

A LATIN PRIMER

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A Latin primer by H. C. Nutting

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NUTTING, LATIN PRIMER.

W. F. I.

To

MY LITTLE DAUGHTER

ELIZABETH

WHOSE EAGER INTEREST AND GLAD COÖPERATION

HAVE BEEN THE INSPIRATION OF

THIS SMALL VOLUME

PREFACE

FROM some points of view it is a misfortune that in American schools the study of Latin is usually undertaken so late that every detail of the work of the first terms must be planned with a view to reaching Caesar in a year. Encouraging signs, however, are appearing here and there, and in two or three states a movement is already on foot to carry the beginning of Latin back into the upper grades of the grammar school.

For the prosecution of this work in the grades there seems to be an almost total lack of satisfactory manuals, and it thus happened that some time ago, wishing to take up the study of Latin with one of my own children, I was led to work out for myself a plan of instruction suited to the years of my pupil. Out of that experience the present volume has grown.

In the formulation and development of the plan of the book, I have aimed particularly at four things:

- (1) To lay a broad and sure foundation of forms.
- (2) To impress through constant use a limited number of the most fundamental constructions.
- (3) To make thoroughly familiar, by continued repetition, a working vocabulary of something less than four hundred words.
- (4) To infuse a large degree of human interest into the work.

In pursuance of the last mentioned of these aims, I have admitted into the earlier Exercises several Latin words

selected rather for the interest they might excite than because of frequency of use in Caesar's *Commentaries* or Cicero's *Orations*, and, in the treatment of forms and syntax, the order of topics has been determined very largely with a view to the early development of interesting dialogue and narrative. In general method, however, the book follows thoroughly well-tried and conservative lines; and I hardly need add that, in making the above-named innovations, it is far from my purpose to render the work easy or attractive at the expense of real and substantial attainment on the part of the pupil.

The lack of general vocabularies at the end of the volume is by no means due to oversight; for it is an integral part of my plan that the student should fully master and make his own the vocabulary of each Exercise as it comes. Indeed, the number of new words in a day's lesson is so small and the amount of repetition so great that general vocabularies at the end of the book would be nothing but a hindrance to the proper use of the manual. In place of these, therefore, I substitute simply a Latin Word List. By means of this list, in case of dire need, a pupil could run down the meaning of a word; but as a matter of practice such need will seldom be found to arise.

The habit of thorough acquisition of each day's vocabulary results quickly and naturally in ability to read at sight. To foster on the part of the pupil the development of this very desirable power, there has been introduced into each Exercise, beginning with Number XXXV, one of a series of little stories told in Latin. The series is developed strictly on the gradatim plan, each successive anecdote being constructed so completely of familiar materials that footnotes are nowhere necessary. Such a programme of course subjected the writer to a very trying restraint; but

it was in this way possible to develop a body of material which provides practically ideal conditions for the practice of sight reading.

This Primer is shortly to be followed by a First Latin Reader, the two books together covering the field commonly referred to as "First Year Latin." The stories of the Reader are drawn in large part from early American history, a subject that lends itself very happily to the purpose in hand; for the tales of those stirring days of war and adventure are replete with human interest, while at the same time they afford the most admirable opportunity for the introduction of the vocabulary and syntax of Latin historical narrative. The Reader continues with somewhat greater freedom the gradatim plan begun in the Primer, and the pupil who first went over the ground covered by the two books was able to complete even the simplified Caesar contained in the Reader without knowing what it is to "prepare" an English translation; for from the very start translation "at sight" had established itself as the norm in the most delightful and natural manner possible. On account of the narrow limitations of syntax and vocabulary, the anecdotes of the Primer are largely fanciful; but in the Reader it is my aim to make the narrative historical.

In putting the material of this volume into final form, I have been much helped by the suggestions of Dr. R. Arrowsmith. I would also here express my thanks for similar assistance received from Miss Margaret Webb and Miss Clara L. Smith, both of whom have used my manuscript as a basis for the work of the newly organized seventh grade Latin classes in the Berkeley schools.