



Malta
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Association

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Malta Classics Association*

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Pharmaceutical Latin

by Tóth Emöke Takácsné

Debrecen, 2014. Paperback, 133pp., 20.5 X 29.5cm.

This excellent and very useful book has two aims: teaching Latin and Medicine. The delight achieved in reading it is, therefore, twofold from beginning to end. It does not attempt to teach Latin before Pharmaceutical terms, nor the latter before the former. It teaches both disciplines in a clear way through plenty of illustrations, the source of which are provided at the end of the book. The inclusion of these illustrations is made possible thanks to the largeness of the pages. Its pedagogical method is that of teaching through exercises, which include quizzes, crossword puzzles and simple exercises, like those of finding synonyms and opposites, translations and giving the correct grammatical forms. It abounds in vocabularies and it has, at the end, a short Latin-to-English Dictionary based on Pharmaceutical and Medical terms, useful to have in one's possession even for everyday use.

The Medical and Pharmaceutical information is rich and varied: anatomy, pharmaceutical substances, chemistry, physiology, botany, prescriptive formulae, pharmaceutical apparatus, dermatology, the heart and blood systems, and the digestive and respiratory systems. Indeed, being so clear and simple, it is useful for all ages.

The Latin proceeds from the alphabet through the numerals, declensions, adjectives, their comparisons, prefixes and prepositions, conjugations to diminutives. It was surprising to see that the declension tables give the order of the cases, with the genitive following the accusative, in the style of the British and, therefore, our system, and not the continental, where the genitive follows the nominative. The author is not afraid of frightening the reader with Grammar: on the contrary, grammar is presented as a friendly and useful, if not necessary, tool to appreciate Medicine and Pharmacy to the full because it tackles the meaning of their terminologies.

The book abounds in tables which are themselves both lucid and helpful in serving as summaries. The author understands that with Latin, grammatical exposition is necessary, but not necessarily pedantic. The address remains that of Pharmacy and Medicine, and Latin comes in as the tool. The scientific language is all the way explained gradually only through tables and exercises.

The book ends with a summary of the Latin Grammar by way of exercises, a specimen of pharmaceutical indications in prescriptions, glossary and abbreviations of pharmaceutical terms, and the already mentioned Latin dictionary.

Such a book is recommended for every medical school. Indeed, one would do well to help influence the planners of medical and pharmaceutical programmes at universities to include a course for first years in Medicine and Pharmacy Degrees, and this book would suit the purpose very well; for the medical people who are still uninitiated in the Latin language, this book will serve as a delightful revision of the subject matter through the Latin language; finally, for the Latinists, it will serve as good introduction to disciplines that are part of their own healthy lives.