

**APPLETONS' HOME
READING BOOKS.
NATURE-STUDY READERS.
III HAROLD'S QUEST**

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Appletons' Home Reading Books. Nature-Study Readers. III Harold's Quest by John W. Troeger

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JOHN W. TROEGER

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Appletons' Home Reading Books

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UNITED STATES COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

DIVISION I

NATURAL HISTORY

APPLETONS' HOME READING BOOKS

NATURE-STUDY READERS

By JOHN W. TROEGER

III

HAROLD'S QUESTS

BY

JOHN W. TROEGER, A. M., B. S.



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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THIS series of books is intended to supply what is called supplementary reading for pupils who have been two years or more at school. The first book will, indeed, be found useful even for pupils that are beginning their second year's work at school. The sentences are short and the words are simple. The child in his third year may take home the first book, *Harold's Discoveries*, read and re-read it at leisure. He will attain facility in recognizing in a printed form words that he already knows by sound.

The first work of the child in the school is to learn to recognize the printed forms of words that are familiar to him by ear. These words constitute what is called the colloquial vocabulary. They are words that he has come

to know from having heard them used by the members of his family and by his playmates. He uses these words himself with considerable skill, but what he knows by ear he does not yet know by sight. It will require many weeks, many months even, of constant effort at reading the printed page to bring him to the point where the sight of the written word brings up as much to his mind as the sound of the spoken word. But patience and practice will by and by make the printed word far more suggestive than the spoken word, as every scholar may testify.

In order to hasten the growth of this familiarity with the printed word it has been found necessary to reinforce the reading in the school by supplementary reading at home. Books of the same grade of difficulty with the reader used in school are accordingly provided for the pupil. They must be so interesting to him that he will read them at home, using his time before and after school, and even his holidays, for the purpose.

But this matter of familiarizing the child

with the printed word is only one half of the object aimed at by the supplementary home reading. He should read that which interests him. He should read that which will increase his power of making deeper studies. Moreover, what he reads should correct his habits of observation. Step by step he should be initiated into the scientific method. Too many elementary books fail to teach the scientific method, because they do no more than point out in an unsystematic way those features of the object that the untutored senses of the pupil would discover at first glance. It is not useful to tell the child to observe a piece of chalk and see that it is white, more or less friable, and that it makes a mark on a fence or a wall. Scientific observation goes immediately behind the facts which lie obvious to a superficial investigation. Above all, it directs attention to such features of the object as exercise a determining or controlling influence on the environment. It directs attention to the features that have a causal influence in making the object what it is, and in extending its effects to other objects.

Science discovers the causal relations of objects and their reciprocal action on one another.

After the child has learned how to observe what is essential in one class of objects he is in a measure fitted to observe for himself all objects that resemble this class. After he has learned how to observe the seeds of the milkweed, he is partially prepared to observe the seeds of the dandelion, the burdock, and the thistle. After he has learned how to observe the oak, he has learned something of the method of observing the birch, the elm, and the pine. A study of the apple aids his power of observing the cranberry and the cherry. A study of the budding of the willow enables him to understand the budding of the lilac, and a study of the germination of beans to understand that of peas and lentils.

The teacher is liable to err in undertaking to carry the investigation of one province of Nature too far, at the expense of neglecting a similar investigation in other kingdoms of Nature. The books of this series discuss various subjects in botany and in animal life; not

only these, but they start investigations in physics. The course is a spiral one, as it ought to be in the elementary school. Even in his first year the child ought to learn something regarding the methods of observation in each of the three great realms of Nature—first, the realm of elements treated of in the science of physics or natural philosophy; second, the realm of botany, treating of the various forms of the plant; and, third, the realm of animal life. Each of these realms of Nature is to be taken up again in the second book, and still again in later books of the series. With the growing power of the child to think and use scientific method he will expect and demand new scientific vistas. These will be furnished one by one in more advanced books.

The teacher of a school will know how to obtain a small sum of money to invest in supplementary reading. In a well-graded school of four hundred pupils ten books of each number are sufficient, these ten books to be loaned the first week to the best pupils in one of the rooms, the next week to a second ten