

**CLASSICS OLD AND NEW:
A SERIES OF SCHOOL
READERS: A FIFTH READER**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649550487

Classics Old and New: A Series of School Readers: A Fifth Reader by Edwin A. Alderman

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EDWIN A. ALDERMAN

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A SERIES OF SCHOOL
READERS: A FIFTH READER**

CLASSICS OLD AND NEW

A Series of School Readers

BY

EDWIN A. ALDERMAN, LL.D.

A FOURTH READER



NEW YORK • CINCINNATI • CHICAGO
AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY

EducT 759.06.122(4)

RECEIVED

DEC 5 1940

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P R E F A C E

Good expression in reading is the product of sympathy and understanding, and therefore, the child who likes to read is quite sure to take first rank as a good reader. The controlling purpose of Classics, Old and New is to inspire in children a love for reading, and thus, without their being conscious of the fact, induce in them the reading habit. This is about the best and safest of all habits. If we contrive to teach young people the mechanical art of reading, and fail, at the same time, to breed in them the impulse and desire to continue their education throughout life by reading, we have cheated them out of the best thing to be obtained by going to school.

Good literature is an expression for the best of the world's activity, and the power latent in such literature to lift and enlighten the mind and spirit is greater than any other power, save, perhaps, the influences of home. The formal education of many of the children that will use this series of readers will cease with the elementary schools. This fact makes the preparation of the readers a very serious task, especially to one who knows children well enough to realize how difficult it is to know them at all.

When a child enters the Fourth Reader, he has practically mastered what may be called the mechanics of reading. New words, as words, no longer have any terror for him. He knows how to read, we say. He is, therefore, at a critical moment in his mental life in so far as that life touches literary culture. Let us hope that his imagination is not dulled, and that he has learned, as the earlier readers of this series are planned to teach him, to have a feeling for the good as distinguished from the

bad or the commonplace. The selections in this book are the work of three score and ten writers of distinction, writers of the past ages and of the present time—writers of many lands, who were not writing down to children, but uttering their own best thoughts. This book, like the earlier numbers, may, therefore, be appropriately called *Classics, Old and New*.

No hard and fast culture-epoch theory has determined their selection, though earnest thought has been given to the interests that appeal to youth at this age. Constant effort has been made to give variety in subject matter, and yet to maintain a unity of appeal to the understanding and the imagination. The subjects chosen range from nature and myth and adventure to biography and patriotism and ethics.

Our material age is coming more and more to neglect poetry as a thing outside the world of reality. The truth is, that there are no more practical things in the world than poetry and music, for they, even more than bread, bring to life what it needs. Many of us can recall poems that have served us as practically in the day's work as have the multiplication tables. The guiding thought in all the poetry selected has been to acquaint the child with the songs that will always be sung—especially the older poems studied by their fathers and mothers before them,—such old and yet ever young treasures as "Lord Ullin's Daughter," Gray's "Elegy," "Annabel Lee."

The author believes that these readers, in the hands of sympathetic teachers, can be so used as to make not only good readers in the technical sense, but also real lovers of fine literature, young people of good taste in letters and of an increasing desire for close friendship with the best that has been thought and said.

The following acknowledgments are made in addition to those already given in the biographies: to Charles Scribner's Sons for the use of "How I Found Livingstone"; to Houghton, Mifflin & Co. for the use of "Playing Theater at Rivermouth," and to G. P. Putnam's Sons for the use of "A Tradition of Weatherford."

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