

The child may be told, or he may notice, at an early date, that some words are non-phonetic, and it is sometimes necessary to introduce a non-phonetic word for reading purposes. The child, usually, understands the difficulty and makes the best of it. However, as a rule, the less he sees of non-phonetic words the more rapid progress he will make in the early stages.

By this method, the more sounds the child knows and the more words he can read, the easier each new word becomes. Clever children, who wish to learn to read and have received in a few lessons a clue to the way to do it, often invent ways of helping themselves to learn. For example, such a child, having learned "Old Mother Hubbard" by heart, will take the book, find the picture, pick out the few words he knows, and guess the others for himself. He may even keep on working at it until he knows all the words. All such efforts should be encouraged, and it is often well to follow the lead of the child. It is not at all necessary to follow exactly the plan outlined in this book.

The first few lessons are by far the most difficult for both teacher and child. After the first ten lessons, the difficulty vanishes and the lesson becomes a pleasure instead of a task. For this reason, these early lessons are given in minute detail.

HOW TO BEGIN

The desire to learn to read.

The teacher or mother first tells the child stories that she remembers from childhood and knows by heart.¹ She then reads easy, interesting, new stories to him from the Children's Corner of the newspaper, the Sunday School magazine, or some child's story book.

The child's curiosity is, usually, awakened, as to how she can do this, when, to him, the page is merely black and white paper.

To explain this, she shows him a picture which has, under it, a story about the picture. She asks him to tell her what he sees in the picture, and what he thinks it is about. She then explains that

¹ Helpful suggestions are to be found in: "How to Tell Stories to Children," by Sara Cone Bryant (Houghton).