BEGINNING GERMAN

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Beginning German by Heinrich Keidel & W. Blakemore Evans

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INTRODUCTION

Learning a foreign language is not play but work. Very often, especially in the case of more mature students, the difficulties which confront both teacher and student seem almost insurmountable.

This book does not offer any strikingly novel method. The authors do not even claim that it is easy. They have, however, attempted to reduce the amount of theoretical grammar to those essentials which are necessary to the progress of the student.

In the selection of vocabulary a first book should contain the more common words and phrases of everyday life, but in addition to this it should also offer at least an introduction to the more choice language of literature. This double aim has been the guiding principle in the selection of illustrative examples and reading material.

There are two innovations in the treatment of the theoretical grammar, which, it is hoped, will prove advantageous. The first is a comparison, on a very modest scale, with the fundamental facts of modern English grammar. In each chapter the starting point is English, with which it is assumed the student already has some acquaintance. The second innovation concerns the arrangement. First books, as a rule, present the facts of grammar piecemeal, here a bit and there a bit. In this book the

(3)

BEGINNING GERMAN

254

various larger divisions of grammar are given as separate units, each to be studied and mastered as a whole. For example, the first unit is the entire German verb, save the subjunctive mode; the second is the pronouns; the third, the nouns, etc.

In presenting the material to the class the following method is recommended: After a brief discussion of the preliminary paragraphs 1 to 5, let ample time be devoted to pronunciation. Imitation of the teacher's pronunciation, aided by whatever phonetic helps he may be able to give, is the course recommended. Much practice on the exercises in pronunciation should precede even the reading of the explanatory paragraphs 6 to 18. Then follows the first group of German texts. These are to be explained and interpreted by the teacher, or rather, let teacher and class work them out together. They are to be practiced until they are almost committed to memory. In this the Fragen, following each of the narrative texts, will be of assistance. Before the llebung is attempted, however, the chapter of the grammar headed Verb is to be carefully studied. When this is mastered the lichna follows, which is in fact practice upon this chapter of the grammar, based on the German texts already learned. Then follows the second group of texts, again to be thoroughly mastered; after which the chapter of the grammar on pronouns, and finally the llebung for oral and written practice are to be taken up. Each lichning is devoted primarily to a given chapter of

4

BEGINNING GERMAN

the grammar, but there is in all, save the first, a review of the preceding chapters, in order to keep the entire subject continually in the mind of the student.

The amount of time to be devoted to any one chapter cannot even be estimated, as it depends so largely upon very varying conditions and circum-The authors feel keenly that one of the stances. great flaws of our American education is lack of thoroughness, lack of definite, accurate knowledge, and so they would urge that no chapter be left until it is completely assimilated. It is confidently hoped. however, that, with the exception of the English-German exercises in the Appendix, the book may be finished easily in one semester when used with college classes, or in one year in the high school. The English-German exercises are intended as a final review of both grammar and texts, extending at the rate of one period a week, throughout the second semester of the college course or the third semester of the high school.

These directions may prove of value, although they perhaps seem unduly detailed, especially in a book which, as the authors hope, offers considerably more room for the free play of the teacher's individuality and pedagogical efficiency than is possible where the work of each class-room hour is fully outlined.

In closing, we desire to express our sincere thanks for the assistance and cordial co-operation

5

BEGINNING GERMAN

which we have so generously received from Dean J. V. Denney and our colleagues in the German Department of the Ohio State University.

85

AUGUST, 1915.

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3

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THE AUTHORS.

1

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6

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323

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CONTENTS		
Pe	ragraphs.	Page
Preliminary	1-5	1
Uebungen zur Aussprache		12
Einige Rlaffenausbrücke		16
Pronunciation	6-10	20
Gender, Pronouns of Address, Word-Order	11-18	27
가 있는 것 같아요. 그는 것 같아요. 같이 같이 많이 잘 가지 않는 것 같아요. 이 것이 가지 않는 것 같아요. 같이 많이	11-10	82
Texts with Uebungen. Handlungen, Hebbels Kindheit, Karl ber Große.		82
Verb	14-44	42
Simple and Compound Tenses	16-28	42
Principal Parts	29	50
The Infinitive with or without to (au)	30	56
Use of the Tenses	81	56
Passive Voice	82-85	51
Compound Verbs	36-40	61
Impersonal Verb	41-42	61
Reflexive Verb	48-44	67
Texts with llebungen		69
Der Landmann, Der Dieb, Die zwei		
Dichterfreunde, Goethe und Schiller, Ein Brief, Das Matrofenspiel.		
Declension	45-78	90
Number, Case-forms	45-48	90
Definite and Indefinite Articles	47-48	91
Pronouns	49-57	92
Limiting Adjectives	58	1.08
Nouns	59-66	105
Adjective	67-77	108
Ordinal Numbers	78	116