

**ARABIC PRIMER: CONSISTING OF 180
SHORT SENTENCES CONTAINING 30
PRIMARY WORDS, PREPARING
ACCORDING TO THE VOCAL SYSTEM
OF STUDYING LANGUAGES**

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Arabic Primer: Consisting of 180 Short Sentences Containing 30 Primary Words, preparing according to the vocal system of studying languages by Sir Arthur Cotton

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SIR ARTHUR COTTON

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BY

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DIRECTIONS
FOR USING THE
BOOKS OF THE "VOCAL" SYSTEM.

THE sentences in this Primer are prepared according to the principles shown in a pamphlet on learning languages, by Sir A. Cotton, of which the following is an abstract.

1. The language is to be learnt through the ear, and not through the eye.

2. Sets of sentences composed only of a small list of words, and no others, are to be used.

3. These sentences must be written by a native in the language to be learnt, and translated into English, that they may be true native expressions, and not English expressions in foreign words.

4. Every word is to be pronounced separately by a native teacher, and repeated by the learner, five times at least by each, and no word is ever to be uttered by the learner, excepting immediately after the teacher, till he is fully confirmed in a true pronunciation.

5. After the repetition of each word separately, the sentence is also to be repeated in the same way.

6. The learner is never to attempt to compose sentences until he has learned a large number of real expressions from the books, otherwise he will certainly get into a habit of using English expressions in the foreign words.

7. The learner must carefully learn where to place his tongue, in order to pronounce the sounds that are not known in English, without which he cannot possibly pronounce them. Nothing but thousands of repetitions can make the learner use them so freely as is absolutely necessary. There is no other way of accustoming the tongue to the new position.

8. And so with the pronunciation generally, and with the hearing, nothing but multiplied repetitions of word by word and sentence by sentence, immediately after hearing them uttered by a native, can sufficiently exercise both the tongue and the ear.

9. The whole attention must be concentrated as far as possible on one thing at a time. If the attention be distracted by new words and new expressions, pronunciation, &c., together, nothing approaching to correctness of pronunciation, expression, &c., can be attained, and an immense time is wasted.

10. The progress of the learner at first is extremely slow, and all the ordinary Primers suppose a progress a hundred times beyond the reality; and the sole reason why such enormous time is always expended in obtaining a most imperfect use of a language is that it is attempted to acquire the pronunciation, the grammar, a multitude of words, the putting them together, &c. &c., all at once. And in this way a real mastery of the language, so as to speak it correctly, as a native does, is never acquired.

11. Languages are usually learnt as if it took a long time to learn the grammar, &c., but that to speak with a

good pronunciation and expression, and freely, and to catch the words from a speaker by the ear were easily and quickly acquired, but this is exactly contrary to fact. Long before the pronunciation, the free use of words, correct expressions, and the ready hearing of the foreign words are acquired, the grammar, &c. is picked up almost without effort.

12. Whatever is learnt should be learnt thoroughly, and completely appropriated, before proceeding to new words or expressions. It is entire waste of time and labour to learn partially and hurry on to new things, losing what has not been well secured; therefore a few words should be taken in hand at a time, and these put into extremely short native expressions, and completely appropriated, so as to be nearly as ready at hand as one's own language, before proceeding to a second set. The first small set of words especially should be used in every possible way, and repeatedly, till they have become quite familiar; and it must be remembered that almost the whole pronunciation of the language is involved in the first hundred words, for they will contain almost every sound. It is of the utmost consequence to give abundance of time to these first sets of words and sentences, for immensely more is implied in their acquisition than might be supposed, and if a perfectly sound foundation is thus laid, further progress is safe and sure, and it will soon become comparatively rapid.

13. The materials therefore for the "Vocal" system are sets of words with short sentences composed only of them,

very gradually lengthened. Thus the present Primers consist of 30, 100, 150, 250 and 500 words, with 180, 500, 450 and 500 sentences composed of those words, beginning with two words in a sentence and ending with six or seven. It is an essential principle of this system that the learner is never to attempt to talk till he is thoroughly established in sound pronunciation, and in a large stock of *bond fide* native expressions. If this is neglected he will inevitably become confirmed in false pronunciation and false expression, and never use the language correctly. There are everywhere thousands who have used a foreign language for twenty or thirty years, and yet are with difficulty understood, excepting by those who are accustomed to their imperfect pronunciation and expressions.

The exercises in them are these:—first the teacher pronounces each word of the first five or ten of the thirty, and the pupil repeats it after him, with the English meaning, five or ten times. This is done several times over, and then the sentences are begun in the same way; first, each word repeated five or ten times and then the sentence as many. This is continued through the first, suppose, five hours. The teacher then gives the Arabic word and the pupil repeats it, giving the English meaning, repeating this also five or ten times. The teacher then gives the English word and the pupil translates it, several times. Thus the set of ten words is gone over repeatedly, and after this the sentences are gone through in the same way again and again, till the whole of the five or ten words and their sentences are perfectly familiar. The next five or

ten words are then taken, and so on. Perhaps these thirty words and sentences may be acquired in ten days of five hours, perhaps in less; but whatever time is required it should be given to this first set, and nothing should be done with the second set till this is so acquired that the pupils can, with almost perfect readiness, give the English for the Arabic sentences or the converse. If fifty hours are given to this set every word will have been heard and uttered more than two thousand times, and this is absolutely necessary. The words should be repeated deliberately, giving time for the attention to be well exercised on every word, and in this way about fifteen hundred words are heard and uttered in an hour.

It is this thorough exercise of the tongue and ear, with the attention concentrated as far as possible on one thing, that is essential both to correct and ready pronunciation, and recognition when heard, and nothing else can possibly give it; and it will take a tenth part of the time to do this in the quiet of study with a teacher that it would to do it in the ordinary course of conversation in social life, when the attention is distracted with a thousand things. Perhaps each of these five sets of sentences, containing one thousand words, with their inflexions, may require two months of five hours a day, or ten days each; but with many it may take much less.

But with these thousand words and two thousand sentences thus completely appropriated, the learner may safely and confidently enter into any of the ordinary intercourse, and daily add to his stock with little effort. He has