Friends, fortune, fame, the industrious scholar gains;  
The idler's doom is rags, and wreck, and chains.

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PREFACE.

This little book I have compiled at the request of the publishers, and at the suggestion of several teachers, whose opinions, founded as they are upon experience, I cannot but respect.

It has been thought, that even the simplest lessons, in ‘The Introduction to the National Reader,’ require a higher degree of advancement, in the art of reading, and a greater maturity of mind, than can be reasonably expected in very young children. And it is, certainly, desirable that those, who have just enlisted in the service of letters, and are doomed by their ‘destiny severe’ to be inspecting and reviewing, for a good part of each day, columns of words drawn up in rank and file, having no idea connected with them except that of the uniform in which they are paraded, and that of the chiming of their names at roll-call, should, for a part of the day, at least, be allowed to seek relaxation, by exercising themselves with words that are drawn together by sense, rather than by sound, and are addressed not to the eye only, but to the mind.

This book, then, is intended as a companion for the Spelling Book; that, when the children are tired of that,—as, if I rightly remember the liveliness of my own interest in that manual, it may be expected that they sometimes will be,—they may, by way of variety, take up this. It is hoped that they will find in it something to interest, something to instruct, and nothing to injure them.

Whether it is because so few writers of talent have undertaken to furnish good materials for a compilation
like this, or whether there is a great intrinsic difficulty in writing for children so as to be instructive without being dull, and simple without being silly, it may not be certain. But it is certain, that but a few writers have been happy in the production of pieces interesting and profitable to very young children. I have, therefore, been obliged to take into this collection a good deal of matter that has been repeatedly used before. But the labors of Watts, and Barbauld, and Edgeworth, are now common property, and the more widely they are scattered over the world, the better for the world will it be. I owe no apology, therefore, and I offer none, to my fellow-laborers in this field, for having, like themselves, taken advantage of the works of these benefactors of mankind. In regard to their labors, however, as well as to others', I have adopted one rule, which is, to alter, without scruple, whatever appeared to me objectionable; and I have endeavored to satisfy myself that, in this, I do the author no wrong, for in no case do I give the writer's name. No one, but myself, therefore, is responsible for either the thought or the language of any lesson. The authorship of a piece is a matter which does not often interest very young children; and I have made the book for them. A number of the lessons in this selection,—some new versions of old fables and other pieces, both in prose and verse,—are my own; but I have used no note to distinguish these from the rest.

I commend the book to the notice of teachers, to the kind judgment of the public, to which I already owe much, and to the care of Him who cares for children, and to whom all, engaged in instruction, are accountable for their sacred trust.

J. P.

Boston Nov. 1830.
## INDEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson I</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson II</td>
<td>The foolish Lamb</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson III</td>
<td>The quarrelsome Cocks</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson IV</td>
<td>Story of Harry</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson V</td>
<td>&quot; &quot; Peter</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson VI</td>
<td>&quot; &quot; Billy</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson VII</td>
<td>The cruel Boy</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson VIII</td>
<td>The good-natured Boy</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson IX</td>
<td>The rest of the same Story</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson X</td>
<td>The Liar not believed</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XI</td>
<td>The careless Girl</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XII</td>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XIII</td>
<td>Praise to God</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XIV</td>
<td>A Walk in the Fields</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XV</td>
<td>Quadrupeds</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XVI</td>
<td>The Dog and the Wolf</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XVII</td>
<td>The Cock, the Cat and the Young Mouse</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XVIII</td>
<td>The Cats that went to Law</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XIX</td>
<td>The Martens</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XX</td>
<td>More about the Martens</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XXI</td>
<td>The Bee in a Flower</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XXII</td>
<td>The Chimney Sweeper</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XXIII</td>
<td>The Colonists</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XXIV</td>
<td>The Rest of the Colonists</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XXV</td>
<td>The Hog and the other Animals</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XXVI</td>
<td>The Little Dog</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XXVII</td>
<td>Things by their right Names</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XXVIII</td>
<td>The Sun</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XXIX</td>
<td>The Moon</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XXX</td>
<td>The Wolf and the Lamb</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XXXI</td>
<td>The Points of Compass</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XXXII</td>
<td>The Four Seasons</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XXXIII</td>
<td>God, our Shepherd</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XXXIV</td>
<td>The Creator and the Creature</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XXXV</td>
<td>Night</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XXXVI</td>
<td>Noon</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XXXVII</td>
<td>The Lark</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson XXXVIII</td>
<td>The Lion and the Mouse</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson XXXIX. The discontented Squirrel ........................................ 73
Lesson XL. The Girl that teased her Mother .................................... 77
Lesson XLI. The good Samaritan .................................................... 79
Lesson XLI. The Swan .................................................................. 80
Lesson XLIII. How to make the Best of it ........................................ 81
Lesson XLIV. Never Fight ............................................................. 83
Lesson XLV. I didn't think ............................................................. 86
Lesson XLVI. Edward and the Cat .................................................. 87
Lesson XLVII. Perseverance ........................................................... 89
Lesson XLVIII. Cruelty to Animals .................................................. 91
Lesson XLIX. The Nettle ................................................................ 92
Lesson L. Gambling ...................................................................... 99
Lesson LI. Saturday Night .............................................................. 102
Lesson LI. Gratitude to Teachers .................................................... 102
Lesson LII. Evening at Home, after School ..................................... 103
Lesson LIII. What "Independence" means ....................................... 103
Lesson LV. The Bed of Death ......................................................... 107
Lesson LVI. A Mother's Gift ........................................................... 110
Lesson LVII. The Spider and the Fly .............................................. 111
Lesson LVIII. Play, School, and Bedtime ....................................... 112
Lesson LIX. The Cat, the Old Mouse, and the Young Mouse .......... 113
Lesson LX. The Boys and the Frogs ............................................... 114
Lesson LXI. The self-conceited Boy ............................................... 115
Lesson LXII. Flying and Swimming ............................................... 117
Lesson LXIII. The End of the Holydays .......................................... 120
Lesson LXIV. Vacations and Amusements ..................................... 121
Lesson LXV. The Fox ................................................................... 122
Lesson LXVI. The Fox and the Hen ............................................... 123
Lesson LXVII. The Elephant .......................................................... 126
Lesson LXVIII. Sunday; at Church and at Home ......................... 129
Lesson LXIX. Not able to read! ...................................................... 130
Lesson LXX. The Rose ................................................................. 133
Lesson LXXI. The Fox and the Crane ............................................ 134
Lesson LXXII. Innocent Sport ......................................................... 135
Lesson LXXIII. The Emmts ............................................................ 136
Lesson LXXIV. Against Idleness and Mischief .............................. 137
Lesson LXXV. The Black Bonnet ................................................... 137
Lesson LXXVI. Mother, where is he? ........................................... 141
Lesson LXXVII. The Rose and the Grape-vine .............................. 142
Lesson LXXVIII. The Arabs and the Camel Driver ....................... 143
Lesson LXXIX. Children at Play .................................................... 146
Lesson LXXX. Welcome to the Robins .......................................... 147
Lesson LXXXI. A Teacher’s Prayer for his Scholars ....................... 148
Lesson LXXXII. Docility of domestic Animals .............................. 149
Lesson LXXXIII. Docility of Birds ................................................ 153
Lesson LXXXIV. The sagacious Goose ......................................... 156
Lesson LXXXV. Honesty, the best Policy ...................................... 158