

**HINDÚSTĀNĪ PRIMER:
CONTAINING A FIRST GRAMMAR
SUITED TO BEGINNERS, AND A
VOCABULARY OF COMMON
WORDS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649420605

Hindūstānī Primer: Containing a First Grammar Suited to Beginners, and a Vocabulary of Common Words on Various Subjects by Monier Williams

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MONIER WILLIAMS

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SUITED TO BEGINNERS,

AND

A VOCABULARY OF COMMON WORDS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS,

TOGETHER WITH USEFUL PHRASES AND SHORT STORIES.

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NEW EDITION.

LONDON:

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1865.

PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH, the "Easy Introduction to Hindústání," published in the autumn of last year, was intended to suit all classes of learners, many of those among whom the book has circulated have expressed an opinion that it is not sufficiently short and simple to serve as a Primer, or first book. The present little work has, therefore, been written to meet the wants of beginners, especially those whose minds, without being stocked with much learning, have at least been trained to comprehend the common principles of grammar. As its title implies, its aim is merely to explain the *first* rules and rudiments of the language, in such a manner as shall commend them to Englishmen of average capacity, whose scholastic discipline has not been greater than is usually imparted at national schools. This has been no easy task. As the subject developed itself, I became conscious that I could not effect anything satisfactory, even of an elementary nature, unless I gave my learners credit

for a certain faculty of apprehension, a certain native vigour of intellect, and acquaintance with the structure of their mother-tongue. My plan, therefore, has been to keep in view as far as possible, the formation, of English; and, by comparing it with Hindústání, to mark the differences and resemblances that exist in the two languages. Nevertheless, in pursuance of my method, I have thought myself justified in assuming ignorance as to the meaning of the common terms of grammar. Experience has convinced me that many advanced students would be puzzled if asked to give a clear and definite explanation of the terms, Noun, Adjective, Verb, &c. In a Primer, then, it is hardly possible to be too full and explicit in making these points perfectly plain.

The vocabulary of useful words on various subjects, appended to the grammatical part of this work, will, I hope, add greatly to its practical utility. With a view to the exhibition of such words only as are commonly used in India, I have sought the assistance of Hindústání scholars who have associated with the natives in those districts of Hindústán where the purest idiom is spoken. The selection has therefore been submitted to the Rev. R. C. Mather, to Captain Henry J. W. Carter, and to Professor Cotton Mather, and I have to thank these gentlemen for the kind aid I have received from them in revising the proof sheets.

Notwithstanding the pains I have taken to be simple and intelligible, I fear I have not always been successful. The blame, however, must not be laid entirely at my door. Primers and grammars of every kind are, after all, necessary evils, only to be borne because not to be avoided, and even, at their best, composed of much nauseous matter, which is part and parcel of their very nature, and which no amount of sweetening can render palatable.

No grammar, however ingenious, especially on a subject like Hindústání, could ever be made *pleasant reading* to an Englishman. If the present little work prove successful in removing any of the difficulties of idiom which have hitherto debarred the mass of European residents in India from proper intercourse with the natives, its utmost purpose will be accomplished.

In conclusion, I may briefly repeat what I have stated at full in my Preface to the larger work, that if we hope, not merely to preserve our Indian empire, but to avert a worse catastrophe than the mutiny of 1857, we must endeavour to break down the partition which has hitherto separated the European and Asiatic races. This can only be effected by free communication with the natives, by studying their character, and leading them to study us, until Englishmen, Hindús, and Mussulmáns are brought to perceive that, as

fellow-men and fellow-subjects, they have many interests, tastes, and views in common with each other. Who can doubt that the first step to be taken in this direction ought to be a fixed resolution, on the part of every British resident in the East, to make himself master of the Indian vulgar tongue? It is hardly too much to affirm that the honour, the safety, the very existence of Englishmen in India depend on the fulfilment of this duty.

M. W.

Cheltenham, October, 1859.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
Letters	1	Conjunctions	42
Table of the Alphabet	6	Interjections	42
The different sorts of Words		Numbers	42
in Hindústání	6	Letters and Syllables put to	
Substantives, or Nouns	8	the beginning, or added to	
Gender of Nouns	9	the end, of Words	44
Number and Case	10	A few Rules for the Forma-	
Examples of Nouns	14	tion of Sentences	44
Genitive formed with <i>ká</i> ,		List of useful Nouns:—	
or <i>ké</i> , or <i>kí</i>	15	Relating to Heaven	50
Adjectives	18	Relating to Hell	50
Comparison of Adjectives	19	The Hindú Elements	50
Pronouns	19	Relating to Air and Sky	50
Verbs	24	Relating to Earth	50
Formation of the Verb	28	Relating to Fire	50
Examples of Verbs —		Relating to Water	50
<i>Márná</i> , 'to strike'	33	Relating to Man	51
<i>Bolná</i> , 'to speak'	34	Kindred	51
<i>Honá</i> , 'to be'	35	Animals —	
<i>Jáná</i> , 'to go'	37	Beasts	51
Table of common Verbs	38	Birds	51
Causal Verbs	39	Fishes	52
Compound Verbs	39	Insects, Reptiles, &c.	52
Adverbs	40	Trees, Plants, Fruits,	
Prepositions	42	Vegetables, &c.	52