observations of travellers who have toiled along the very

roads on which they venture subsequently to play the part of friendly directors.

This Tract is divided into three parts; the first and principal relates to the earliest serious difficulty with which the pupil has to contend—*i.e.*, the Determination of the Genders of German Nouns, whether native or adopted : the second to the conjugation of the Auxiliary Verbs : the following introductory paragraphs together with the third section are offered rather as friendly notices and hints to the beginner, and as matters founded on the writer's experience in reference to his own early troubles, than as put forward with any *ex cathedra* pretensions.

It is said that the German Grammar is the youngest in Europe, and that it had scarcely any decided form until within the last 150 years. To Klopstock, the credit has been given of having systematized it to an extent far beyond his predecessors : but the "decided form" and "system" may be applied to error as well as to truth ; which appears from the length of time and the extent to which all German Grammarians, until the philosophical researches of the above mentioned and learned men, worked more or less on the exploded notion of the principles of Grammar being identical in all languages : that there are common principles is not doubted, though it may well be that they have ever been well ascertained ; at all events, laid down with clearness and precision.

Hence, however, the numerous and abortive attempts to assimilate the German Grammar to that of the Greek and Latin tongues. We read in the Arabian Nights of one of the rebellious



genii being confined in a small vessel under the seal of Mahomet;—the Genius *DER ZEIT* was more unmanageable, and laughed at the efforts of the learned until the German savans within the present century made their profound researches into all the cognate Teutonic languages ancient and modern,—such as extinct dialects only to be met with in the oldest books, and as unlike Modern German, as Chaucer's English,—or rather perhaps, Anglo-Saxon—is like the English of the present day. From these sources in German, Dutch, Swedish, Danish, and Norse, of various ages and dialects, they obtained principles peculiar to their own tongue; and to this Cabala, the refractory Spirit so far yielded, that the hindrances to an acquaintance with the German of common life were changed in character from that of serious difficulty approaching to almost impossibility, to that of obstacles as certain to yield to steady intelligent application, as in any other Modern European language ;—some would say, more so.

That acquaintance with the German of refined literature, necessary for speaking and writing the language *like a native*, may, as a superstructure, be based on the solid knowledge so laid as a sound foundation : but this is far beyond those uses of everyday life, on account of which alone the large majority of students attempt any language. Few venture to publish in a foreign tongue : Auguste Schlegel himself, who with Tieck translated Shakespeare into German, shrunk from doing so in English though he spoke it well and though he wrote a good deal in French.

As far as Etymology is concerned, it was thus determined that the inflections of their verbs, nouns, pronouns, and adjectives were reducible to two elementary forms—THE ANCIENT and THE MODERN; and of these, all the hitherto embarrassing and anomalous varieties of regular and irregular verbs,—declensions in the nouns &c., &c., were composed; all that had then to be done was to give the rules for that composition or its modifications, together with lists of exceptions.

In absence of these, nothing could or can be more perplexing to earnest anxious students and to the lovers of precision, than the irreconcilable differences among the various Anglo-German Grammars, written before or after that of Becker. In the nouns, for instance, one author would make four declensions;—others five or six;—and one, as many as eleven!—but in all cases, the rules were indefinite,—the results unsatisfactory,—and the difficulties insolvable; the ‘Universal Menstruum’ supplied as above by Grimm, Becker, &c., was wanting.

Another class of Grammarians, the Radicals of their calling, disgusted with all this, have endeavoured to dispose of the difficulty by adopting more or less what they term *Natural Systems*,—characterized, generally speaking, by storing the memory in the first instance with an extensive selection of words and phrases; as if by giving the materials they also supplied their pupils with powers of making those abstract observations on the general practices of the best writers and speakers of the age, commonly known, in the collective form, by the word ‘Grammar.’

The empiricism of this, as a general proceeding, is painfully felt by those who in later life, with matured abilities and limited time, are required to adopt the same course that is truly followed by Nature as regards children with their feeble powers but abundant time. When however the Adult finds himself thus placed in the go-cart and leading-strings, he begins to appreciate the immense accumulation of traditional experience there is in any Grammar however imperfect; if he has any doubts left on this point, the attempts to arrange the conjugation of a verb, for instance, as an original proceeding, will soon dispel them.

To return to Becker's Grammar: this was first published in English by Murray, in 1830, but it met with little or no encouragement, as it contained many terms, such as "Attributive Combinations," "Predicative Combinations," "Collectives," "Frequentatives," &c., not used in our common English Grammars, but very valuable as being powerful, comprehensive, and saving much circumlocution. A little attention would have shewn a well arranged index, in which reference is made to the paragraphs containing ample explanation and illustration: but the anxiety for 'Quick Returns' on small capital of labour and intelligence rendered people impatient, and this fine work fell into disrepute accordingly.

In consequence of this, an intermediate version was prepared under the eye of Dr. Becker, by his son Mr. Bernhard Becker,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1861. Williams and Norgate, London.