

**A PRACTICAL READER
WITH EXERCISES IN
VOCAL CULTURE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649060610

A Practical Reader with Exercises in Vocal Culture by Caroline B. Le Row

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CAROLINE B. LE ROW

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VOCAL CULTURE**

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Exercises in Vocal Culture.

BY

CAROLINE B. LE ROW,

Late Instructor in Elocution,

SMITH AND VASSAR COLLEGES.

"In the name, then, of physical and mental well-being, I demand that the art of reading aloud shall be ranked among the principal branches of public education."—ERNEST LEGOUVÉ.

NEW YORK:
MAYNARD, MERRILL, & CO.,
43, 45 AND 47 EAST TENTH STREET.
1893.

PREFACE.

ALL students are expected to be able to read well ordinary prose and poetry, and it is for the purpose of helping them to do this, as well as to help teachers in the teaching of reading, that this book is prepared.

It is thoroughly practical. No unnecessary technical terms are used. The subjects explained and illustrated are those only which, as the result of many years' experience among teachers as well as pupils, the compiler has found most necessary.

As physical development and correct vocalization must precede all good reading, the simplest and therefore most essential physical and vocal exercises are given, with full directions for their use.

The Selections for reading present nothing of a merely showy style of elocution. They are adapted for the upper classes of Grammar Schools as well as for High and Advanced.

It is claimed that the Practical Reader contains more suitable material for elocutionary work in the school-room, in more condensed, analytical, and available form, than any Reader or Speaker before the public.

Thanks are due to Messrs. Harper & Brothers; Houghton, Mifflin & Co.; Fords, Howard & Hulbert; Cowperthwait & Co.; and Charles Scribner's Sons, for permission to make extracts from the copyrighted editions of their publications; also to the authors herein represented.

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SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

THE ability to read well is a very different thing from the ability to teach reading, as nearly all teachers not specially trained for the work have proved by experience. The object of this compilation is to furnish a simple—and consequently practical—text-book which shall be a genuine help in this direction.

It is no easy task to convey by printed words that which requires the living voice for its exemplification; moreover, as Elocution is not an "exact science," it is impossible to specify an unvarying plan of instruction. In this particular branch, more than in any other, judgment, ingenuity and taste are called into requisition.

Reading should not be entirely taught by imitation, though this is frequently the only method at the command of the teacher. Such a process destroys all originality of style, and generally prevents all originality of thought.

One cause of the disagreeable styles of reading so common in schools, is the failure to connect sound and sense. Speaking is the utterance of original ideas; reading, the utterance of the ideas of others. So far as the thoughts of another are expressed by the reader as the speaker would himself utter them, so far it is good reading. But when this expression is in poetical, dramatic or oratorical form—in other words, when the style becomes more beautiful, more intense, or more exalted than that of our ordinary

conversation—something more is necessary than the direction, "Read as you talk." An apt response to such direction would be, "I do not talk, or hear anybody else talk, in that style; therefore I do not know how to read it." It is just here that the more difficult and artistic work of Elocution is to be done. By use of the examples illustrating certain styles and different degrees of force, pitch, time, etc., the imagination, judgment and taste of the student are educated, and he can apply to any selection the principles which he has learned in detached lines and sentences.

For this is needed not only intellectual comprehension of what is to be read, but ability to produce the tones suitable for its expression. This last is *wholly* dependent upon *physical* development. Every student can readily *understand* that Byron's "Apostrophe to the Ocean" needs the orotund quality of voice; the "Death and Burial of Little Nell," soft force; "Thanatopsis," low pitch, while perhaps not one in fifty can *produce* these variations. It is for the cultivation of this physical power that the Vocal Exercises are given.

An adequate supply of breath, and a proper manner of using it, are matters of the first importance in all vocalization. As well expect to reap a harvest before seed-sowing, or to wear a garment before the material for it is manufactured, as to produce a good tone of voice from a scanty amount of breath, or without muscular action of the natural breathing apparatus. So important is this matter and so comprehensive in all its bearings, that it is fully considered elsewhere in the book in an article originally written by the compiler for a physiological magazine. Its statements are urged upon the attention and thought of teachers and pupils alike.

It is suggested that a few minutes of each reading lesson