

**A HISTORY OF THE
MCGUFFEY READERS,
THE BOOKISH BOOKS - IV**

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A history of the McGuffey readers, the bookish books - IV by Henry H. Vail

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HENRY H. VAIL

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A HISTORY
OF THE
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THE BOOKISH BOOKS.

This is the fourth of a series of ten volumes, each complete in itself, all "bookish" in theme and treatment.

The first was "The Delicious Vice," by Mr. Young E. Allison. It is out of print.

The second was "My Favorite Novelist," being three essays on that subject by Mrs. Burton Harrison, Frank R. Stockton, and Paul Bourget.

The third was "The Delicious Vice, Second Series," by Mr. Allison, being new papers of the same character as the first volume.

The edition of each volume is closely limited. The price is fifty-five cents per volume, post-paid.

THE BURROWS BROTHERS CO.,
CLEVELAND, OHIO.

W. H. McGUFFEY



WILLIAM H. MCGUFFEY

**A HISTORY
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McGUFFEY READERS**

By
HENRY H. VAIL.

WITH THREE PORTRAITS.

THE BOOKISH BOOKS—IV.



**CLEVELAND
PRIVATELY PRINTED
1919**

OF this book there have been printed three hundred and fifty numbered copies, of which three hundred are for sale.

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UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

A History of the McGuffey Readers

THE BOOKS.

Before me are four small books roughly bound in boards, the sides covered with paper. On the reverse of the title pages, two bear a copyright entry in the year 1836; the others were entered in 1837. They are the earliest editions of McGuffey's Eclectic Readers that have been found in a search lasting forty years.

They represent the first efforts in an educational and business enterprise that has for three-quarters of a century called for the best exertions of many skilled men, and in their several forms these books have taken a conspicuous part in the education of millions of the citizens of this country.

But what interest can the history of the McGuffey Eclectic Readers have to those who did not use these books in their school career? Their story differs from that of other readers since in successive forms, adjusted more or less perfectly to the changing demands of the schools, they attained a wider and more prolonged use than has been accorded to any other series.

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The Function of Readers

By custom and under sanction of law certain studies are pursued in the common schools of every state. Spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, grammar, civics and physiology are the subjects usually taught. The school authorities select the textbooks which shall be used in each subject. The readers are the only texts used in all schools affording opportunity for distinct ethical teaching. The history of our country should give ideas of patriotism; the civics should contain the primary notions of government; the physiologies should instruct the pupils in the laws of health; but the reader should cover the whole field of morals and manners and in language that will impress their teaching indelibly upon the mind of every pupil. While the chief aim of the school readers must be to teach the child to apprehend thought from the printed page and convey this thought to the attentive listener with precision, these efforts should be exerted upon thoughts that have permanent value. No other texts used in the school room bear directly and positively upon the formation of character in the pupils. The school readers are the proper and indispensable texts for teaching true patriotism, integrity, honesty, industry, temperance, courage, politeness, and all other moral and intellectual virtues. In these books every lesson should have a distinct purpose in view, and the final aim should be to establish in the pupils high moral principles which are at the foundation of character.