

TEACH YOURSELF BOOK

GERMAN



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A BOOK OF SELF-INSTRUCTION IN GERMAN
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THE ENGLISH UNIVERSITIES PRESS LTD
102 NEWGATE STREET
LONDON, E.C.1

PREFACE

We have travelled a long way on the road since the Englishman, tall and skinny, with sandy hair and protruding teeth, was made the butt of ridicule on the Continental stage, and his attempts to speak a foreign tongue were found either irritating or excruciatingly funny.

We have progressed much, too, in our approach to the study of foreign languages. We are not so content to signal and gesticulate for our food in a foreign restaurant, and our eyes no longer flash with indignation at these "damned foreigners" who cannot speak the King's English. It used to be quite common, too, for a well-educated man to turn out a creditable essay in French or German on the fossil iguanodon, yet be distressingly inarticulate when called upon to order a second-class railway ticket or a dinner. Amusing mistakes, of course, will always be made. There is the Scot, for instance, who translated: "J'aime la langue française" by: "I love the tall French girl," or the German who said in great indignation to the waiter in a London restaurant: "I am here since ten minutes—when do I become a sausage!" He had forgotten that *bekommen* in English is *to get*, while the English *become* is in German *werden*.

Most of the difficulties of forty years ago were due to an undue importance given to grammar and Classical subject-matter; the teaching did not help the practical man who wanted to travel. It is claimed for this book that the interests of such people are studied throughout. The classified vocabularies should prove very helpful, and it is hoped that the student will find that the bugbear of German declensions loses some of its terrors as presented here.

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Teach Yourself German

Anyone who follows this course conscientiously should be able to read, write and speak the German language with some measure of success. His accuracy and his fluency will depend not only on his native ability but also on his determination to keep at it regularly: a short time every day over a long period is much better than gigantic efforts every now and then.