

**THE HISTORICAL,
BIOGRAPHICAL, AND
POETICAL READER; OR,
SCHOLAR'S COMPANION**

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The Historical, Biographical, and Poetical Reader; Or, Scholar's Companion by J. L. Blake

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J. L. BLAKE

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BY THE
REV. J. L. BLAKE, D.D.

AUTHOR OF VARIOUS WORKS ON EDUCATION AND GENERAL LITERATURE.

TO WHICH IS SUBJOINED
A SCHEME OF THE COMMON PREFIXES AND POSTFIXES THAT
ENTER INTO THE COMPOSITION OF ENGLISH WORDS;
WITH DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES, EXHIBITING THEIR PROPER FORCE
AND FUNCTIONS.

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T. J. ALLMAN, 42, HOLBORN HILL.
1862,

2080

~~J. L. Blake~~
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PREFACE.

WHEN one of his courtiers detractingly remarked to Charles II. of Dryden's dramas, that "most of them were *stolen*," that witty monarch sarcastically replied, "I wish only you could *steal* me such plays." In like manner, though it require not original genius, nor profound literature—neither a rare inventive faculty and a lofty fancy, nor stores of erudition—to form a compilation, yet, for the sake of the young and the cause of education, we cannot but give expression to the wish, that those who have undertaken to do so had been equally well qualified for that nice and important task as the amiable and ingenious compiler of the "Scholar's Companion." Mr Blake's delicacy of taste, justness of judgment, and skill of arrangement, have produced a work, both for Families and Schools, eminently useful and interesting; and which both Tutor and Teacher will find at once to expedite and facilitate the *labour* of instruction. In a word, *the book*—as all good books, especially scholastic ones, ought to do—*teaches*. This selection not only displays equal judgment and taste in its matter, manner, and arrangement, but it indicates an intimate knowledge of the puerile mind, a thorough perception of its feelings, instincts, aspirations, and ways and times of access. This last constitutes the pervading, and discriminative, and the most valuable feature of the volume, as it is the want of it that militates so much against the practical utility and success of so many similar performances, which profess to interest and instruct youth. They address themselves rarely either to the juvenile heart or understanding, and, of course, rarely reach either. The result is conformable. The book and the teacher must identify themselves with the pupil, to make a due impression. They must think as he thinks, see as he sees, and feel as he feels. The instruction, whether written or oral, that is to tell and endure, must come home to the heart, and be level to the capacity. In a word, to

PREFACE.

make use of a strong scriptural figure and truth, the youthful mind, in order to thrive—to advance in size and improve in vigour—*must be fed with food convenient for it.* For the general features of the “Scholar’s Companion,” let the amiable author speak for himself:—

“The object of this volume is to make the reader acquainted with particularly interesting and important events in history and biography, presuming that a taste will thereby be formed in the minds of young persons for connected and extensive reading upon those subjects. In the selection of materials, such have been taken as were of a decided character, in their moral tendency. Whether a good or bad quality were to be represented, unless it were so strongly marked that a child would be led of his own accord, and instantaneously, to admire the one and to abhor the other, it was deemed unfit for use. Thus a literary and a moral purpose is accomplished at the same time and by the same labour.

“It is also believed, that the plan of the Scholar’s Companion is well calculated to facilitate the art of good reading. Our youth may be furnished with a thousand rules and illustrations of rhetoric, if there were so many, and it would be of no comparative value in learning to read, unless the books containing these rules and illustrations are intelligible and interesting. From such a routine of exercises, a natural elocution can never be wrung from the voice of young or old; while, on the other hand, books, like the present, will always be read with at least the prominent tones of an agreeable style. Let children and youth understand what they read—let them be interested in what they read—and they will be sure to read with a good degree of spirit and correctness.

“It will be seen that a larger portion of the volume is in verse than is usual with reading books of corresponding character. It is thought that this will add to the value of the work. Young persons especially are fond of reading poetry; and a moral sentiment, or a historical fact, expressed in verse, is much more likely to make an impression than if it were in prose. While it is acknowledged that much difficulty was experienced in finding a sufficient number of articles in this part of the work, of the high character desired, a belief is indulged by the author, that he has laboured with some degree of success.”

Besides a list of English Verbal Distinctions, a scheme of Prefixes and Postfixes, or Initiatives and Terminatives, which has been appended to the work, will, it is hoped, be found to be plain, of practical and easy application, in keeping with the requirements of modern tuition, and fully up with the rapid progressive march of scholastic improvement. The scheme may be profitably used, either in connection with the text, during parsing, or other grammatical and explanatory exercise; or it may be beneficially taught and learned as a *distinct study.*

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