THE ELEMENTARY STUDY OF ENGLISH: HINTS TO TEACHERS

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649416790

The Elementary Study of English: Hints to Teachers by William J. Rolfe

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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WILLIAM J. ROLFE

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BY

WILLIAM J. ROLFE, LITT. D.

William James Rolfe.

NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
1896

PREFACE

In the Preface to the first volume of the "English Classics for School Reading" I promised to prepare some "Hints for Teachers" on the use of the books. These *Hints* were printed in a small pamphlet, two editions of which have been exhausted. In this third edition I have thought it well to expand the pamphlet into a little book, in which the *Hints* should be given in revised and enlarged form, with the addition of one or two other papers on the elementary study of English.

In former editions of the *Hints* the teacher has been referred to the books—the *Tales of Chivalry* and *Tales from English History*—for the passages which the quoted notes explain or illustrate. I now give these passages *with* the notes, thus making the *Hints* complete in themselves, and also rendering the method and suggestions more intelligible to teachers who are unacquainted with the series. Whatever books for "supplementary reading" or the elementary study of English they use, they may be interested in some of these results of the experience of a fellow-teacher—for such, it should be understood, they are. I suggest nothing to others which I have not thoroughly tested myself. More than forty years ago, with boys and girls eight or ten years old, in a country academy, and with no other material than was to be found in the school reading-books of the time, I

did such work as is described here. Some of those boys and girls, after they had become fathers and mothers, told me that nothing in their school training was of more enduring value and delight to them than those early lessons in literature. All my teaching from that day to this, in high schools, summer schools (where the students were mostly teachers), private schools, and elsewhere, has been on the same lines, and hundreds of pupils have borne similar testimony to the results. That the method is the best possible I have not the presumption to imagine, but that it is good in its way I may venture to believe when I have such assurance of the fruit it has borne.

The *Hints* are prefaced with a paper on "The Grammar-school Course in English," written on that subject at the request of the officers of the Massachusetts State Teachers' Association, and read at a meeting of that society in Boston in 1888, but not printed until now; and short papers on "The Teaching of History" and on "The English Language" are added. In the Appendix I give a brief description of the books already issued in the series, with selections from the notes in the later volumes as further illustrations of the method.

CAMBRIDGE, *June* 10, 1896.

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS