

THE FOURTH READER

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The Fourth Reader by Lewis B. Monroe

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LEWIS B. MONROE

**THE
FOURTH READER**



"IN SWANAGE BAY."—Page 220.

THE
FOURTH READER.

BY
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PREFACE.

WHATEVER other office a reading-book should serve in a school-room, we believe all are agreed that one of its main purposes is to teach articulation and pronunciation—the utterance of language. We have local faults and peculiarities of pronunciation, or “provincialisms,” in every section of the land. Besides these, the constant influx into this country of foreigners from every nation upon the earth has a tendency to corrupt our speech. Foreign adults learn the language imperfectly, and speak it with a brogue or accent. Where they form a large proportion of the population—as is the case in many localities—their blemishes and defects are copied by children, until in whole communities the language becomes perverted. The school-room is almost the only place where a remedy can be applied. We have presented, therefore, in the Introduction to this book, the best means of which we have any knowledge for correcting these defects, and stemming the tide which would drift our noble language from its moorings. A guide is given for the formation of every vowel and consonant, by figures and diagrams illustrating the position of the organs of speech required for each.

In carrying out this idea, we have been fortunate in securing the coöperation of Mr. A. Graham Bell, whose wonderful success in teaching deaf-mutes to speak has afforded the most striking demonstration of the merits of this physiological system of instruction. Educators who may wish to study the subject still more closely, and learn all the possibilities of the organs, are referred to the volume entitled *Visible Speech*, by Prof. A. Melville Bell.

We trust that the method of teaching the meaning of words through the “exercises” at the end of the lessons will commend itself to teachers, and that they will enlarge very much upon the plan thus indicated. The repetition of formal definitions rarely leaves any impression upon a child’s mind. Words are tools; by *using* them we find out what they are good for; but telling their purpose, instead of working with them, does little to increase their usefulness in our hands.

L. B. M.

TO TEACHERS.

THE natural mode of acquiring language is through the ear. If a child should hear nothing but correct pronunciation, he would pronounce correctly, even though he might not attend school or have special instruction in language for a day. But unfortunately he imitates the defects quite as much as the merits of those to whom he listens. In the course of a few years the habits of the organs of speech become fixed, the ear is less impressible, and the individual retains the faults early acquired.

The remedy is to substitute a conscious, intelligent use of the organs for the instinctive action which is natural. If a syllable is mispronounced, it is because the organs of speech are placed in a wrong position. The pupil must be taught to observe the action of the tongue and lips, and to substitute the right position for the wrong one.

The following examples will illustrate this :

Substitution of t or d for th.—A child says *tree* for *three*, *wid* for *with*, *fader* for *father*. This is because the tip of the tongue is placed too high—behind the upper teeth or against the gums, instead of under the points of the upper teeth. In obstinate cases the child should be required to protrude the tongue between the teeth, and make a prolonged sound of *th*. The sound of *t* cannot, from its nature, be prolonged.

N for ng.—Thus: *goin'* for *going*. This very common fault is caused by touching the point of the tongue against the upper gums, in the position of *t*, instead of bringing the back of the tongue against the palate, in the position of *k*; that is to say, the articulation should be made, not with the tip, but with the back, of the tongue.

Omission of the sound of r.—For instance, *baʌ* for *bar*, *eaʌ* for *ear*. This is because the tongue is allowed to lie inactive at the moment when the sound of *r* should be produced. The tip of the tongue should be raised and turned a little backward to give the true sound of this letter.

B for v.—Thus: *gib* for *give*. This is because the lips touch each other, when the lower lip should be brought in contact with the upper teeth.

Substituting the neutral vowel (n in urn) for short i.—Thus: *pupul* for *pupil*, *habut* for *habit*, *ut* for *it*. This is because the tongue lies relaxed in the mouth, instead of being raised to its highest position. Lifting the tongue costs an effort, and indolence or negligence substitutes the easier or laxer position.

Our advice to teachers is to depend upon the ear as far as possible for the correction of errors in pronunciation; but where this will not suffice, resort to the physiological mode here indicated. It is recommended that a *short* exercise from the Introduction be given before each lesson in reading, dwelling especially on those vowels, consonants, or combinations upon which the pupils are most liable to mistake.

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