

**GERMAN WITHOUT
GRAMMAR OR
DICTIONARY. PART I**

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German Without Grammar or Dictionary. Part I by Zur Brücke

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ZUR BRÜCKE

**GERMAN WITHOUT
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GERMAN

WITHOUT

GRAMMAR OR DICTIONARY;

OR,

A GUIDE TO LEARNING AND TEACHING THE GERMAN
LANGUAGE ACCORDING TO THE PESTALOZZIAN
METHOD OF TEACHING BY
OBJECT LESSONS.

PART I.

BY

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ELEVENTH EDITION.

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PREFACE.

THE general favor with which the public has received "German without Grammar or Dictionary" has induced the publishers to make several very important changes in Part I. In the first place, the type, at the urgent request of many teachers, has been changed from the Roman to the German. Secondly, several hundred words, not before translated, are carefully defined in vocabularies, immediately following the exercises in which they occur. Thirdly, each lesson, for convenience, is divided into paragraphs, as is the case in Part II. In addition to these changes, a reference vocabulary of several hundred words, and several very interesting lessons, have been added, so that the new book, while it retains all the sprightly naturalness which has been accorded to the former work, may justly be considered a great improvement for both classes in schools and private students.

We have endeavored, after thirty years' experience in teaching German according to the NATURAL METHOD, to give the results of our labor in so condensed and simple a form as to enable any diligent student, even a child, to acquire a fair speaking knowledge of the German language in the course of a single year.

The author has taught thousands of children and adults to use, in idiomatic German conversation, two thousand words in a single twelvemonth. He has also instructed one hundred and thirty pupils in a class exercise of thirty or forty

minutes, so that each pupil understood the lesson as well as if the class had consisted of only ten members. (See the Rochester, N. Y., High School Report for 1860. This report was made by the State Regents.) No spoken language was ever acquired by grammar or dictionary, and simply for the reason that no idiom in any language will bear a literal translation. Just think of rendering the English idiom, *How do you do?* or the German expression, *Wie befinden Sie sich?* or again, the French idiom, *Comment vous portez-vous?* literally, into any other language!

Says the eminent Chancellor of the New York University, "It is the idiomatic portion of the language that gives it soul, if not life. No language is properly learned until its idioms are mastered."* May we add to this excellent testimony, that the idiom of any language is best learned by speaking it? Nay, more; that this is really the only way in which the idiomatic expressions of any living language can be properly acquired.

Let it not be supposed that we discard the help of either grammar or dictionary; for wherever we meet with an irregular verb in any of the lessons, we turn at once to the list of irregular verbs, and repeat the conjugation of that verb in the mood and tense in which it is used in the given sentence. Suppose that we have the verb *sprechen*, "to speak," then we either write it on the blackboard or give it from the book; as, *Ich spreche, du sprichst, er spricht, wir sprechen, ihr sprecht, sie sprechen*. In fact, we make every possible use of the grammar and the dictionary as well, but only as helps; there is no parsing, no time wasted in useless analysis.

For, as long as the colloquial language is the basis, and the literary language must come afterward in any tongue, so long must the student acquire the language sought after by construction and not by analysis. For the taking ten thousand

* See Dr. Howard Crosby's article in the *New York Independent*, Nov. 13, 1879.

clocks apart would not enable a person to construct a single clock!

An eminent educator has remarked, "Our daily speech is moulded by what we have learned in the nursery, and not by what grammarians have taught us." This is the order of nature. So we learned our mother-tongue. It is in this natural and pleasant way that we are to acquire other living languages besides our own.

The speaking lessons of this book deal with a wide range of subjects belonging to every-day life. We speak of eating, drinking, sleeping, seeing, hearing, breathing, smelling, etc.

As we proceed from one lesson to another, the German sentence is carefully and progressively elaborated by practical examples. As a weaver would occasionally weave a beautiful figure into his cloth, so the pupil is led by animated conversation to weave into his speech the forcible idioms peculiar to the German language.

By continually repeating the same words, phrases, and sentences in an ever-changing variety of forms, the substance of each lesson is gradually and indelibly engraved upon the memory of the learner.

The mode of imparting instruction by this method is explained with such care in each speaking-exercise (*Sprechübung*) that we need to say but little here on that subject, except that in the use of the two senses, hearing and seeing, the hearing comes first, as it should, in the order of nature. A little reading, therefore, with much speaking is our motto.

Teachers of this method have pursued somewhat the following plan with pupils or classes: first, grammatically, they have permitted them to vary the verb in number, person, tense, and mood. If, for example, the pupil has just said, *Ich kann schon etwas Deutsch* (I know already some German), the teacher might ask, *Können ihr schon etwas Deutsch* (Do you know already some German)? To which any pupil in the class, or all the pupils, might reply, *Ja, wir alle können schon etwas*

Deutsch (Yes, we all already know some German). Again, if the teacher wishes to question his pupils in regard to the articles, he might ask, Wo ist der Mann? Answer: Der Mann ist hier (The man is here). Wer liebt den Mann? Answer: Ich liebe den Mann (I love the man). This we regard as an excellent drill, especially where the pupil has little or no knowledge of the declensions, or of the conjugation of verbs.

But best of all do we regard the colloquial exercise, where, after a Sprechübung of only two or three Abtheilungen (paragraphs) has been read, the questions are put, to exercise the learner in conversation, as follows: Meine Freunde, habt ihr Alles verstanden was wir in diesen Abtheilungen gelesen haben? Answer: Ja, wir haben Alles verstanden was wir in diesen Abtheilungen gelesen haben (Yes, we have understood everything that we have read in these sections). Then the teacher goes on to put questions in every conceivable way about the subject of the lesson, until every member of the class is familiar with it.

But we think it best to discard all grammar practice until Part I. is thoroughly learned by conversation.

Train the ear by TALKING. When that is well and thoroughly done, the pupil will have little occasion for aid from the Grammar in Part II. An occasional glance at the declensions, or at the conjugations of the verb, will be all-sufficient. No time need ever be wasted in PARSING. In construing a sentence in a dead language this may be necessary; but conversation in a living language wholly obviates any such tedious labor in arriving at the meaning of a sentence. Does not an intelligent boy or girl, at the age of twelve, speak the English language better, that is, more fluently or correctly, than any university professor claims to speak Latin or Greek after a lifetime's practice in parsing and analyzing?

Place pictures, as of a cat, a dog, or a horse, before the pupil. Any kind of object-teaching is infinitely preferable to a long lesson in a book. Professor Wickersham, of Pennsylvania, says on the subject of books, "We teach too much at second

hand, too much from books." When a teacher teaches by objects, the instruction given is more fresh and original than any book instruction can possibly be.

Aristotle taught from no printed book, neither did Socrates, neither did our Lord. A blade of grass, an ear of corn, or the lily of the valley was sufficient for illustration.

What scholars these immortal teachers have made! So it is! In the hands of the true teacher the object handled is inspired with a new life, with an all-absorbing interest, which impresses the mind of the pupil with a powerful and everlasting impression.

Words from such an experienced educator as Dr. Wickersham will doubtless be regarded as decisive on this subject by all teachers who know by personal experience what true teaching is.

But, good reader, try these lessons and see for yourself. As a matter of course, every word, every phrase, and every sentence should be thoroughly mastered in each lesson before commencing a new one. The teacher should add to and extend each lesson as much as possible by conversation on familiar subjects. Remember that hearing and repeating are the chief instruments in acquiring a new language rapidly.