

**A CLASS BOOK OF
DICTATION PASSAGES.
WITH WORDS APPENDED**

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A Class Book of Dictation Passages. With Words Appended by William Williamson

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WILLIAM WILLIAMSON

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SELECTED BY

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PREFACE

THE casual way of giving a Dictation Lesson from a chance book or newspaper is now rapidly becoming a thing of the past, and in its place previous preparation on the part of the pupil is recognised as the only sound principle.

The large proportion of failures on the ground of bad spelling in the Civil Service "Preliminary"—52 per cent., and the prominence given to the subject in the Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations, are but a few indications that the spelling in our schools is either neglected altogether or attempted on unscientific methods. Spelling, all are agreed, is very largely picture-writing. Sound misleads. Derivation may, here and there, help the more advanced. Observation only can master the inconsistencies with which the English Language, noble and vigorous as it is, is crammed. The passages are not graduated in difficulty, but simply culled from a wide and varied field of modern English Literature, in which, it is hoped, the pupil himself may be tempted to wander and to feast at "his own sweet will." The words appended are often selected on the principle of contrast and comparison, and altogether furnish a répertoire of over two thousand—all more or less deserving of separate and distinctive observation. My thanks are due to several

of the leading publishers for their kind permission given me to make selections from their publications. This obligation I have gladly acknowledged in a footnote in each case.

To Messrs Macmillan & Co., for their permission to take a certain number of extracts from Sir John Lubbock, C. Yonge, Kingsley, and Lightfoot, my grateful thanks are specially due.

I should be very glad to receive any suggestions (however seemingly trifling) for the improvement of the little book, which, I am sure, will make large demands upon the indulgence of those masters and mistresses who may do me the honour of according it their approbation.

W. W.

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I

CHATHAM, at the time of his decease, had not, in both Houses of Parliament, ten personal adherents. Half the public men of the age had been estranged from him by his errors, and the other half by the exertions which he had made to repair his errors. His last speech had been an attack at once on the policy pursued by the Government, and on the policy recommended by the Opposition. But death restored him to his old place in the affection of his country. Who could hear unmoved of the fall of that which had been so great, and which had stood so long? The circumstances, too, seemed rather to belong to the tragic stage than to real life. A great statesman, full of years and honours, led forth to the Senate House by a son of rare hopes, and stricken down in full council while straining his feeble voice to rouse the drooping spirit of his country, could not but be remembered with peculiar veneration and tenderness.—MACAULAY, *Essays*.

disease
reparation
pursue
peruse
tragedy

counsel
councillor
counsellor
fiancée
proprietary

preparatory
besiege
accommodate
sombre
sortie

II

Queen Mary's willingness to admit him was notified by Sir Andrew Melville, a tall, worn man, with the typical Scottish countenance and a keen steadfast grey eye. He marshalled the trio up a circular staircase, made as easy as possible, but necessarily narrow, since it wound up through a brick turret at the corner, to the third and uppermost storey of the lodge. There, however, was a very handsome anteroom, with tapestry hangings, a richly moulded ceiling, and wide carved stone chimney-piece, where a bright fire was burning, around which sat several Scottish and French gentlemen, who rose at the Earl's entrance. Another wide doorway with a tapestry curtain over the folding leaves led to the presence chamber, and Sir Andrew announced in as full style as if he had been marshalling an English ambassador to the Court of Holyrood, the most high and mighty Earl of Shrewsbury.—C. YONGE, *Unknown to History*.

mythical
leprous
leprosy
quinsy
repair

reparation
syllogism
supersede
precede
proceed

siege
seize
hemorrhage
negotiate
neigh

III

Did I exaggerate when I classed Hilda among the chief makers of England in the childhood of the English nation? Do not the facts which I have mentioned justify the estimate? Nay, her position was dimly apprehended even by those who lived near her own