

PREFACE.

IN selecting the lessons of this book, it has been borne in mind that the Fourth Reader is the highest of the series of Readers authorized for use in Public Schools, and, consequently, the most advanced reading-book that the great majority of the pupils of the Province will use. The selections, with very few exceptions, have been taken from the writings of acknowledged masters in literature, and in addition to their intrinsic literary worth, they have the further merit of being such as will familiarize the pupil with the greater names in English authorship, and afford him a means of forming some estimate of the wondrous diversity, beauty, and richness of the literature of our mother tongue.

The selections in verse are poetic gems, whose lustre and value time will never lessen. Many of them have been household words for generations, and nearly all are popular favorites. Pains have been taken to secure accuracy of text in these selections.

The pieces, in both prose and verse, have been selected primarily with respect to their fitness as lessons for teaching reading. It is believed that they will so interest the pupil that he will be stimulated to learn to read for the pleasure and advantage the power to read will bring him. In prose, only such selections have been admitted as are complete in themselves; and while their variety of style and subject affords a wide range of exercises for training in reading, their instructive character will render them additionally useful.

For the sake of those pupils, many of them, relatively, of mature age, who cannot proceed farther than the Public School course, a number of somewhat difficult selections, from the higher realms of literature, have been inserted towards the end of the book. Notwithstanding this, it will be found, that, beginning with an easy transition from the Third Reader, the grading is gentle and regular throughout.

In the Explanatory Notes only those difficulties which are beyond the easy solution of the teacher have been explained. Anything about which the ordinary text-books in history, or geography, or grammar, supply sufficient information, has been left for elucidation to the teacher. Nothing has been said of all such words as are defined in a common pocket-dictionary; and it is believed that nearly every word which is beyond explanation by such help, has had its meaning made clear.

A reading-book should be used principally for teaching the art of reading. A reading lesson should not be converted into a lesson in history, or science, or literature. Yet so much does good reading depend upon an intelligent knowledge of what is read, that the teacher must be particularly careful to see that his pupils understand what they read. This is all the more necessary in the higher classes of a school, since the more advanced pupils, from the facility with which they recognize word forms, are apt to acquire the habit