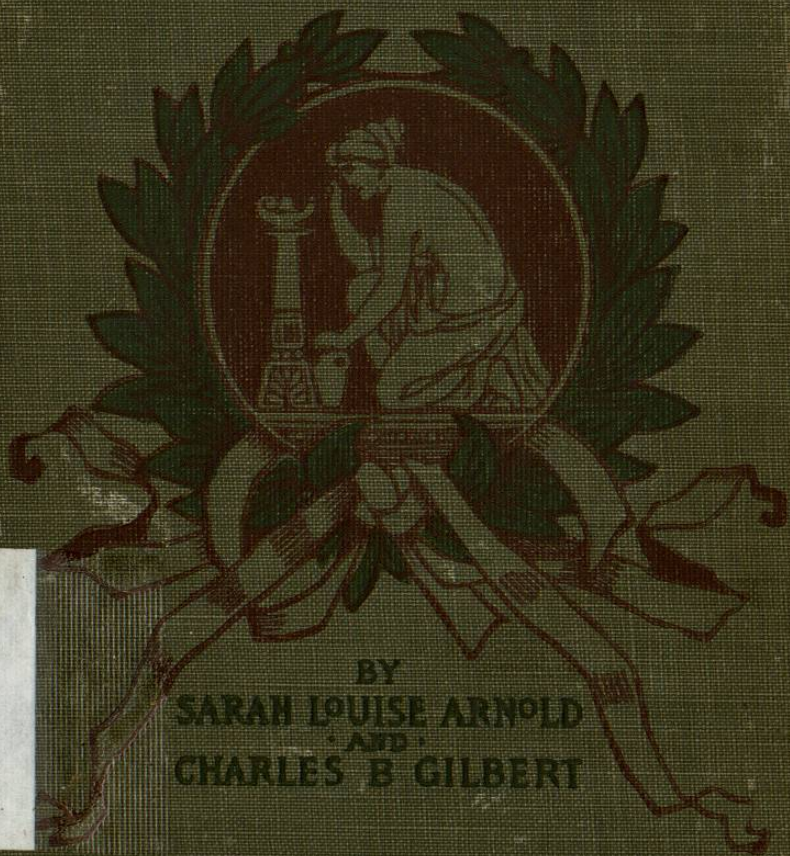


STEPPING STONES TO LITERATURE

A FOURTH-READER



BY
SARAH LOUISE ARNOLD
AND
CHARLES B GILBERT

SILVER BURDETT & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

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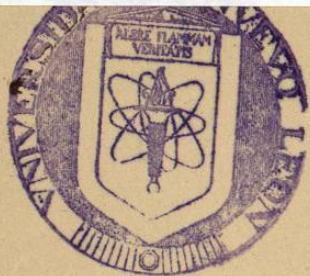
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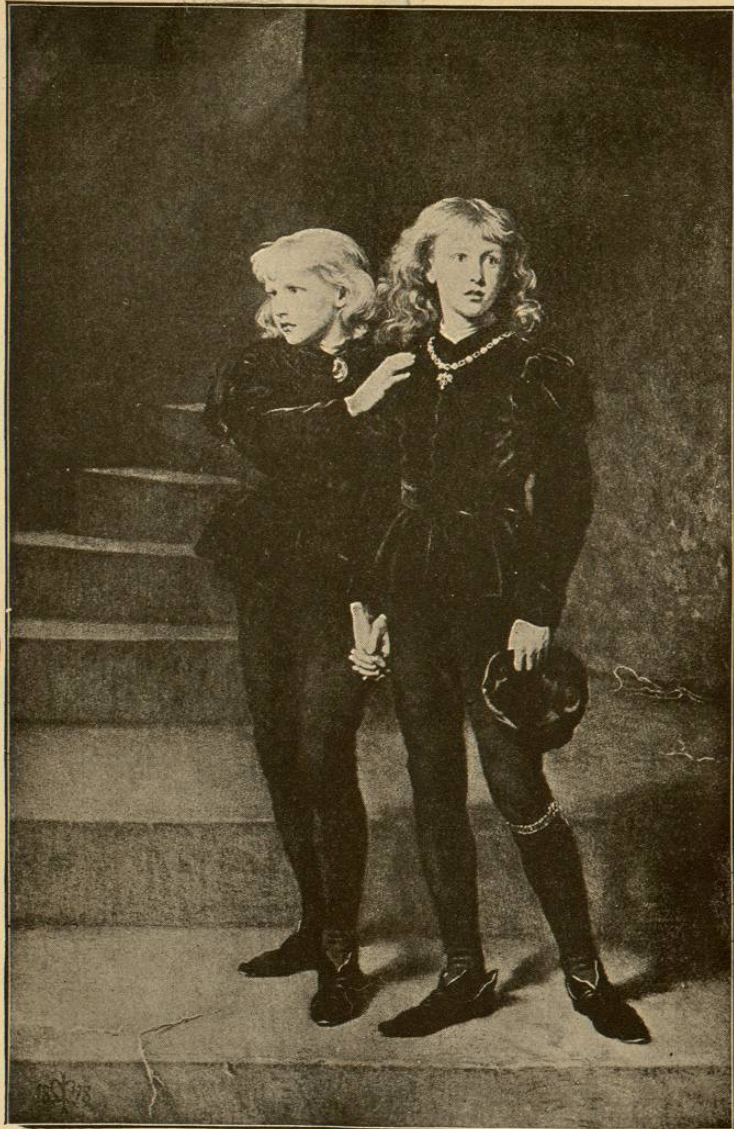
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J. E. MILLAIS.

THE PRINCES IN THE TOWER. (Page 220.)

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STEPPING STONES
TO
LITERATURE

BY

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A Fourth Reader.



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PREFACE.

THESE Readers are intended to meet chiefly the need for better literature as reading matter in the schools. All the material used in them is selected from authors of standing, is carefully graded, and appears as nearly as possible in its complete form. The compilers believe that children have been fed too much upon fragmentary selections for the cultivation of good taste. It is advisable that the works of an author be presented to the young mind in the form in which they came from the master's hand, that they may be seen in all their bearings and settings.

While doubtless much good has come from reading the brief selections from standard authors found in the ordinary readers, they have failed of the prime purpose of inculcating a fondness for literature in its completeness and a taste for reading good books. It is not improbable that the too prevalent taste for scrappy reading is partially derived from the character of the reading books upon which children have been fed. Hence as many selections as possible in these Readers are given in full, and it is urged that teachers treat them as complete works of literature and see that they are studied as such.

In the Fourth Reader the child is given his first distinct introduction to mythology. In the earlier books, fables and fairy stories have been used, and there has been a little suggestion of mythology; but in the Fourth, myth and wonder — those subjects which appeal to the child's imagination and carry him out of his limited environment into a larger world — are emphasized. We believe that this is in accord with whatever truth exists in the culture epoch theory of education.

It also makes a suitable and natural introduction to the historical matter which appears later. The connection between this matter and that in the lower books is furnished by two fables, "The Fox and the Cat" and "The Fox and the Horse," and by such humorous poems as "That Calf" and "The Cow and the Ass." These lead, on the one side, to the Nature readings both in verse and prose; on the other side, they lead directly to the myth, and the myth introduces the child easily

and naturally to history, — the Hiawatha myth, for example, making an excellent introduction to American history, and the Greek myth, to ancient history. The selection from "Aladdin" belongs to that class of purely imaginative literature which all children read and enjoy.

The authors believe that if these Readers are used wisely, according to the plan suggested, they will not only help to make better readers of the children in our schools, but will also aid in a wise correlation of studies, will cultivate taste, stimulate a love of good literature, and, through literature, bring within reach of the children the choicest treasures of the world.

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SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

THE purpose of this series of books is indicated by its name, **STEPPING STONES TO LITERATURE**. The aim of the authors was to make the formalities of reading subordinate to its real end, which is the acquisition of thought from the printed page. It is urged, therefore, that you aim not first to teach children how to read, and then incidentally to give them some acquaintance with good literature; but that you seek primarily and chiefly to acquaint your pupils with literature as such, and secondarily to teach them the technique of reading. You will find, if you follow this plan, that not only will the first object be gained, but that the children will learn the art of reading much better than when the chief emphasis is placed upon this art.

In a book composed of good literature, words should be studied only as they occur in the text, and as their study is necessary to an understanding of the text. Such study is doubtless important, but great care should be taken to prevent its interference with the real object of reading, which is acquaintance with literature.

The study of literature should not be confused with the study of the biographies of authors. Acquaintance with the lives and personal traits of authors is often interesting, and frequently throws light upon their writings, yet its value is but secondary at best; children, especially, should give their chief attention to the writings themselves. Let them read freely and abundantly, until they become absorbed in their reading. Do not interrupt them too frequently with criticisms. In no case spoil a reading lesson by introducing the study of technique for its own sake. Remember always that the ends to be secured are a love for good literature and the storing of the mind with noble ideals.

While the selections in this series of Readers are, in so far as possible, literary wholes, in many cases it has been necessary to abbreviate. Sometimes chapters have been taken out of books, the chapters in themselves constituting complete productions. In all cases of abbreviation, it is urged that the attention of the children be called to the books from which the selections are made, and that they be advised to read them entire. Lead the children to the use of the public library through their reading lessons.

The ends above set forth, included in the term "the mastery of books," are of course the real objects of all reading. They are secured by what is known as silent reading, whereas the school reading lesson consists in reading aloud. The object of the latter is twofold: *first*, the making plain to the teacher that children are capable of mastering books; *second*, instruction in the art of oral reading. While this art is not, as it is often treated, of primary importance, but wholly secondary, it is yet important, and should receive careful attention.

Good oral reading includes both intellectual and physical elements. The first implies clear and sympathetic comprehension of the subject matter, so that the reader is able to impart it to others as if it were original with himself. The second involves a mastery of the various physical organs used in reading. The common advice, "Read as if you were talking," is correct if the pupil talks correctly, — that is, it covers the first point, "sympathetic knowledge of the subject matter;" but in this country, where the voices and modes of speech are proverbially bad, it does not cover the second.

First, then, be sure that the children understand what they are reading. Try to secure their interest in it, and then expect them to read it to you as if they were imparting fresh and valuable information. This requires a thorough knowledge of the text and context, and the free use of the dictionary and other reference books. The children should read their school reading lessons as they would read any book on any occasion, because they are interested in what the book contains.

Second, see to it that the children become masters of those portions of the body which are used in reading, so that when they comprehend what they are reading, they can impart it to others in a natural, pleasing, and lucid manner. Practically, the entire body is used in good reading. Specifically, the points to be carefully observed are *carriage or position* of the various parts of the body, *proper breathing*, *clear enunciation*, *correct pronunciation*, and *quality of voice*.

1. **Carriage.** The body should be erect, so that a vertical line passes through the ears, the shoulders, the hips, and the heels. This position should not be stiff, but all the muscles should be free, so that the various members can move gracefully and readily as may be required. To secure this freedom, calisthenic exercises are useful.

2. **Breathing.** The breathing should be deep rather than superficial. It is often well, before a reading lesson, to have the class stand in correct position and draw in through their nostrils — not through their mouths — as deep and as full breaths as they are capable of taking. This exercise repeated several times will tend to produce good breathing during the reading lesson. Children should be taught to breathe through the nostrils, and to use the diaphragm and the muscles of the

abdomen in breathing even more than those of the chest. They should be taught to take in new breaths before the supply of air is exhausted to such a degree as to affect the voice.

3. **Enunciation.** Few children enunciate all sounds distinctly. If you watch children carefully, you will find that some have difficulty with vowels, others with consonants. Special drill exercises should be given to classes to cover general deficiencies, and to individuals to meet particular needs.

4. **Correct Pronunciation.** This is determined by the usage of good authors. To avoid errors it is necessary to consult frequently some standard dictionary, with which every class room should be supplied.

5. **The Quality of the Voice.** Another consideration to which it is necessary to give careful attention is the quality of the voice. It is said that very few Americans have agreeable voices. This is a serious national defect. No one who has felt the charm of a rich, full, gentle voice needs to be told the importance of training the voices of children.

Special attention should be given to timbre, pitch, and inflection. Strive to cultivate in your children full, rich voices. In reading, give careful heed to appropriateness of vocalization,—that is, see that the children use the proper quality of tone and the right inflections to express the feeling of what they are reading. Good reading is a beautiful art, and cannot be secured by obedience to technical laws merely. It can only be secured by constant watchfulness and care on the part of both pupil and teacher.

S. Rinaldo Casso



PRELIMINARY MATTER.

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