

**SCHOOL READING
BY GRADES: EIGHTH
YEAR. PP. 1-239**

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School Reading by Grades: Eighth Year. pp. 1-239 by James Baldwin

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JAMES BALDWIN



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PREFACE.

No more important duty is incumbent upon teachers than that of inculcating in the minds of their pupils a discriminating love for good books. The acquirement of the ability to give correct oral expression to the printed or written word is, after all, only a means to this more important end. The young person who can read intelligibly to himself, and in a manner that is pleasing to his hearers, is quite sure to find much pleasure in books. If his tastes have been properly cultivated and he has been taught to discriminate between that which is good and that which is worthless, this habit of reading will prove to be of incalculable value to him in after life; but, on the other hand, if he has been permitted to acquire a liking for that kind of writing which is neither instructive nor beautiful, and a distaste for the nobler and more enduring forms of literature, it would have been better if books had never been placed in his way. In the preparation of the series of reading books of which this volume is the eighth and concluding number, the importance of thus cultivating the literary judgment has been constantly borne in mind, and every reasonable means has been employed to assist the pupil to discover and appreciate things which are beautiful and true in literature and art. The selections in this volume have been chosen with the special view of opening the way to much supplementary reading on many important subjects and from books that can be safely recommended. The notes in connection with certain of the selections, as well as the notes on "Books" (page 236), are intended to assist in the attainment of this purpose. It is presumed that pupils in this grade have general access to dictionaries and other works of reference on all subjects; hence, no space is given to biographical or explanatory notes, but only a brief list of the authors and artists whose works are represented, with the date of the birth and death and, in most cases, the title of the most famous work of each. The educative and aesthetic value of the full-page illustrations will be readily appreciated by all.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Joan of Arc	<i>Thomas De Quincey</i> 7
The Halyon	<i>Walter Pater</i> 16
Jaffar	<i>Leigh Hunt</i> 19
The Sonnet	<i>William Wordsworth</i> 20
Sir Thomas More :	
I. His Character	<i>John Richard Green</i> 21
II. His Trial	<i>Miss Manning</i> 23
III. His Execution	<i>James Anthony Froude</i> 28
A Boarding School Incident	<i>Charlotte Brontë</i> 31
Thanatopsis	<i>William Cullen Bryant</i> 38
Raphael	<i>John Greenleaf Whittier</i> 41
Rip Van Winkle	<i>Washington Irving</i> 44
Hymn to Diana	<i>Ben Jonson</i> 63
The Vision of Mirzah	<i>Joseph Addison</i> 64
Michelangelo's Moses	<i>The Poetry by J. A. Symonds</i> 70
The Merchant of Venice :	
I. The Story	<i>Charles and Mary Lamb</i> 73
II. The Trial Scene	<i>William Shakespeare</i> 91
William Shakespeare	<i>Dr. Samuel Johnson</i> 105
The Blessed Damozel	<i>Dante Gabriel Rossetti</i> 109
The Charge at Balaclava	<i>Henry Kingsley</i> 111
The Charge of the Light Brigade	<i>Alfred Tennyson</i> 117
Words of Wisdom from the Poets :	
Justice	<i>Ralph Waldo Emerson</i> 119
Retribution	<i>Henry Wadsworth Longfellow</i> 119
Perfection	<i>William Shakespeare</i> 119
A Father's Love	<i>Walter Savage Landor</i> 120
Two Sonnets	<i>Edmund Spenser</i> 120
The Battle of Waterloo	<i>Victor Hugo</i> 131

	PAGE
Battle of Waterloo	<i>Lord Byron</i> 143
Two Pictures by Thackeray :	
I. Castlewood, England—1691	<i>From "Henry Esmond"</i> . . . 145
II. Castlewood, Virginia—1776	<i>From "The Virginians"</i> . . . 148
The Parting of Hector and Andromache	<i>From Homer's "Iliad"</i> . . . 155
How Nitetis came to Babylon	<i>Georg Ebers</i> 159
Assassination of Julius Cæsar	<i>From "Plutarch's Lives"</i> . . . 175
The Funeral of Julius Cæsar	<i>William Shakespeare</i> 179
The Fall of Constantinople	<i>Edward Gibbon</i> 189
Hervé Riel	<i>Robert Browning</i> 197
How Cromwell dissolved the Long Parliament	<i>Thomas Carlyle</i> 203
Sonnet to Cromwell	<i>John Milton</i> 206
Milton's <i>L' Allegro</i> and <i>Il Penseroso</i> 208
<i>L' Allegro</i> 209
<i>Il Penseroso</i> 214
On his Blindness	<i>John Milton</i> 220
To Milton	<i>William Wordsworth</i> 222
The Trial of Warren Hastings	<i>Thomas B. Macaulay</i> 223
Supplementary Notes 224

FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS.

	ARTIST.	PAGE
The Vision of Joan of Arc	<i>D. Mallard</i>	9
The Sistine Madonna	<i>Raphael</i>	43
Statue of Moses	<i>Michelangelo</i>	71
The Bleaséd Damozel	<i>Dante Gabriel Rossetti</i> 108	
Napoleon at Waterloo	<i>C. Steuben</i>	142
The Parting of Hector and Andromache	<i>A. Maignan</i>	154
Cromwell dissolving the Long Parliament	<i>Benjamin West</i>	207
Milton dictating "Paradise Lost" to his Daughters	<i>M. Munkacsy</i>	221

PORTRAITS.

	PAGE
William Shakespeare	Title-page
Thomas De Quincey	7
Sir Thomas More	21
John Richard Green	22
James Anthony Froude	29
Charlotte Brontë	31
Ben Jonson	63
Joseph Addison	64
William Shakespeare	105
Ralph Waldo Emerson	119
Walter Savage Landor	121
Edmund Spenser	130
Victor Hugo	131
William Makepeace Thackeray	146
Robert Browning	197
Thomas Carlyle	203
John Milton	208
William Wordsworth	222
Thomas Babington Macaulay	223
Edmund Burke	228

SCHOOL READING.

EIGHTH YEAR.

JOAN OF ARC.

Jeanne d'Arc, or, as she is named in English, Joan of Arc, was the daughter of a peasant of Domrémy, a little village on the borders of Lorraine and Champagne. She was born in 1412. Domrémy is close to the great woods of the Vosges, in which Jeanne loved to wander, watching the birds and the beasts, and making friends of them. At home she was "a good girl, simple and pleasant in her ways," and differed from other girls in being more modest, industrious, and pious. She was taught to sew and to spin, but not to read and write.



Thomas De Quincey.

At this time all the northern part of France was torn and desolated by the war which had for its object the subjugation of France to the power of England. Misery and disease were everywhere, and even in her distant vil-

lage, at the foot of the Vosges, Jeanne had been made acquainted with the horrors and hardships which afflicted her country. When about thirteen years of age, she believed that St. Michael appeared to her in a blaze of light, commanding her to be modest and attentive to all the duties of religion. This vision, and her sorrow for the distress of France, absorbed her whole being ; her constant expression was, she "had pity on the fair realm of France."

When she was fifteen, St. Michael appeared to her again, and bade her go and fight for the Dauphin.

"Messire," replied the girl, "I am but a poor maiden ; I know not how to ride to the wars, or to lead men at arms."

The poor girl wept, and wished to escape a work so difficult and so new. But, encouraged by the angel, her brave spirit overcame her fears, and she made known her mission to her friends.

At first she was laughed at as insane, and her father swore he would drown her rather than she should go with men to the wars ; but she succeeded in the end in leaving her home, and in making her way to the Dauphin, whom she persuaded of her heavenly mission, and promised that he should be anointed and crowned in the town of Rheims. She was now in her eighteenth year — tall, strong, and active, and able to remain on horseback without food from dawn till dark. Mounted on a charger, clad in a suit of white armor from head to foot, and bearing a white banner, she seemed "a thing wholly divine, whether to see or hear."