

**SPANISH LIFE: A
CULTURAL READER
FOR THE FIRST YEAR**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649000678

Spanish life: a cultural reader for the first year by Philip Schuyler Allen & Carlos Castillo

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PHILIP SCHUYLER ALLEN & CARLOS CASTILLO

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PREFACE

THE title-page of *Spanish Life* indicates sufficiently the contents of the book. It deals exclusively with the various aspects of modern Spanish life and social usage, it furnishes a working vocabulary for the student of present-day industry and achievement.

We do not believe that this type of Spanish first reader is the only one from which the student may derive profit. But we do think our book is a most important and necessary kind of elementary reader. For surely it is proper for the beginner to become acquainted with the real words which express actual, contemporary Spanish living and doing, before he comes to study the Spanish world of romance and fable, fairy-tale and folklore, the world of poetry, song, and old-fashioned symbol.

Few Spanish readers which have hitherto appeared are books to be gone through page by page, nor do their stories need to be read in the order given in the book. Most such readers, except for their beginning pages, are rather anthologies of desirable reading-matter than progressive readers focused about a central idea.

Spanish Life, on the contrary, is a carefully planned series of short rubrics or chapters, which advance by gradual and regular steps from initial descriptions of the home and home-life to a consideration of the manifold activities of the world without.

It goes without saying that the vocabulary of words necessary to describe so many-sided a life, while not noticeably large, is yet not a small one. Nor have any especial pains been taken to restrict artificially the extent of the vocabulary. We are impatient of elementary Spanish books whose sole aim is to restrict the number of words used in them. Such books are certain to be noteworthy, not for what they teach, but for what they deliberately fail to teach. And surely, the more expressions the student of Spanish can be brought to learn and *retain*, the better for him!

Spanish Life employs a threefold method for fastening its phrases in the reader's mind. First, it presents its material in the form of concise categories. What one expects to come next, actually does come. The whole context of each chapter is inter-related, is closely bound together.

Second, the progression from one chapter of the book to another is a natural one. Much care has been taken to avoid whimsical and irrelevant digression in theme and treatment. As much as possible, each division of the book grows out of the one preceding it.

Third, in addition to the constantly applied principle of association of facts, their iteration is a prominent feature of *Spanish Life*. Key-words and important idiomatic phrases are repeated over and over again -- not on the same page always, but in the chapters which follow the first mention of such words and phrases. Woodenness of expression is thus avoided, at the same time that the student has sufficient opportunity to drill upon what is essential.

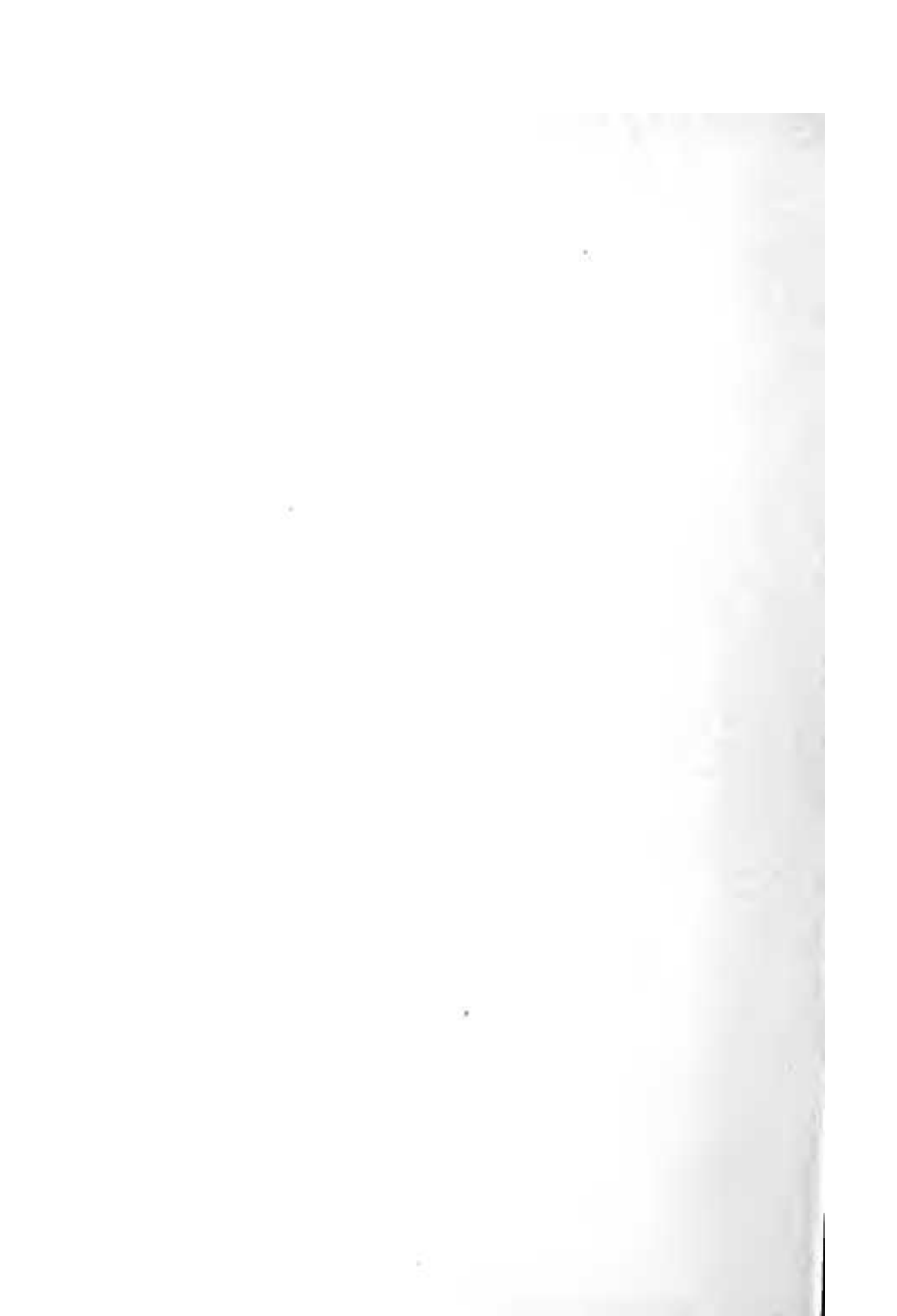
The student thus gains from a careful reading of *Spanish Life* a valuable and up-to-date list of connected groups of words which will form the backbone of his later reading, writing, and speaking. Besides, these words are just the ones he will have frequent occasion to use in all his further work towards an adequate command of the Spanish idiom.

The apparatus of *Spanish Life* is self-explanatory. The vocabulary is intended to be full and complete. No notes seem to be necessary. The *PREGUNTAS* based upon the text are unusually numerous, with a view to offering the teacher whatever suggestions he may care to receive in the way of securing from the pupil a recital in Spanish of the words of the authors. A new departure in a book of this kind is the short chapter of *RESPUESTAS* (pages 120 ff.), for which the student himself must invent the question. We have found this exercise particularly stimulating in our own classroom-work, because it leaves the initiative of speech where it should ever be in school: on the lips of the pupil himself.

Our friend and colleague, Professor George T. Northup, has read the proofs of the book and done for it work of a constructive kind. We wish him therefore to share in any happy fate which may confront *Spanish Life*, but not to be held responsible for any slightest fault which may mar the first edition.

PHILIP SCHUYLER ALLEN
CARLOS CASTILLO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO,
October 23, 1919



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