

**LONGMANS' "SHIP"  
LITERARY READERS.  
THE FIFTH READER**

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Longmans' "Ship" Literary Readers. The Fifth Reader by Various

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**VARIOUS**

**LONGMANS' "SHIP"  
LITERARY READERS.  
THE FIFTH READER**





A LITTLE GIRL WAS RUBBING MY FOREHEAD TENDERLY. See p. 9.

A good book is a true friend

wise author a public benefactor

LONGMANS' "SHIP"  
LITERARY READERS

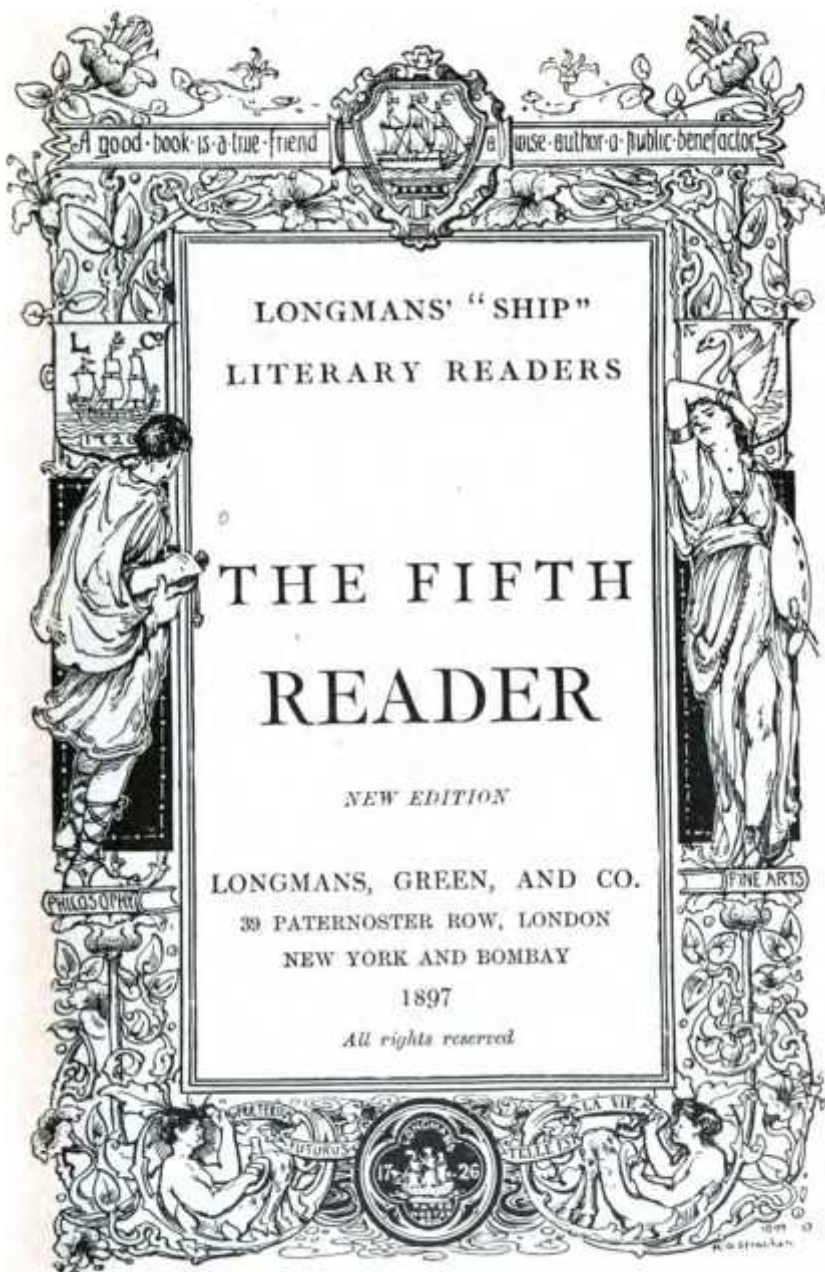
THE FIFTH  
READER

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# THE FIFTH "SHIP" LITERARY READER.

## LESSON 1.

### JOHN RIDD GETS SOME LOACHES FOR HIS MOTHER.

**Richard D. Blackmore** is a man of many activities. He is a barrister by profession; he has written and translated poetry; he is a very successful gardener and fruit-grower; and a still more successful novelist. His earliest stories, "**Olara Vaughan**" and "**Cradock Nowell**," did not attract any unusual notice, but on the publication of "**Lorna Doone**" in 1869, he leaped at once into fame. The plot of this tale is full of stirring incidents; the characters are well drawn; the English is strong and simple; and the descriptions of north-east Devon are so correct and graphic that the novel is used as a guide-book to the Doone Valley. It has been called the best novel of the second class produced in England in our time. Mr. Blackmore, the son of a clergyman, was born at Longworth, in Berkshire, in 1825. He received his education first at John Ridd's old school in Tiverton, and then at Oxford. Besides the stories already named, he has written "**The Maid of Sker**," "**Cripps the Carrier**," "**Mary Anerley**," "**Springhaven**," "**Perlycross**," etc.

#### PART I.

MY mother had long been ailing, and not well able to eat much; and there is nothing that frightens us so much as for people to have no love of their victuals. Now I chanced to remember that once at the time of the holidays I had brought dear mother from Tiverton a jar of pickled loaches, baked in the kitchen oven, with vinegar, a few leaves of bay, and about a dozen peppercorns. And mother had said that in all her life she had never tasted anything fit to be compared with them.



Accordingly I now resolved to get some loaches for her, and do them in the self-same manner, just to make her eat a bit.

There are many people, even now, who have not come to the right knowledge what a loach is, and where he lives, and how to catch and pickle him. And I will not tell them all about it, because if I did, very likely there would be no loaches left ten or twenty years after the appearance of this book.

Being resolved to catch some loaches, whatever trouble it cost me, I set forth without a word to any one, in the forenoon of St. Valentine's day, 1675-6, I think it must have been. Annie could not come with me, because the water was too cold; for the winter had been long, and snow lay here and there in patches in the hollow of the banks, like a lady's gloves forgotten. And yet the spring was breaking forth, as it always does in Devonshire, when the turn of the days is over; and though there was little to see of it, the air was full of feeling.

I never could forget that day, and how bitter cold the water was. For I doffed my shoes and hose, and put them into a bag about my neck; and left my little coat at home, and tied my shirt-sleeves back to my shoulders. Then I took a three-pronged fork firmly bound to a rod with a cord, and a piece of canvas kerchief, with a lump of bread inside it; and so went into the pebbly water, trying to think how warm it was. For more than a mile all down the Lynn stream, scarcely a stone I left unturned, being thoroughly skilled in the tricks of the loach, and knowing how he hides himself. For being gray-spotted, and clear to see through, he will stay quite still where a streak of weed is in the rapid water,

hoping to be overlooked, nor caring even to wag his tail. Then being disturbed he flips away, like a whale-bone from the finger, and hies to a shelf of stone, and lies with his sharp head poked in under it; or sometimes he buries himself in the mud, and only shows his back ridge. And that is the time to spear him nicely, holding the fork very gingerly, and allowing for the bent of it, which comes to pass, I know not how, at the tickle of air and water.

Or if your loach should not be abroad when first you come to look for him, but keeping snug in his little home, then you may see him come forth amazed at the quivering of the shingles, and look at you, and then dart up-stream, like a little gray streak; and then you must try to mark him in, and follow very daintily. So after that, in a sandy place, you steal up behind his tail to him, so that he cannot set eyes on you, for his head is up-stream always, and there you see him abiding still, clear, and mild, and affable. Then, as he looks so innocent, you make full sure to prog him well, in spite of the wry of the water, and the sun making elbows to everything, and the trembling of your fingers. But when you gird at him lovingly, and have as good as gotten him, lo! in the go-by of the river he is gone as a shadow goes, and only a little cloud of mud curls away from the points of the fork.

When I had travelled two miles or so, conquered now and then with cold, and coming out to rub my legs into a lively friction, and only fishing here and there because of the tumbling water; suddenly, in an open space, where the meadows spread about it, I found a good stream flowing softly into the body of our brook. And it brought, so far as I could guess by

the sweep of it under my knee-caps, a larger power of clear water than the Lynn itself had; only it came more quietly down, not being troubled with stairs and steps, as the fortune of the Lynn is, but gliding smoothly and forcibly, as if upon some set purpose.

**Been ailing**, ever since her husband had been murdered by the outlaws who lived in the Doonee Valley.

**Loaches**. The loach belongs to the carp family. It is about four inches long, and of a yellowish white colour with brown spots. It is fond of clear, rapid streams.

**1675-6**. Reckoning the year to begin on the 25th of March, as it was then reckoned, the date was 1675; but reckoning it to begin on the 1st of January, the date was 1676. John Ridd, who tells the story, was "turned fourteen".

**Annie**. John Ridd's sister.

**When the turn of the days is over**. When the days begin to lengthen.

**The Lynn stream**. Two noisy

torrents, called the East and West Lynn, unite at Lynmouth in North Devon. John Ridd's farm was at Oare, on the East Lynn. Going down the stream a little way he would come to the mouth of its tributary, the Bagworthy, and ascending this he would come to the Waterslide.

**I know not how**. Does the reader know more than John Ridd?

**The tickle**. The rippling of the water where the air touches it.

**Shingles**. The big gravel and roundish stones sometimes found in or beside streams and on the sea-shore.

**Affable**. Of pleasant manners.

**Prog**. Prod, stick.

**Gird**. To strike, to pierce through with a weapon.

**COMPOSITION**.—Make sentences containing the following words: *Appearance, daff, amazed, quivering, daintily, affable, friction.*

## LESSON 2.

### JOHN RIDD GETS SOME LOACHES FOR HIS MOTHER.

#### PART II.

BUT now the day was falling fast behind the brown of the hill-tops; and the trees, being void of leaf and hard, seemed giants ready to beat me. And every moment as the sky was clearing up for a white frost, the cold of the water got worse and worse, until I was