

**ELEMENTARY GERMAN
READER: WITH NOTES
AND VOCABULARY**

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Elementary German Reader: With Notes and Vocabulary by O. B. Super

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GERMAN READER

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BY

O. B. SUPER

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P R E F A C E.

A CERTAIN German pedagogue placed on the title-page of a schoolbook that he had written, the motto, "It is never possible to overestimate the stupidity of your pupils." (Man kann sich seine Schüler nie zu dumm vorstellen.) Perhaps most of our pupils would protest against the universal application of this motto, but if what is virtually the same idea were expressed thus: "It is never possible to make the work too easy for your pupils," most of them would agree with the sentiment, and, doubtless, many teachers would admit that it was sound pedagogy, at least when applied to beginners. If this book, therefore, has any excuse for being, it will be found in the fact that the editor believes in the principle above expressed, and has here carried it out more fully than has heretofore been done.

This book will accordingly be found to contain more easy reading than any other book of its class. Many German Readers begin well enough, but the average pupil's powers of acquisition do not increase in the same ratio with the increase in difficulty of the selections, and he is, therefore, likely to find the latter part of the book discouragingly difficult and, consequently, uninteresting.

If Lessing's Fables or Grimm's Tales are proper reading for a pupil to-day, it is scarcely probable that he will, in a few weeks, be able to read with profit and enjoyment selections from Humboldt's Kosmos or Kant's Ethics, yet this seems to be the theory of the compilers of some books of this kind. A more rational proceeding would seem to be to have a larger quantity of easy reading, and as the pupil's knowledge increased, he could take longer lessons and so be encouraged by being able to observe his own improvement.

Inasmuch as this book is intended primarily for the school and not for the college, it does not profess to contain specimens of German literature. Like Hamlet, the average beginner reads only "words, words, words," and graces of style and even beautiful thoughts are unappreciated on account of the difficulty experienced in getting at the meaning of individual words. A study of these things should be relegated to a later stage of the student's career, after grammar and vocabulary have ceased to require constant attention.

No authors' names are attached to the prose selections, because, in the first place, they have been taken from a great variety of sources, and the original writer was not, in every case, known. In the second place, even in familiar selections, great liberties have sometimes been taken with the text, so that the original author cannot properly be held responsible for what is said or for the manner in which it is said. For most of the historical selections,

Grube's "Characterbilder" with many omissions and some additions, have furnished the basis.

In choosing the poems the only object aimed at was simplicity. While they may not all, perhaps, be called representative German poems, they are, with few exceptions, the productions of representative German poets, and the names of many of Germany's greatest writers will be found in this section.

The poems have been placed last, not because it was intended that they should all, of necessity, be read last, but because, in the first place, a satisfactory grading of poems is more difficult than that of prose, and this arrangement, moreover, will permit the teacher to give the class any poem he chooses and at any time he sees fit, which could not so readily be done if the poems were scattered through the book.

Part I. has been prepared for the accommodation of such teachers as desire to have their pupils begin reading almost simultaneously with the study of the grammar, a very slight knowledge of the accidence being all that is here presupposed.

O. B. SUPER.

DICKINSON COLLEGE.

November 4, 1895.

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