

**THE SEVEN KINGS OF ROME: AN EASY  
NARRATIVE, ABRIDGED FROM THE FIRST BOOK  
OF LIVY BY THE OMISSION OF  
DIFFICULT PASSAGES, IN ORDER TO SERVE AS  
A LATIN CONSTRUING BOOK FOR BEGINNERS,  
WITH GRAMMATICAL NOTES AND INDEX**

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The Seven Kings of Rome: An Easy Narrative, Abridged from the First Book of Livy by the Omission of Difficult Passages, in Order to Serve as a Latin Construing Book for Beginners, with Grammatical Notes and Index by Josiah Wright

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**JOSIAH WRIGHT**

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## P R E F A C E.

" I BELIEVE that the pupil cannot too soon be led on from words to sentences, and from unconnected sentences to a continuous narrative. With this view, I am preparing an edition of an easy Latin author, which he will be able to commence as soon as he has finished the Exercises in this volume, and in which he will find several important rules, which we have not yet been able to touch upon, both illustrated and explained."

This extract from my "Help to Latin Grammar" will serve, in some measure, to show the aim and purpose of the present work. It is intended to supply the pupil with an easy Construing-book, which may, at the same time, be made the vehicle for instructing him in the rules of grammar and principles of composition. It appears to me that these branches of the study of Latin have hitherto been kept too much apart. Boys have construed their Delectus, or Eutropius, or Nepos; and have gone elsewhere for their grammatical exercises.

Nor can I wonder at this. An educated man must feel positively ashamed of taking his pupil away from our good English authors, and setting before him instead a *Delectus* or *Entropius*. He therefore skims over them as lightly, and escapes from them as quickly as possible, and has recourse for his composition lesson to one of the many exercise-books which swarm from our educational press. Now, in this there are two evils. The first is, that the time which the pupil must, of necessity, spend over his construing, is almost entirely wasted. Neither thoughts nor words are impressed on his mind. He contracts, moreover, a distaste for the language, to which he is introduced by so melancholy an approach. In the second place, he learns grammar and composition in a bad way. He studies, not an author, but scattered fragments of an author. From these he may pick up a few disjointed phrases; but they can never teach him the connexion of sentences, nor inspire him with the spirit of the language. Besides, he misses the great advantage of selecting and classifying examples for himself: than which there is no more useful process.

These evils, then—evils which I have felt myself, and of which I have heard several eminent teachers complain—I have endeavoured to remedy in the following pages. I have selected for construing the First Book of Livy; because I did not know where else to find such simplicity and elegance of style united to so interesting a narrative. Livy's History is rarely, if

ever, set before beginners, both on account of its great bulk, and of the various difficulties which it contains. The first of these objections I have obviated by publishing separately a small portion only; the latter, by excluding from this portion most of the difficult passages. I trust that, by so doing, I have not exposed it, on the other hand, to the objection which is usually brought against abridgments. Abridgments are usually, and justly, disliked, because they do not give the exact words or sense of the author. But here Livy tells his own pleasant stories in his own pleasant words. What is omitted, is that which no one can wish a beginner to learn, and which may be better learnt elsewhere. Few things are more injurious to the progress of the pupil than coming suddenly on obscure and uninteresting passages. It is much better for him, as he may do here, to read a book through without interruption; and then he should read it over and over again, till he almost knows it by heart. I do not mean to say that the mere beginner will be able to translate every passage in this book without assistance; but an experienced teacher knows that in such cases assistance should always be given.

The character of the notes may be inferred from what has been said. As the text contains, not the history, but the legends, of early Rome, the notes do not contain any historical disquisitions. The whole question has been passed over, as one quite foreign to our present purpose; which is, to teach Latin, not History. The