

THE ECLECTIC READERS 美国语文读本

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THE ECLECTIC READERS

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WILLIAM H. MCGUFFEY

上海三联书店

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LESSON 1

PERSEVERANCE



1. "Will you give my kite a lift?" said my little nephew to his sister, after trying in vain to make it fly by dragging it along the ground. Lucy very kindly took it up and threw it into the air, but, her brother neglecting to run off at the same moment, the kite fell down again.

2. "Ah! now, how awkward you are!" said the little fellow. "It was your fault entirely," answered his sister. "Try again, children," said I.

3. Lucy once more took up the kite. But now John was in too great a hurry; he ran off so suddenly that he twitched the kite out of her hand, and it fell flat as before. "Well, who is to blame now?" asked Lucy. "Try

again,” said I.

4. They did, and with more care; but a side wind coming suddenly, as Lucy let go the kite, it was blown against some shrubs, and the tail became entangled¹ in a moment, leaving the poor kite hanging with its head downward.

5. “There, there!” exclaimed John, “that comes of your throwing it all to one side.” “As if I could make the wind blow straight,” said Lucy. In the meantime, I went to the kite’s assistance²; and having disengaged³ the long tail, I rolled it up, saying, “Come, children, there are too many trees here; let us find a more open space, and then try again.”

6. We presently found a nice grassplot⁴, at one side of which I took my stand; and all things being prepared, I tossed the kite up just as little John ran off. It rose with all the dignity⁵ of a balloon, and promised a lofty flight; but John, delighted to find it pulling so hard at the string, stopped short to look upward and admire. The string slackened, the kite wavered, and, the wind not being very favorable, down came the kite to the grass. “O John, you should not have stopped,” said I. “However, try again.”

7. “I won’t try any more,” replied he, rather sullenly. “It is of no use, you see. The kite won’t fly, and I don’t want to be plagued with it any longer.” “Oh, fie, my little man! would you give up the sport, after all the pains we have taken both to make and to fly the kite? A few disappointments⁶ ought not to discourage⁷ us. Come, I have wound up

1 Entangled, *twisted in, disordered.*

2 Assistance, *help, aid.*

3 Disengaged, *cleared, set free.*

4 Grassplot, *a space covered with grass.*

5 Dignity, *majestic manner.*

6 Disappointments, *failures or defeats of expectation.*

7 Discourage, *take away courage.*

your string, and now try again.”

8. And he did try, and succeeded, for the kite was carried upward on the breeze as lightly as a feather; and when the string was all out, John stood in great delight, holding fast the stick and gazing on the kite, which now seemed like a little white speck in the blue sky. “Look, look, aunt, how high it flies! and it pulls like a team of horses, so that I can hardly hold it. I wish I had a mile of string: I am sure it would go to the end of it.”

9. After enjoying the sight as long as he pleased, little John proceeded to roll up the string slowly; and when the kite fell, he took it up with great glee¹, saying that it was not at all hurt, and that it had behaved very well. “Shall we come out to-morrow, aunt, after lessons, and try again?”

10. “I have no objection, my dear, if the weather is fine. And now, as we walk home, tell me what you have learned from your morning’s sport.” “I have learned to fly my kite properly.” “You may thank aunt for it, brother,” said Lucy, “for you would have given it up long ago, if she had not persuaded you to try again.”

11. “Yes, dear children, I wish to teach you the value of perseverance,² even when nothing more depends upon it than the flying of a kite. Whenever you fail in your attempts to do any good thing, let your motto³ be,—try again.”

EXERCISES.—What is the subject of this lesson? Why was John discouraged in his attempts to fly his kite? What did his aunt say to him? What may we learn from this? What should be our motto if we expect to be successful?

1 Glee, joy.

2 Perseverance, *continuance in anything once begun.*

3 Motto, *a short sentence or a word full of meaning.*

LESSON 2

TRY, TRY AGAIN

1. 'T is a lesson you should heed,
Try, try again;
If at first you don't succeed,
Try, try again;
Then your courage¹ should appear,
For, if you will persevere,
You will conquer², never fear;
Try, try again.

2. Once or twice though you should fail,
Try, try again;
If you would at last prevail³,
Try, try again;
If we strive, 't is no disgrace⁴
Though we do not win⁵ the race;
What should you do in the case?
Try, try again.

1 Courage, *resolution*.

2 Conquer, *gain the victory*.

3 Prevail, *overcome*.

4 Disgrace, *shame*.

5 Win, gain, *obtain*.

3. If you find your task is hard,
Try, try again;
Time will bring you your reward¹,
Try, try again.
All that other folks can do,
Why, with patience², should not you?
Only keep this rule in view:
Try, try again.

EXERCISES.—What does the mark before “T is” mean? What is it called? What point is used after the word “case” in the second stanza? Why?

1 Reward, *anything given in return for good or bad conduct.*

2 Patience, *constancy in labor.*

LESSON 3

WHY THE SEA IS SALT

A FAIRY TALE.

Mary Howitt was born in 1804, at Coleford, England. She wrote many charming stories for children in prose and verse, and also translated many from Swedish, Danish, and German authors. This story is arranged from one in a collection named “Peter Drake’s Dream, and Other Stories.” She died in 1888.

1. There were, in very ancient times, two brothers, one of whom was rich, and the other poor. Christmas was approaching, but the poor man had nothing in the house for a Christmas dinner; so he went to his brother and asked him for a trifling¹ gift.

2. The rich man was ill-natured, and when he heard his brother’s request he looked very surly. But as Christmas is a time when even the worst people give gifts, he took a fine ham down from the chimney, where it was hanging to smoke, threw it at his brother, and bade him begone and never to let him see his face again.

3. The poor man thanked his brother for the ham, put it under his arm, and went his way. He had to pass through a great forest on his way home. When he had reached the thickest part of it, he saw an old man, with a long, white beard, hewing timber. “Good evening,” said he to him.

4. “Good evening,” returned the old man, raising himself up from his work, and looking at him. “That is a fine ham you are carrying.”

¹ Trifling, *of small value*.

On this, the poor man told him all about it.

5. “It is lucky for you,” said the old man, “that you have met with me. If you will take that ham into the land of the dwarfs, the entrance to which lies just under the roots of this tree, you can make a capital bargain with it; for the dwarfs are very fond of ham, and rarely get any. But mind what I say: you must not sell it for money, but demand for it the ‘old hand mill’¹ which stands behind the door.’ When you come back, I’ll show you how to use it.”

6. The poor man thanked his new friend, who showed him the door under a stone below the roots of the tree, and by this door he entered into the land of the dwarfs. No sooner had he set his foot in it, than the dwarfs swarmed about him, attracted² by the smell of the ham. They offered him queer, old-fashioned money and gold and silver ore for it; but he refused all their tempting offers, and said that he would sell it only for the old hand mill behind the door.

7. At this, the dwarfs held up their little old hands, and looked quite perplexed³. “We can not make a bargain, it seems,” said the poor man, “so I’ll bid you all a good day.”

8. The fragrance⁴ of the ham had by this time reached the remote parts of dwarf land. The dwarfs came flocking around in little troops, leaving their work of digging out precious ores, eager for the ham.

9. “Let him have the old mill,” said some of the newcomers; “it is quite out of order, and he don’t know how to use it. Let him have it, and we will have the ham.”

1 Handmill, *a mill turned by hand.*

2 Attracted, *drawn to, allured.*

3 Perplexed, *puzzled.*

4 Fragrance, *sweetness of smell.*

10. So the bargain was made. The poor man took the old hand mill, which was a little thing not half so large as the ham, and went back to the woods. Here the old man showed him how to use it. All this had taken up a great deal of time, and it was midnight before he reached home.

11. "Where in the world have you been?" said his wife. "Here I have been waiting and waiting, and we have no wood to make a fire, nor anything to put into the porridge pot for our Christmas supper."

12. The house was dark and cold; but the poor man bade his wife wait and see what would happen. He placed the little hand mill on the table, and began to turn the crank. First, out there came some grand, lighted wax candles, and a fire on the hearth, and a porridge pot boiling over it, because in his mind he said they should come first. Then he ground out a tablecloth, and dishes, and spoons, and knives and forks.

13. He was himself astonished at his good luck, as you may believe; and his wife was almost beside herself with joy and astonishment. Well, they had a capital supper; and after it was eaten, they ground out of the mill every possible thing to make their house and themselves warm and comfortable. So they had a merry Christmas eve and morning.

LESSON 4

WHY THE SEA IS SALT

(Concluded.)

1. When the people went by the house to church, the next day, they could hardly believe their eyes. There was glass in the windows instead of a wooden shutter, and the poor man and his wife, dressed in nice new clothes, were seen devoutly¹ kneeling in the church.

2. “There is something very strange in all this,” said everyone. “Something very strange indeed,” said the rich man, when three days afterwards he received an invitation from his once poor brother to a grand feast. And what a feast it was! The table was covered with a cloth as white as snow, and the dishes were all of silver or gold. The rich man could not, in his great house, and with all his wealth, set out such a table.

3. “Where did you get all these things?” exclaimed he. His brother told him all about the bargain he had made with the dwarfs, and putting the mill on the table, ground out boots and shoes, coats and cloaks, stockings, gowns, and blankets, and bade his wife give them to the poor people that had gathered about the house to get a sight of the grand feast the poor brother had made for the rich one.

4. The rich man was very envious of his brother’s good fortune, and wanted to borrow the mill, intending—for he was not an honest

¹ Devoutly, *in a reverent manner*.

man—never to return it again. His brother would not lend it, for the old man with the white beard had told him never to sell or lend it to anyone.

5. Some years went on, and, at last, the possessor of the mill built himself a grand castle on a rock by the sea, facing the west. Its windows, reflecting¹ the golden sunset, could be seen far out from the shore. It became a noted landmark² for sailors. Strangers from foreign parts often came to see this castle and the wonderful mill of which the most extraordinary³ tales were told.

6. At length, a great foreign merchant came, and when he had seen the mill, inquired whether it would grind salt. Being told that it would, he wanted to buy it; for he traded in salt, and thought that if he owned it he could supply all his customers without taking long and dangerous voyages.

7. The man would not sell it, of course. He was so rich now that he did not want to use it for himself; but every Christmas he ground out food and clothes and coal for the poor, and nice presents for the little children. So he rejected all the offers of the rich merchant. The merchant, however, determined to have it; he bribed one of the man's servants to let him go into the castle at night, and he stole the mill and sailed away with it in triumph.

8. He had scarcely got out to sea, before he determined to set the mill to work. "Now, mill, grind salt," said he; "grind salt with all your might!—salt, salt, and nothing but salt!" The mill began to grind and the sailors to fill the sacks; but these were soon full, and in spite of all

1 Reflecting, *throwing back light, heat, etc., as a mirror.*

2 Landmark, *an object on land serving as a guide to seamen.*

3 Extraordinary, *wonderful.*