

HIGHER LATIN COMPOSITION

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Higher Latin composition by A. H. Allcroft & A. J. F. Collins

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PREFACE.

WHEN the accidence and the ordinary rules of Latin have been mastered, and the learner for the first time attempts to translate into Latin a piece of continuous English prose, he is confronted by a new set of difficulties, which lie rather in the relation of the English constructions before him to the Latin constructions he has learned than in the management of those constructions themselves: he wants to know, not so much how, as when, to use them, and his perplexity often comes from an incomplete understanding of the exact bearing of the English.

In this book an attempt is made to meet these difficulties by an analysis of some of the differences of idiom between English and Latin sentences. Part I. deals with the more striking differences that affect the sentence as a whole, and Part II. with the Latin equivalents of some ordinary English constructions. Parts III. and IV. bring together more fully the main rules of Latin syntax, not so much with a view to their being learnt from this book, as to their application in the turning of English passages into Latin; and to this end a considerable number of illustrative examples have been incorporated.

The twenty-three exercises at the end of the book, on the subject-matter of the several chapters, are followed by a number of continuous passages, many of which have been set at the London University B.A. Examination and for Responsions at Oxford.

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HIGHER LATIN COMPOSITION.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS book is intended for use by learners who have mastered Latin accidence and the main rules of syntax and are now ready to begin continuous composition.

The first thing that the would-be writer of Latin prose has to do is to get rid of the illusion that on a first casual reading he knows the meaning of the English.

Just as it is often impossible to be certain of the meaning of a passage in Shakespeare, till it has been mentally paraphrased, so for the purpose of Latin prose the English must be paraphrased either implicitly or explicitly before it is translated. It must also be paraphrased from the Latin point of view; that is to say, all that is expressed in the English must be stated directly, concretely, and in a matter-of-fact way. Take for example as straightforward a sentence as the following:—

“Now it must have seemed to the eager eye of the Carthaginian patriot as though Spain had been created for the very purpose of supplying all these various and conflicting wants.”

It may be safely said that such a sentence would have been as unintelligible to a Roman as a highly metaphorical passage in Shakespeare is to a third form boy. He would ask (1) Who was the Carthaginian patriot? (2) Why, as he was not looking at Spain, did anything connected with it appear to his eye? (3) What was meant by an “eager eye”? (4) He would not be acquainted with that view of the Creation which is familiar to us, and if he were he