JOHNSON'S SECOND READER

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BLANCHE WYNNE JOHNSON & E. C. BRANSON

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ILLUSTRATED.

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SUGGESTIONS TO THE TEACHER

The child is ready for the Second Reader when he can recognize instantly on a printed page about five hundred words, all of which are already in his spoken vocabulary. In the Second Reader new words, as representing ideas partly new at any rate, begin to be introduced; some reliance, too, is placed on the child's ability to think intelligently.

The child learns to *use* good English intelligently by *reading* good English intelligently. To accomplish this object, the sentences must not be so long as to require more breath than he can easily command; nor so involved in thought as to exceed his ability to follow without breaking down, or even without being fatigued; nor composed of words that he might not hear spoken by his associates out of school.

At the same time every selection in this or any other reader should either be from the hand of an acknowledged master of the language, or should be designed to lead him almost immediately to such fountain head. The development of a love for good literature is the highest aim of a course of reading in school, and a well-balanced, well-con-

structed sentence carrying a well-balanced, well-constructed thought should appeal to the child as harmony to the musician. He cannot be responsive to such an appeal unless most—and preferably all—of the language he has heard be correct.

When the teacher, the pupil, and the reading-book are brought together, the aim is to have the pupil give evidence to the teacher that he comprehends what the printed symbols are, expressed in sound, and what the collection of words—the sentence—is in thought. When the teacher learns how to keep this balance between word and sentence, sound and sense—how to have the pupil call all the words correctly, and yet do much more than merely "call the words," think the thought—then good teaching begins.

In the arranging of selections in a series of readers, the compilers have to see to it that no selection has too many new words in it, that the new words be not too difficult, and that each selection be a development of the one preceding. Yet, each selection should contain a complete thought, which should have a high value in the formation of the child's character. It should not be expected that any one selection can have an appreciable effect upon the child. When one is weak, a tonic is prescribed, and the essential character of a tonic is small doses, regularly administered for a long time.

There are infinite differences in children, but they have these characteristics in common, weakness and immaturity. It is a tonic they need, whether it be their moral or their mental growth that is considered.

When a series of readers is produced that keeps this balance between the attempt to increase gradually and systematically the child's vocabulary, and the effort to develop gradually and systematically his moral being, then a perfect series will have been produced.

The compilers of this series do not claim that they have struck this balance perfectly, but if intelligent teachers who use the books will help, they will come nearer to accomplishing their object in future editions.

A great deal of use is made in this number of fables and folk-lore stories, all of which have a high moral value, in the tonic sense referred to above. It is not intended that the teachers should tell the pupil the moral, so-called, but the selection should be so read, word-sound and sentence-meaning being both brought out, that the child cannot help absorbing the lesson.

The nature-study lessons are based upon familiar natural objects—technical terms being avoided as far as possible—and when rightly used can be made the basis of training in observation upon the concrete world in which the child lives.

Some of the lessons in this book may appear to present too many new and apparently difficult words for a Second Reader—as, for instance, the selection from Hiawatha.

However, the literary value of the selection is so high, and, above all, it has been found out by frequent and long-continued experiment that children are so carried away by the charm of the poem—which should be given them in the words of the author—the beauty of the rhythm, and the delightful story told, that they do not notice the difficult words as such. In fact, these characteristics of the selection are the very instruments by means of which the difficult words are grappled with and overcome.

It is suggested that, in schools where one teacher has charge of more than one grade or section, a language lesson, based on the reading lesson just gone over with one grade, will keep that grade profitably employed while the teacher has to give his attention to the other.

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