

**A SERIES INTENDED TO CREATE  
AND FOSTER A TASTE FOR GOOD  
READING. CHOICE LITERATURE.  
BOOK ONE FOR PRIMARY  
GRADES**

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A Series Intended to Create and Foster a Taste for Good Reading. Choice Literature. Book One for Primary Grades by Sherman Williams

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BOOK ONE FOR  
PRIMARY GRADES**



*A series intended to create and foster a taste  
for good reading*

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# CHOICE LITERATURE

BOOK ONE

FOR PRIMARY GRADES

COMPILED AND ARRANGED

BY

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CHOICE LITERATURE

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## PREFACE

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CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER once said, "To teach a child to read, and not teach it what to read, is to put a dangerous weapon into its hands."

There can be no doubt as to the truth of this statement. High schools now very generally have courses in reading and literature; but the great majority of pupils never reach the high school, and those who do have formed a taste for reading before that period, very often a taste for reading that is decidedly bad, and only occasionally for that which is really excellent, so that in this particular the work of the high school becomes largely that of reformation, instead of formation, a very difficult work that need not have been necessary.

This procedure utterly ignores the needs, so far as the study of literature is concerned, of ninety per cent of the pupils, and begins the work too late with the others. To some extent desultory work is being done in many primary and grammar schools, through the use of supplementary readers; but this cannot be very effective in forming a taste for good reading, because the expense necessary to provide a sufficient amount and variety of books will be so great that few schools can meet it, and still fewer will. Too often the supplementary readers used are intended merely to furnish information. As

the result of this condition of affairs, with the exception of here and there a school, no effective effort is being made to create and foster a taste for good literature in grades below the high school. Much supplementary reading is being done, but there seems to be no clearly defined plan, no definite end aimed at.

This is probably due to the fact that there is no series of readers well adapted to the carrying on of this work. The compiler of this series has attempted to meet this want. The selections are carefully made and graded, and are believed to be those suited to the age and maturity of the pupils for whom they are intended. They are all good of their kind, and it is believed that the selection of trashy matter on the one hand, or matter beyond the comprehension of the pupils on the other, has been avoided.

Each volume of the series has been made with a definite purpose in view, and in each will appear a brief statement in regard to the selections made and the end aimed at. There will be such notes and explanations as seem to be necessary. This series can be used to excellent advantage in teaching children how to read, but it should be borne in mind that the primary purpose of the series is to teach what to read, to create and foster a taste for good literature; therefore many selections for which room cannot be found, will be suggested, to aid in directing the out of school reading of the pupils. It is hoped that teachers will encourage pupils to form little libraries of their own. Many suggestions will be made that will aid in such work.



## TO THE READER

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THIS book is made in the belief that many of the old rhymes and tales, such as are herein contained, "Children's Classics," if I may so term them, are, or should be, the birthright of every child. They are all very old; many of them so old that their origin is wholly lost. This is notably true of "Cinderella." Miss Marion Cox, in a volume of more than five hundred pages, to which Andrew Lang has contributed an admirable introduction, gives three hundred and forty-five variations of the story, and traces it to the literature of nearly every country.

The selections from "Mother Goose" include those most commonly met with, which the writer has found to appeal most strongly to children. A collection of rhymes which has endured nearly two hundred years (they were first published in Boston in 1719) without having lost its popularity, has certainly demonstrated its right to be read to and by the children.

"Little Red Riding Hood" is old — no one knows how old. With slight variations, the story is common to Sweden, Germany, and France.

No doubt many of these old stories were originally nature myths. This is quite likely true of "Jack and the Beanstalk." It has been suggested that it is an

old Teutonic allegory, the red hen being the sun, the money bags the rain, and the harp the winds.

"Bluebeard" is from the tales of Perrault, which were published about 1697. Dr. C. Taylor thinks Bluebeard a type of the Castle Lords of the days of Knight Errantry. Some think Bluebeard was intended to represent Henry the Eighth. Another solution is that Bluebeard was Count Conomar, and the young wife, Tryphyna, daughter of Count Guerech. Count Conomar was a lieutenant of Brittany in the reign of Childebert. The incident of the keys and the doors is similar to that mentioned by "The Third Calendar" in the "Arabian Nights."

The story of "Whittington and His Cat" is found in substance in an old Persian story. Several solutions of the story have been given. One suggests that a "cat" is a brig built on the Norwegian model. Another that the word "achat" means *barter*.

"Beauty and the Beast," perhaps the most beautiful of all the nursery tales, is from the French of Villeneuve (1740).

Some writer has said, "The most instructive reading for a person of any age, old or young, is that in which the author's tone of thought is above the average tone of the reader's thought, and yet not beyond his grasp." Perhaps this thought may apply to the selections from *Æsop*.

A short list of popular sayings is given. These may be of interest in themselves, and it may be both profitable and interesting to add to the list those common in your locality.

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