

**THE BEACON
SECOND READER**

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The Beacon Second Reader by James H. Fassett

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SECOND READER**

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BEACON SECOND READER**

BY

JAMES H. FASSETT

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, NASHUA, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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PREFACE

In the "Beacon Second Reader" the author has chosen for his stories only those of recognized literary merit; and while it has been necessary to rearrange and sometimes rewrite them for the purpose of simplification, yet he has endeavored to retain the spirit which has served to endear these ancient tales to the children of all ages. The fairy story appeals particularly to children who are in the second school year. It has been proved by our ablest psychologists that at about this period of development, children are especially susceptible to the stimulus of the old folklore. They are in fact passing through the stage which corresponds to the dawn of the human race, when demons, dragons, fairies, and hobgoblins were as firmly believed in as rivers and mountains.

As a test of this theory the author asked hundreds of second-grade and third-grade school children to recall the stories which they had read during the preceding year, and to express their preferences. The choice of more than ninety per cent proved to be either folklore stories, pure and simple, or such tales as contained the folklore element. To be sure, children like other stories, but they respond at once with sparkling eyes and animated voices when

the fairy tale is suggested. How unwise, therefore, it is to neglect this powerful stimulus which lies ready at our hands! Even a pupil who is naturally slow will wade painfully and laboriously through a fairy story, while he would throw down in disgust an account of the sprouting of the bean or the mining of coal.

It can hardly be questioned, moreover, that the real culture which the child derives from these literary classics is far greater than that which he would gain from the "information" stories so common in the average second and third readers.

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THE SHOEMAKER AND THE ELVES—I

shoemaker beautiful to-morrow leather
 already bought sew enough

A shoemaker and his wife lived in a little house on the edge of a wood.

They were very, very poor, and each day they grew poorer and poorer.

At last there was nothing left in the house but leather for one pair of shoes.

"I will cut out this last pair of shoes," the shoemaker said to his wife.

"To-morrow I will sew them and peg them."

So he cut out the leather and left it on his bench.

The next morning he went into his shop to make the shoes.

What did he see!

A pair of shoes, all nicely made and ready to be sold.

The stitches were so fine and the shoes so well made that they were quickly sold.

With the money the poor shoemaker bought leather for two pairs of shoes.

Then he said to his wife, "I will cut out the leather for two pairs of shoes.

To-morrow I will sew them and peg them."

So he cut out the leather for the shoes and left it on his bench.

The next morning when he went into his shop to make the shoes, what did he find!