

INTRODUCTORY SUGGESTIONS.

It is chiefly at the beginning that the difficulties of Sanskrit present themselves. The variety of forms, the strange alphabet, the peculiarities of word and sentence combination,—all these simultaneously confront the student at the very outset. Accordingly, the plan followed with my classes, and for which provision is here made, is to distribute these difficulties over the first few weeks of the course. The common paradigms of nouns and verbs should first be learned. These are given by the Grammar in transliteration. The reading of the first four pages of the Nala in Roman letters should then be taken up. The Reader gives these in transliteration on an inset conveniently facing the same text in *nāgarī* letters. The student may thus become familiar with the *form* and *sound* of the vocables, without being embarrassed by the alphabet and the running together of the words. Next, the same familiar text should be read aloud over and over again in *nāgarī* letters. I am convinced that the easiest way to master the alphabet is to read frequently in it words which one already knows. The next step will be the reading of pages five to nine without the help of a transliteration, but with the aid given by the typographical separation of the words, which has been carried out so far as is practicable, though in violation of Indian usage. Finally, from this point on, the reading may be continued without other help for the difficulties of euphonic and graphic combination than is offered by the notes.

After finishing the Nala, the student should take up the Hitopadeṣa. Selections xvii., xx., and xi. are very easy and are good to begin with. The remaining short ones from vi. to xxi. may then follow in order; and finally the long selections ii. to v.

It is recommended that the student use the stories from the Kathā-sarit-sāgara for exercise in rapid reading, as soon as he has acquired a fair vocabulary from what precedes. The passages from “Manu” may be read as they stand.

Of the Vedic selections, the easiest are numbers xxxi. (Rigveda i. 1), xxxiii., xxxviii., xxxix., xli., xlv., xlvi., and lix.; and it is advisable to read these first and in the order here mentioned. Selection xxxii., as being one of poetic merit and not over-hard, may next be taken up, and after it, the Varuna-hymns, selections xliii.–xliv.; then the hymns in dramatic form, selections xxxv., xxxvii., and lvi.