ORIOLE STORIES FOR BEGINNERS

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649664245

Oriole Stories for Beginners by M. A. L. Lane

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd. Cover @ 2017

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BOSTON, U.S.A.
GINN & COMPANY, PUBLISHERS
Che Athensum Press
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PREFACE.

A CAREFUL study of the work in the primary schools has convinced me that what is most needed is a primer which, without being dull and lifeless, shall repeat and reiterate the first words learned. Until there is established a vocabulary of which the child is absolutely sure, no real progress can be made. This vocabulary may be small, but it should consist of words commonly used by the pupil, in order that he may associate words with ideas as early as possible. Many reading books that are delightful from a literary or an artistic standpoint have proved practical failures, either because the words taught are not those of the child's daily speech, or because in the attempt to give variety and interest the needed drill has been avoided.

Fortunately, the repetition which is distasteful to the adult mind, is in itself a pleasure to most children. They demand the same story in the same phrases again and again, as all story-tellers know. The difficulty lies in giving any dramatic interest with a limited vocabulary. It is impossible, also, to prevent a series of short sentences, written in the third person, from becoming monotonous. It is equally impossible to read aloud such a series with any variety of intonation.

These lessons, therefore, are cast largely in conversational form, so that the child may read with interest and pleasure. With the exception of a few familiar rhymes and sayings, no lesson introduces more than four new words. On many of the pages only one or two new words are used, in order that the pupil may feel the satisfaction of growing power. As far as possible the machinery of the book has been kept out of sight, as its success depends upon the appeal that it makes to the child's taste.

M. A. L. L.

HINGHAM, MASS., Dec. 1, 1899.



.... Hush! 't is he!

My oriole, my glance of summer fire,
Is come at last, and, ever on the watch,
Twitches the pack-thread I had lightly wound
About the bough to help his house-keeping,—
Twitches and scouts by turns, blessing his luck,
Yet fearing me who laid it in his way,
Nor, more than wiser we in our affairs,
Divines the providence that hides and helps.

Heave ho! Heave ho! he whistles as the twine
Slackens its hold: once more now! and a flash
Lightens across the sunlight to the elm
Where his mate dangles at her cup of felt.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL