THE NORMAL COURSE IN READING: THE NEW FIRST READER: WORD PICTURES AND LANGUAGE LESSONS

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The Normal Course in Reading: The New First Reader: Word Pictures and Language Lessons
by Emma J. Todd & W. B. Powell

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EMMA J. TODD & W. B. POWELL

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Trieste

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NORMAL COURSE IN READING.

BY

EMMA J. TODD,

FORMERLY TRAINING TEACHER IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF AURORA, ILL.,

AND

W. B. POWELL, A.M.,

SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE NEW

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NORMAL COURSE IN READING.

COMPRISING:—

Primer: Preliminary Work in Reading;

First Reader: Word Pictures and Language Lessons;

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Primary Reading Charts: Preliminary Drill in Reading, 48 numbers, 29 x 38 inches, Illustrated.

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

PROBABLY no books in our schools represent, on the whole, more effort and enterprise on the part of publisher and author alike, than the school reading books. They have constantly received contributions from our ablest and most thoughtful educators, and to their publication have been given the best endeavors of our most successful schoolbook makers — facts which abundantly attest the importance of the subject and the interest taken in it by the educational public.

That there have yet remained possibilities for improvement in this department of school work cannot be doubted by any who have followed the discussions of the subject among educators and in the press. Our best teachers have not been satisfied with the readers of stereotyped pattern, and have over and again expressed a desire for something different and better. All this has revealed and emphasized the necessity for improvement, not alone in the manner of presentation, but also in the subject-matter presented.

It is confidently claimed that the Normal Course in Reading fully answers this demand for improvement. Its literature is of the choicest. Its subject-matter is drawn from topics which attract and engage all children, appealing at once to their intelligence and interest, and giving them something to read about and think about. Its order of presentation and treatment is based on true pedagogical principles. Its plan and scope are natural, comprehensive, and in full accord with the most advanced school work of to-day.

A more definite and detailed exposition of the plan, scope, and subject-matter of each book in the series will be found in the "Suggestions to Teachers," prepared by the authors.

The publishers confidently commend the Series to all progressive educators, and anticipate for it large favor at the hands of those who appreciate the best schoolroom work.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

LEARNING to read may be considered under two general heads: —

First, learning to recognize the forms of speech — words, signs, idioms, sentences, discourse — symbols representing what is known, what has definite form in the mind of the learner.

Second, learning to get information from these symbols.

The more faithfully forms of speech represent correct ideas existing in the mind of the learner when he learns them, the better is he prepared for the second part of learning to read.

Words or other signs, if learned as the symbols of imperfect or incorrect ideas, of indefinite or false relations, will ever after be misleading; or, after their true meanings have become known, will always need to be translated.

The child's first efforts in learning to read, if nature's laws are to guide in the work, must be to recognize his own words, representing his own knowing, his own thinking, his own feeling, his own willing, his own concluding, his own doing. It is of the highest importance that these words stand for correct as well as exact ideas.

As a preparation for learning to read, the child must have exact ideas and thoughts, and must be made to express the same correctly and well. Not only must he think, and think correctly, but the teacher must know *what* and *how* he thinks; for under no other conditions can it be known that he speaks correctly and with exactness, or that he is prepared to learn to read.

Let the teacher remember that if ever education should proceed from the *known*, it is in learning to read. The known, in the early stages of learning to read, are the thoughts expressed by what is to

be read and the spoken language expressing them; the unknown are the written symbols, words, signs, sentences. In all this beginning work the teacher must be sure that there is a well-established known from which to lead. The child must be given experiences represented by the words he is to learn, or experiences similar to them. He will learn to read well most easily and therefore most rapidly by first learning to talk well.

The purpose of the early reading lessons is to cause the child to know his vocabulary at sight, and to make him realize, as far as possible, its symbolic signification. He is to be led from the conscious thought to its oral expression, and thence to its written and printed form. With how great enjoyment does he see his own thought in graphic symbols of his own spoken words!

The subjects about which he should learn and be led to talk are those concerning which he will be afterwards called on to read. An interest in these subjects must be created. The child takes pleasure in learning to read if he is interested in the subjects about which he is to read. The greater his interest in a subject, the greater will be his delight in reading about it.

Natural, disconnected expression of thought should be adjusted by the child, through the ingenious guidings of the teacher, to become sequential yet natural, before his ear is charged with its importance, or his eye asked to recognize it.

It is not the purpose of this early work in reading to train the learner to get thought from the printed page. He learns, however, that this reveals thought, because it has so often expressed his own exact thought. He thus learns to look for and to expect thought when he reads.

He does not now learn expression from the printed page. He carries a knowledge of expression obtained from the oral exercise to the text, and begins to learn the subtler offices of symbols when he applies this knowledge in reading. Therefore he realizes that reading is talking. The child thus taught will best learn the office of printed words.

To facilitate the learning of words at sight, it is made possible to teach many words by association; with this in view, adjectives expressing contrast are introduced in the same lesson.

A carefully selected vocabulary is given in this book. The

words which are learned before using books and those learned in connection with the first book should form a community, a symmetrical vocabulary in which the different parts of speech are found in proportion to their ordinary use. This vocabulary should consist of the words and idiom which the child uses or may be trained to use in conversation about plants, animals, rain, snow, frost, wind, pictures, children's toys and other objects; in description of familiar objects and of simple pictures; in comparing and contrasting simple objects; in relating myths and fables, and in making stories of child life.

The work which the child must do in preparation for the reading contained in this little book will lead him to see that the trees, the seeds, the buds, the flowers, the sun, the wind, the rain, the snow, and the frost, have wonderful stories to tell. By this study he is given the key with which he may unlock much of the best in science, art, and literature in his future reading.

Every word given in this reader appears in many places and in several relations. This repetition of the word in different relations is the kind of supplementary reading that belongs to the beginner's grade. If the child uses the new word in oral and written statements in various connections, finds it among others, illustrates it whenever possible by drawing, the word becomes his own. Such repetition or drill fixes the form in his mind.

The child should early learn the meanings of the simpler forms of the language, and should acquire the habit of looking for meaning in forms. Thus he will begin to learn the grammar of the language.

There is a limit to the number of words which the child can learn to recognize at sight, so varied are the forms of our English words. He must therefore have other means of determining the words he meets. He must associate the sound with the form, and be able to recognize a new form through its likeness to those which he already knows. Phonic drill or work in slow pronunciation should be begun the first day of school. The ear should be trained to know the sounds or values of the consonants of the language.

With the acquired ability to give the correct sounds of the consonants and those combinations whose values are constant, the

child will be able to pronounce any word which occurs in his reading if the word is a part of his vocabulary.

To aid in this work of phonic drill, several pages have been devoted to word-building. In this the child is given an opportunity to study and compare words. But in doing this work he should understand that it is word-study, not reading. Reading is thought-getting and thought-giving, and should always be sentence work.

The beginner in reading is unable to carry the eye from the end of one line to the beginning of the next without making a pause. To aid him in giving natural expression in reading long sentences, care has been taken, in printing the first seventy pages, to have each line end at a natural pause or where a suspension of the voice is desirable. As a further help in retaining and giving good natural expression in reading, many pages are placed under the head of silent reading.

To show that he reads silently, the child should perform the act and then read the sentence aloud.

Accuracy in expression should be cultivated from the very beginning of the work.

The child should be led to see and appreciate the difference in meaning between such sentences as the following:—

Ned, let Alice spin a top.

Ned let Alice spin a top.

The power to select and emphasize the right word is of value in expressing orally the thought of the written or printed sentence. This power should be developed from the beginning. This is easily done. For example, a child reads: "My doll lies in a little red cradle." Tell him to read it so that you may know it is not a *large* cradle; so that you may know whose doll it is; what the doll does; where the doll lies; the color of the cradle, etc.; thus bringing out as many meanings as there are words in the sentence. Such work causes the child to *think*. The more he thinks, the better will be his expression.