
Practical Lessons in German

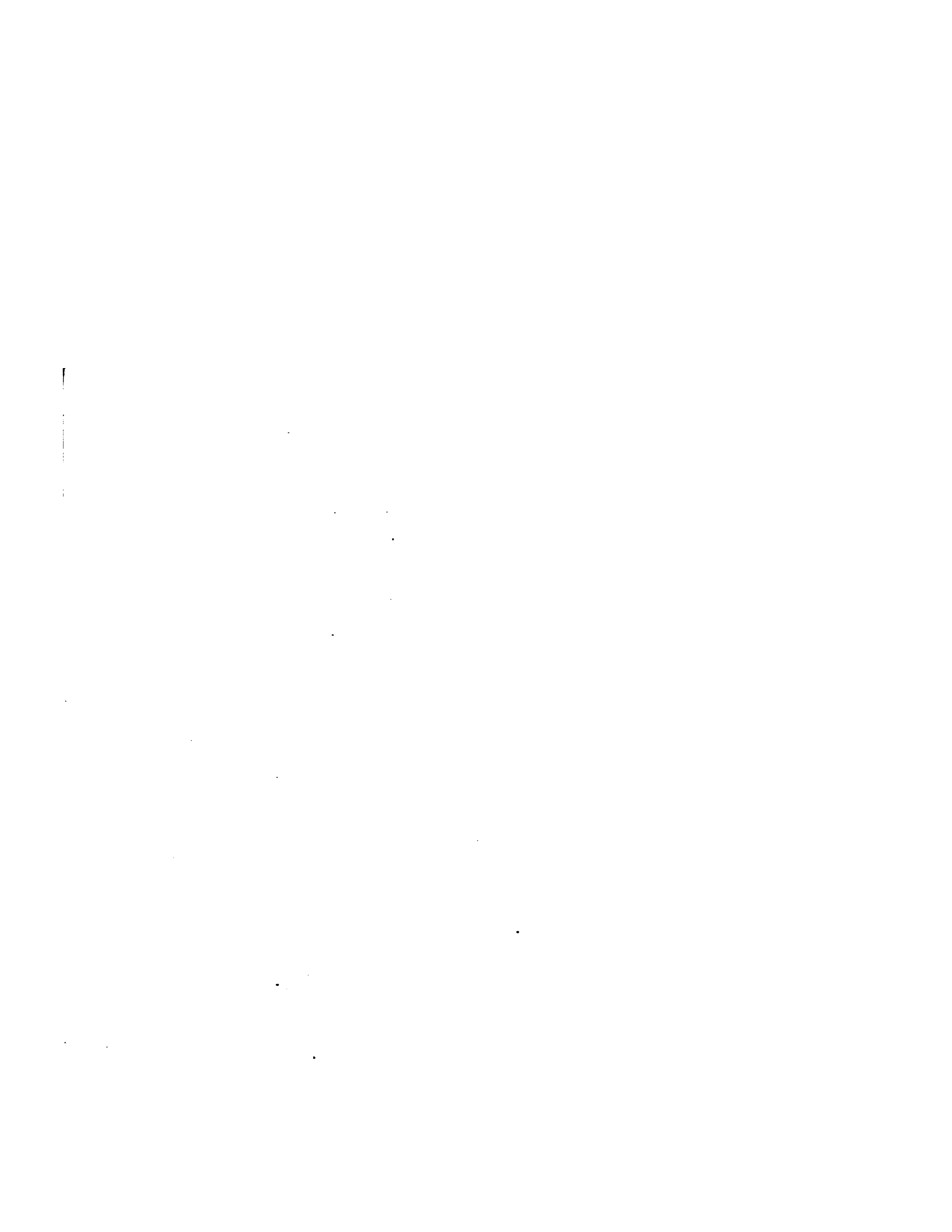
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PRACTICAL
LESSONS IN GERMAN

BY

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PHILADELPHIA

SEVENTH EDITION



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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

“Kein Preis ohne Fleiss.”

This course was intended primarily for use with my own classes, but as the manifolding of it by hand involved great expenditure of time and work, I deemed it expedient to give it its present form, and thus to make it accessible to any others who may see fit to use it.

In preparing this course I did not indulge in “invention” or “fiction” in any hope of accidentally discovering some new, magic scheme of teaching language, but I simply endeavored to reproduce on paper, as accurately as possible, the best processes of my own teaching. In other words, this course is the reproduction of so many real, successful lessons.

I have tried to avoid, on the one hand, encumbering this course with matter of no practical utility to the average student, and, on the other, producing an impression on the mind of the pupil that the language of the Fatherland can be acquired by mere sleight of hand.

The careful reader will observe that, while the subject matter changes from lesson to lesson, there is an inner connection and unity, as well as a gradual development from the simplest forms and expressions to those more difficult and involved: hence the necessity, on the part of the teacher, of insisting upon the pupil learning each lesson well as he proceeds.

I have endeavored to so arrange each lesson that, for the most part, it will explain itself. But, in order to the best results, the teacher ought to keep in mind that he is to be more than a mere “interpreter” of the lesson: he is to make the subject of the lesson thoroughly his own, and then “teach” it, *first orally*, modifying it occasionally according to the conditions of the case. In this way the lesson taught is really *his own lesson*, the book

being merely his guide. After the lesson is thus taught, it is to be read, which, of course, will generally still call for some explaining.

It may not be out of place to remark, with reference to my own use of this book, that when there is no Herr Schmidt or Frau Schmidt, etc., in the class, I *imagine* them present, and treat them precisely the same as though they were visibly before us. In this way even a single pupil enjoys the advantages of a class,—a matter of great importance in teaching him, and drilling him in the use of the verb, the pronoun, etc.

As this little book was intended, primarily, to meet the demand of the age for "short practical courses," I have introduced here and there words and phrases which are very useful to know, but the meaning of which cannot always be readily explained from the context: such words and phrases the pupil will occasionally find explained in a parenthesis, but more frequently in a separate vocabulary on pp. 142–143. After lesson 16, however, all explanations are in German, and form a special paragraph of the lesson itself.

I do not pretend that the explanations will in every case be sufficient; they are suggestive rather than exhaustive, and, like the lesson in general, are meant to wend their way through the teacher's own thought and memory before reaching the pupil's ear. The former is, of course, at liberty to simplify, abridge, enlarge, etc., to suit the circumstances.

It has been my endeavor to so grade the lessons that the pupil easily passes from one to another, and this fact, together with what has been stated above, will make it apparent that the book, although intended primarily for hard work, is at the same time adapted to the wants of those who merely wish to acquire a *reading knowledge* of the language.

In regard to the use of the References to the grammatical tables at the close of the book, the teacher ought to consult his own judgment in each case. Personally, I use them very sparingly with *beginners* until I reach lesson 13, when I commence to make them part of the lesson.

A. ALBIN FISCHER.

Philadelphia, June, 1891.

FURTHER OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THE USE OF THE BOOK.

As a few hints on the proper use of this book have already been given in the preface, and as, moreover, each lesson suggests very largely its own method, little need be said on any point but reviewing.

I believe it is easier to teach a lesson well than to review it well, and for this reason I have laid a great deal of stress upon the exercises, and have even indicated in a measure how the review *may* be conducted. The exercise marked "schriftlich und mündlich" I always have the pupil go over first *orally*, and then have him write it out at home. In the next lesson I have him repeat the same exercise again orally, while I correct it, and if his knowledge of it is found very defective, have him rewrite it, or else go over it again and again orally, until he can do it easily and correctly. These exercises we review from time to time, and thus the pupil acquires great facility. With *classes*, reviewing has to be modified, of course, to suit the circumstances.

At first sight, the great variety and profuseness of the exercises in the more advanced lessons might seem to make the work rather onerous; in reality, however, precisely the opposite result is accomplished, inasmuch as each exercise treats of little more than one thing, only from a different standpoint: accordingly, by going over the entire lesson only once even, most pupils acquire a fair knowledge of it. I do not mean, of course, that this is sufficient. Far from it!

The many "u. s. w." found in the first part of the book are never intended for a convenient way of winding up the subject, but are always meant to suggest to the master further oral drill.

Let me repeat:—*Much oral drill, frequent reviews, and, on completion of the book, a general review, with particular reference to the appendix (Anhang).*

Although this is a book for beginners, it may be used to good advantage with more advanced pupils, especially as a drill book.

A. ALBIN FISCHER.

Philadelphia, August, 1891.