

**CHOICE LITERATURE:
BOOK TWO, FOR
PRIMARY GRADES**

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Choice Literature: Book Two, for Primary Grades by Sherman Williams

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SHERMAN WILLIAMS

**CHOICE LITERATURE:
BOOK TWO, FOR
PRIMARY GRADES**

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

CHOICE LITERATURE

BOOK TWO

FOR PRIMARY GRADES

COMPILED AND ARRANGED

BY

SHERMAN WILLIAMS

FORMERLY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, GLENS FALLS, N.Y.



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PREFACE

CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER once said, "To teach a child to read, and not to 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 has been 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 the teachers will encourage pupils to form little libraries of their own. Many suggestions will be made that will aid in such work.

The selections from Frank Dempster Sherman, Celia Thaxter, and Phœbe Cary are made by arrangement with, and permission of, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., the authorized publishers of the writings of these authors.

TO THE READER

THE compiler of this series believes that children should be trained to read and love poetry at an early age. For this reason the first book of the series has many selections from the Mother Goose melodies, because of their perfect rhythm, which is the thing in poetry that first attracts children. In the present volume are many poems, most of them simple, which children can easily be led to love.

It is hoped that many of the poems will be committed to memory. This will do much to form literary taste, and some one has said that "the end of learning is to read great books."

It may be felt that some of the selections are difficult and that new words are introduced too rapidly. Those who have this feeling may introduce the book higher in the grades. It is the experience of the compiler that children will acquire a reading vocabulary rapidly if given a chance. When one remembers how soon children, favorably circumstanced, acquire a speaking vocabulary with little or no assistance, it ought to suggest the possibilities in acquiring a reading vocabulary.

It should be remembered also that strength and ability to do any work easily and well come from practice, at the outset from practicing that which is done neither easily nor well.

The compiler has noticed that teachers are too fond of doing what may be termed "dealing with the finished

product," that is, having the children read that which they can read well, to show what they can do, rather than reading that which is difficult in order to learn to do such reading. It is clear that neither plan should be followed exclusively.

The reading lesson should be studied as well as any other. Sight reading is good for a test exercise, but there is something for the pupil to do in the way of preparation in the reading lesson, and because this fact is not generally recognized and the preparation insisted upon, we get poorer results in reading than in any other subject.

There must be interest in the matter read, and the experience of the compiler, extending over many years, has shown that it is easier to arouse interest in matter worth reading than in the mere twaddle with which so many readers have been largely made up; hence the attempt to arrange in a series of books the selections which have pleased and profited children in the ordinary course of school work. The books are the outgrowth of experience, not theory.

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