

**LATIN PROSE EXERCISES:  
FOR  
BEGINNERS AND JUNIOR  
FORMS OF SCHOOLS**

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Latin Prose Exercises: For Beginners and Junior Forms of Schools by R. Prowde Smith

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## RIVINGTONS

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# LATIN PROSE EXERCISES

*FOR BEGINNERS AND JUNIOR FORMS  
OF SCHOOLS*

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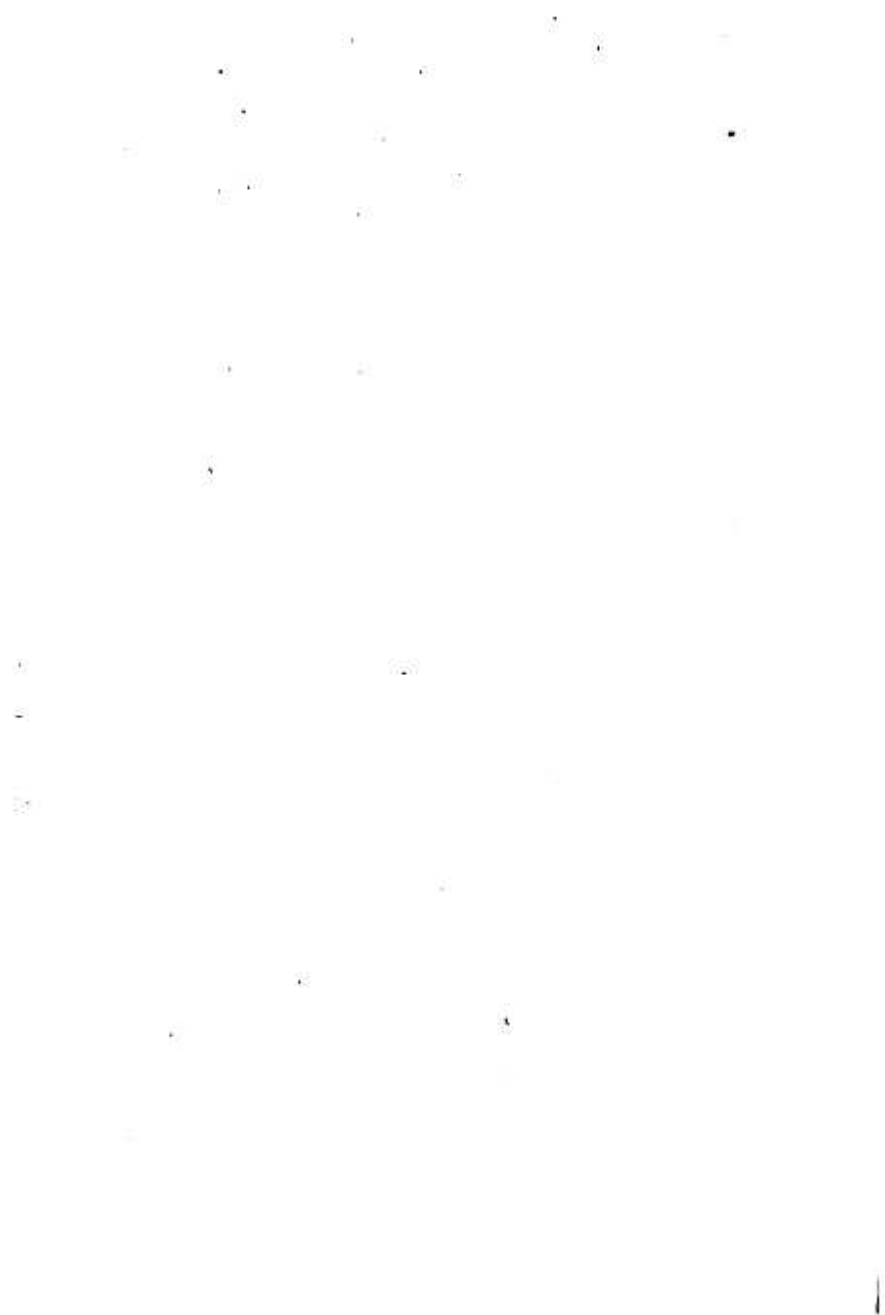


RIVINGTONS

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305. g. 59.





## PREFACE.

MOST masters will admit that boys experience difficulty in elementary Latin Composition principally from not understanding the structure of their own language. They commence Latin at an early age without any knowledge of English Grammar, for it is assumed that this will grow upon them during their study of Latin; and they spend years in endeavouring to apply certain rules which they learn by heart, without being led to perceive that the grammatical value of most words must be the same, whatever be the language employed. Now none of the exercise books at present in use seems to recognize this deficiency; they are all adapted rather for men who have commenced the study of Latin late in life than for the boys for whom they are actually intended. The result is that, whatever be the dubious gain in mental discipline, as far as the acquisition of knowledge is concerned a considerable period of a boy's early life is practically wasted. In many instances, success is attained at last, not so much through any assistance derived from the teacher, as because repeated examples have at length forced themselves upon the observation of the learner, and enabled him unconsciously to form a system for himself.

Now it appears that a great deal of trouble and vexation might be saved even to a clever boy, if his observation were directed aright from the beginning. If he were made to parse his English sentences before turning them into Latin, he would soon perceive that certain fixed principles pervade both languages;

and he would be pleased to find that, in his practical knowledge of his mother tongue, he already possesses an unsuspected fund of information, which will enable him to master any language to which he turns his attention.

The object of this book, then, is to teach Latin Composition and English Grammar simultaneously, in full confidence that the acquisition of the former will be found much easier, when it is approached through routes which turn out on inspection to be already familiar. In accordance with this object, words and phrases have been dealt with only as they form parts of complete sentences; and before these are turned into Latin, the grammatical significance of each word in the English is required to be carefully pointed out, and the sentence analyzed, as indicated in the body of the book. This system has undergone the test of experience for several years, and has always been found to work successfully.

When a boy has once acquired the art of analyzing correctly he may for the most part be spared the trouble in future, for the analysis is only, as it were, the crutch to teach him to walk, and will but impede the rapidity of his progress, when he has learned to do without it. But when it appears that a boy has misunderstood the construction in any particular passage, or if the clauses appear to have been too involved for his right apprehension of them, let him proceed to analyze the sentence for himself, and it will be found that the mistakes will then often be corrected without a master's assistance.

It is suggested that a clause which is likely to present any difficulty should always be analyzed, for boys ought to receive timely warning of the pitfalls in their way. Some masters seem to think it their special function to convict their pupils of ignorance, and even begin by regarding their inevitable success with a sort of grim satisfaction; but they soon find that

if they only give a boy a fair chance he is sure to go wrong, and, strange as it may appear, he is the more likely to fail again in the same place. No one, who has not found it out for himself, would believe how difficult it is to prevent a boy from stumbling again, if he has once been suffered to fall at any point. He has been allowed to reason himself into a wrong opinion, and is in the position of the man convinced against his will; unknown it may be even to himself, he remains of the same opinion still. Repeated correction of errors is not the best way of imparting accuracy; in this, as in most other instances, prevention is the best cure.

This book is intended primarily for boys who have only mastered the accidents, and have begun to understand such distinctions as that which exists between the active and passive voices of a verb, and perhaps also such easy constructions as the agreement of a verb with its subject, and of an adjective with its substantive, but it will also be found useful for boys much more advanced; and the application of the system to an English lesson, as suggested at the end of Part II., will be found a useful exercise for boys of almost any age.

The teaching of Composition on this plan may be advantageously combined with lessons in construing at sight on the same principle. Thus, if a boy is in doubt how to commence any sentence, let him look for the principal verb, just as he is in the habit of doing in English, and then for its subject; when he has construed these, he may be made to close his book, and say what construction he expects to follow, and it will be found that in most instances he will be able to predict exactly what he must look for. It is a good plan for the master to give the meaning of the words, when the boy has selected those which he intends to construe. This method is much preferable to confining the attention of the class to a few lines prepared over-night.