

PREFACE.

IN the preparation of the THIRD READER the chief aim has been to make it an introduction to the study of literature. The choice of selections has been dictated primarily by a desire to excite the interest, improve the taste, develop the judgment, and ennoble the ideals of the pupils, and to cultivate a liking for good literature which will prompt them to read for themselves through later life.

For the more successful accomplishment of this purpose, a much larger proportion of poetry than is usually to be found in readers of this grade has been inserted. Whatever the correct psychological or esthetic explanation may be, the fact undoubtedly is that the majority of children are naturally fond of poetry, of which the melodious language and the rhythmic movement appeal to their nascent sense of the beautiful.

To intensify this preference is a legitimate object of school training, and with this in view critical care has been exercised in the selection of the poems. Since form is a matter of great importance with the young, and since Tennyson's poetry is in form the most perfect and the most varied in the language, advantage has been taken of the expiration of the copyright of many of his earlier poems to insert an unusually large number of them. Needless to say, while in point of formal perfection they are pre-eminent, they are hardly less so in the still more important qualities of literature—good sense, good taste, and good morals.

Compilers of recent series of school readers in different countries have wisely shown an increasing preference for two classes of selections—those presenting to the observation of the pupil his physical environment, and those presenting to his imagination that extra-physical region which has in all ages been peopled with beings of human creation. Animal stories