

**THE SPRAGUE
CLASSIC READERS:
BOOK ONE, A PRIMER**

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The Sprague Classic Readers: Book One, a Primer by Sarah E. Sprague

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SARAH E. SPRAGUE

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THE SPRAGUE CLASSIC READERS

BOOK
ONE

SARAH E. SPRAGUE

EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING CO.





— C. L. Vogel

*The eyes of a child are sweeter
Than any hymn we have sung,
And wiser than any sermon
Is the lisp of a childish tongue.*

— Paul Hamilton Hayne

The
Sprague Classic Readers

BOOK ONE

A PRIMER

BY
SARAH E. SPRAGUE, Ph. D.

I love God and every little child.
—Jean Paul Richter.

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TO the loving little band
of nephews and nieces
and their myriad comrades
— near and far away — who
are just setting out in search
of that alluring Wonderland
to which a child's primer
forms the magic portal, this
series of readers is most
affectionately inscribed by
their lifelong friend,

THE AUTHOR.

FOREWORD.

Dear Friends: — In all the wide universe of beauty, there is nothing so transcendently beautiful as the joyous, natural awakening and development of child nature. It is our happy privilege so to interpret life to the little child that he may assimilate from it only what is good and pure and true; ours to put him in harmony with his every-day environment; to help him understand and love nature; to teach him to appreciate and respond to what is truest and best in music, in pictures, in books and in people.

To accomplish these ends easily and without loss of nervous energy, the child must be kept supplied with happy interests for head, hand, and heart, pursuing none of these, however, to that dangerous fatigue point which is the sure outcome of the forcing process and as surely fatal to all healthy growth. Realizing the full significance of these facts, the writer, in preparing this little volume, has been content to walk hand in hand with the child, sharing his simplest pleasures, keeping, for the most part, in dear, familiar pathways, stopping often by the wayside to pluck a well-known flower or to listen to the song of some familiar bird. The child has alternately led and been led. The uncertain little feet have been guided to higher levels by steps both easy and pleasant. There has been no undue straining after quick results and there has been no loss of that fullness of joy which belongs to the child by divine right. Book One goes into your hands as a labor of love and with the hope that it may be helpful to you and to the little ones in your charge.

Cordially yours,

SARAH E. SPRAGUE

PREFACE.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BASIS of this volume may be found in the following fundamental laws of child nature:—Joy is an integral part of normal childhood. Activity is a necessity of child life. Frequent change—of a pleasing character—is indispensable to healthy development and growth. The forcing process is destructive to mental power. Play is the natural outlet for the inherent dramatic instinct of the happy, unfettered child. Love is the only force to which child nature really yields.

Every normal child is a passionate lover of music, of rhythm, of color, form and motion. These are the highest stimulants to his imagination, and through these, his varied emotions find their truest expression. These also—because they arouse and hold his interest—are of unequalled value in strengthening the powers of attention and retention.

In the above may be found the underlying thought and motive of THE PLAN. The expansion of the plan depends also upon the following facts:—No teacher needs to make learning to read a task to the child. Happiness should be an inseparable part of the child's work as well as of his play. Both his work and his play should be so wisely directed as to leave the child the feeling of perfect freedom. The mind of the child should be kept so full of purity as to leave no room for evil. As the craving for rhythmic effects precedes the child's power to grasp the full import of words, he should have many easy rhymes before he attempts the higher forms of verse. These should both precede and accompany his early lessons in reading.

MARKED CHARACTERISTICS. Book One should be a decided factor in developing a genuine love of nature and in creating an abiding preference for what is best in people, in pictures, in music and in literature. It should also be an index of all that fills the child's hours at school. It