



A BOOK OF LESSONS.
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A BOOK OF LESSONS
FOR
THE USE OF SCHOOLS.

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OF
THE SCHOOL KAISEIJO.

SECOND EDITION



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CONTENTS.

The History of Columbus, and his
Discovery of America——
Part First, 3
Part Second, 9
Part Third, 16
Part Fourth, 20
The History of the Russian Emperor
Peter the Great, 21
History of Isaac Newton,——
Part First, ... 26
Part Second, 28
History of James Ferguson, the
Astronomer,.... 30
Washington's regard for his Mother, 38
The History of Franch revolution,
and Napoleon Buonaparte,... 39
Alfred and his Mother, 41

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THE HISTORY OF COLUMBUS,
AND HIS DISCOVERY OF
AMERICA.

Part First.

The parts of the world which were known 400 years ago were Europe, Asia, and Africa. The people of those regions traded with one another, and believed themselves to be the only inhabitants of the world. They had never ventured to sail out into the great ocean that surrounded them.

The most westerly lands known to the people of Europe were the Madeira Islands, the Canary Islands, and the Azore Islands. And when we look into the map, and see how far out in the great sea those islands are situated, we cannot but admire the bravery of the man who first dared to venture out so far as to reach them. Sailors now, indeed, cross all parts of the Atlantic Ocean without much danger; but those who first discovered these islands, and explored the ocean which surrounds them, had no charts to guide their course.

About this time, Christopher Columbus was

born. His father was a poor hard-working man, who lived in Genoa, a city of Italy.

Poor as he was, however, he took care that his son should be taught reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Columbus was fond of studying maps, and reading accounts of foreign countries. The subjects of geography, as he grew up, occupied more of his time than any other employment, and the pleasure he derived from this study made him long to visit other countries. At 14 years of age he became a sailor; and during his youth he sailed about the Mediterranean, sometimes in merchant vessels, and sometimes in men of war. He endured many hardships, but he gained the advantage of learning the management of a ship; and thus became, while yet a young man, an experienced and clever sailor.

His daring spirit soon urged him to extend his voyages beyond the Mediterranean. He sailed through the straits of Gibraltar into the Atlantic, and made a voyage to the west coast of Africa. During these voyages he carefully observed every new occurrence, and stored up all the knowledge that he could obtain from other sailors.

It was by these observations and inquiries, that he was first led to suppose that there might be land to the westward of the Azores. "The Azores," thought he, "were once unknown, but it only required some man a little bolder than others to discover them; and why may there not be land to the westward of the Azores also, which it only remains for some other fortunate adventurer to make known!"

Some of the facts, which encouraged Columbus to persevere in this supposition of the existence of land to the west of the Azores, are very curious. He had learned that, at Madeira and the Azores, trunks of huge pine trees, such as did not grow in these islands, had been washed on shore by westerly winds. Pieces of wood, cut in strange shapes and curiously carved, had been picked up. But, above all, two dead bodies of men, with features quite unlike those of the people of Europe, Asia, or Africa, had been cast on one of these islands, and had occasioned much wonder.

These strange circumstances, occurring at different times, appear to have been regarded as mere objects of idle curiosity; till Columbus, reflecting on them, was led to think that

the trees must have grown on land, that the carved wood must have been worked by men's hands, and that, as all these things came from the west, land, as yet unknown to Europeans, was to be found in that direction.

So convinced did Columbus become of the existence of new countries towards the west, that he was willing to risk his own life, and to sail over that vast untried ocean in search of them. But he was a poor man, with neither money nor rich friends to assist him.

Even if he could have procured a ship, he had no rewards to offer, with which to persuade daring men to accompany him in the enterprise.

At length he resolved to try to persuade the King or Governor of some country to fit out for him the necessary ships, so that he might go at once and make the intended discovery.

Having been born in Genoa, he first offered his plan to the chief men of that city; but they only laughed at him, and refused to listen to or assist him. Much disappointed, but still resolved to persevere, he went to the King of Portugal. At this time the Portuguese were the best sailors in Europe, and had

made the longest voyages. Columbus was not laughed at this time, but he was treated dishonestly. Pretending to listen to him, the King of Portugal got from him part of his plan; and then, refusing to assist him, sent out one of his own captains, with some ships, to make the very discovery which the ill-used Columbus had been the first to propose. However, the captain who was sent out did not succeed: he met with stormy weather, became alarmed, and soon returned to Portugal.

As soon as Columbus learned the return of these ships, he departed for Spain. He was so poor that he was obliged to beg as he went along.

One cold windy night, a stranger carrying a young child on his back, arrived at a small village in Andalusia, a province of Spain. He begged for bread and water, saying that he and his child were faint with hunger and fatigue. Some kind people took him into their house and relieved him. This stranger was Columbus, journeying towards Cordova, which was then the chief town of Spain, and the residence of the King and Queen. The people who assisted him in his misery were

so much interested in his behalf that they gave him money to continue his journey, and some of them even went with him, and when they arrived at Cordova, presented Columbus to the Queen, and obtained her promise to support him.

But his difficulties were not yet over—many years passed away before the Queen could resolve really to perform her promise. During this time Columbus had need of much patience; the people about the palace were too ignorant to understand his reasons for believing there might be countries beyond the seas, and they laughed at him for his poverty, and called him a dreamer.

At last, the Queen gave orders that three ships should be delivered to him, and furnished him with money to engage sailors and prepare every thing for the voyage. Disappointment, however, still awaited poor Columbus; the sailors disliked to go; they were afraid to embark on such an expedition, and refused to accompany him.

An order from the Queen at last forced 120 men on board the vessels. Their friends took leave of them as of men who were never to return. Columbus, full of hope and joy,

cheered them with assurances of success; but he still saw only despair in the countenances of the sailors. Two of his friends joined the expedition, and to each of them he gave the command of a vessel.

Part Second.

The ships given him to undertake a long and hazardous voyage were old and almost worn out; two of them, indeed, were little better than open boats. On the 3d of August, 1492, the vessels sailed. Columbus first directed his course to the Canary Islands, intending, when he had reached them, to steer due west.

At the Canary Islands he was detained some time, repairing his old and leaky vessels. On the 6th of September he again set sail; and now began the real dangers and difficulties of Columbus. It required all his patience and courage to bear up against the many troubles he met with. His sailors had, from the beginning, opposed him as much as they dared, from their dislike to the voyage.

But when they had lost sight of Ferroe, the most western of the Canary Islands, and

saw themselves in the midst of the vast untried ocean, their fears became so great that they actually cried like children.

"We shall never, never again return to our own homes!" they exclaimed; "we shall never again see our friends and children! we shall be swallowed up in the waves of the unknown sea! Oh! foolish men that we were, why did we consent to accompany this mad Columbus!"

In vain did Columbus beg them to remember that their voyage had hitherto been without storm or alarming accident, and that, therefore, they had really nothing to complain of. These childish men were obstinate in their fears.

A few days after sailing from the Canaries, the ships of Columbus came within the influence of a favourable wind, and so beautifully did it waft them along that, for a time, it cheered even the discontented sailors. When they had proceeded some distance, they met with large patches of seaweed, and also with land plants, drifted from the west. Columbus supposed, from these appearances, that they would soon fall in with land. One of the sailors discovered a live crab on a

patch of seaweed,—another proof to Columbus that land was near, for crabs are generally picked up at low tide on the sea shore.

The sailors were now as eager to discover the expected land as they had been unwilling to sail in search of it. They continually mistook the distant clouds for the desired shore, and shouted, "Land! land!" When these shouts were heard by Columbus, much as he wished the guess to prove true, he still doubted. A common, though not certain sign of land, is the gradually decreasing depth of the water. Therefore, Columbus ordered the lead to be thrown overboard, to take what is called "soundings." The sea-line, with which soundings are taken, is a long rope with a piece of lead fastened to the end of it. When seamen wish to know the depth of the water they throw the lead into the sea, and allow the line to run out till the lead reaches the bottom.

Disappointment awaited Columbus; for on sounding he could find no bottom, and he feared he was not so near land as the sailors expected. They became again troublesome, and tormented their brave leader with their fretful and ignorant fears.

There was, however, some cause for uneasiness, as their ships were old, and, had they met with storms, they might have been sunk. Besides, it was possible that their stock of provisions might be exhausted before they reached land, and, of course, they must then perish with hunger.

In the midst of this despondency, some breezes from the west sprung up; and the change of weather was followed by a sight which gladdened their eyes—several little birds visited the ships. They came regularly in the morning, and flew away in the evening. Their chirping and singing were sweet music in the sailors' ears. It was the first sound of land that they had heard since leaving the Canaries. "My friends," said Columbus, "now you may have hopes of seeing the wished-for land. These birds must have a nest or home somewhere near. They are so fresh and lively that their journey to us cannot have been long and fatiguing."

This general content, however, did not last long. The wind ceased, entirely, and the ships remained motionless; the sea was so thickly covered with weeds that it looked like a green marsh flooded with water. The

sailors were exceedingly frightened at seeing that the ships did not move. They forgot that such accidents sometimes happened on the seas which they had been accustomed to sail upon, and fancied that the ships were stuck fast in the weeds, and that they had arrived at the end of the ocean. They even threatened to throw Columbus into the sea unless he consented to give up his voyage, and take the first opportunity of returning to Spain.

"What!" exclaimed Columbus, "give up the voyage, now that we have almost found the land we seek! Surely no man among you can be so cowardly! Sail with me but a few days longer." In order to gratify his men, Columbus altered the course of the ships to the south-west.

Signs of land now became more frequent. Not only were fresh green herbs seen, but leaves of trees floated past the ships. A branch with red berries, and a stick, carved in a strange manner, were also picked up.

So near was land believed to be that, as the ships were going at a great rate through the water, Columbus, in order to guard against accidents, determined to keep watch all night. Anxiety and restlessness were general

in all the ships: no one went to sleep; every one was looking out for land.

Though Columbus had, to his men, always appeared cheerful and confident, he felt within himself occasional doubts and uneasiness. As he sat on deck, gazing earnestly into the horizon, he thought he saw, through the darkness, a light glimmering faintly at a great distance. He called up one of his crew, and asked him if he saw anything in the direction which he pointed out to him. "Yes," said the man, "I see a light." Columbus clasped his hands together and exclaimed, "It is so! it must be so!"

He now felt certain that he had found land, and that it was inhabited. They sailed on: at two o'clock, one of the ships, which was in advance of the others, fired a gun; joyful sound! it was the signal of land. "Land! land!" was shouted from ship to ship, with one glad voice. The rest of the night was spent by the sailors in talking over the expected sight which the morning was to bring. "Shall we find people in this new country?" asked the men one to another. "Shall we find houses and cities like those of Spain? Shall we find men like ourselves, or strange

monsters, who will be as fierce and cruel as they are frightful?"

In this way the time passed till the dawn appeared, and then they beheld an island that seemed to their eyes, so long used to the sight of nothing but sky and sea, the most beautiful they had ever beheld. The trees were so luxuriant as to appear a never-ending grove, the sea along the shore was clear and sparkling. As the day advanced, people were seen running from the woods towards the shore, and then again retreating among the trees, showing by their manners, that they were astonished at the sight of the ships.

Columbus ordered the boats to be got ready, and entered one of them with some of his crew; impatient to place his foot on the land which he had discovered, he was the first to spring on shore. As soon as his companions had landed, he planted the flag of the King of Spain on the coast; meaning to signify, that this new land henceforth belonged to that king. In doing so, he only followed the orders he had received; but these orders were unjust, because the land was already occupied by others.

Part Third.

Columbus gave the name of San-Salvador to the island which he had discovered. On looking in the map, it will be found among the islands called the Bahamas.

The simple and ignorant people who inhabited this island, on seeing the Spaniards approach the shore, were so alarmed, that they fled to the thickest parts of the woods. But after a time, as their curiosity got the better of their fear, they began gradually to come forth from their hiding-places.

They supposed that both ships and men had, during the night, risen out of the waters, or come down from the clouds. The sails they mistook for wings, and the sound and flash of the guns for thunder and lightning. Disguised as they were with their clothes and armour, the sailors did not seem to them men like themselves. Everything was so new and strange to them, that their mistakes and surprise are not to be wondered at. They themselves wore no clothing; but had their bodies painted in various colours and fanciful patterns. The natural colour of their skins was a reddish brown, and their hair was

straight and black. They had not, like the Spanish sailors, beards growing on their chins; and their only arms were wooden lances, pointed with fish bones.

When Columbus offered them a few coloured glass beads, and some bright brass bells, they soon forgot their fears, and flocked down to the shore in great numbers. As the hour of sunset approached, the three boats again put off from the shore, and joined the ships that remained at anchor.

Columbus was so much pleased with his new discovery, that he did not continue his voyage for some days. He also wished to make friends with the natives, whom he found mild and gentle. In return for the trinkets they had received from the Spaniards, they brought fruit and various kinds of roots to them, besides some balls of cotton. These friendly natives did a still greater service to the Spaniards; the fruits, &c., they might have done without, but they could not live without water; and, owing to the length of the voyage, they had drunk nearly all that they had brought from the Canaries. Springs of fresh water abounded in the island, and the natives not only pointed out the best and largest, but

assisted the Spaniards to fill their casks, and roll them to and from the boats.

Columbus having thus refreshed his men, and supplied the ships with water, again set sail. He proceeded in a southerly direction, because he understood from the signs of the natives that he would find a larger island in that direction. On the 28th of October he arrived at the large island of Cuba. Still, he had not discovered the continent of America. The islands he had visited he called the West Indies, because he erroneously supposed them near to India, though they are many thousand miles distant. They still keep the name given to them by Columbus.

After these discoveries, he determined to return home and report his success. His voyage had hitherto been without storms; his return to Europe, however, was not so fortunate. A dreadful tempest arose when he was near the Azores. He expected every instant, that his frail and worn-out vessels would be shattered by the fury of the winds, or dashed to pieces by the waves.

Fortunately however, all the ships weathered the storm, and returned to Spain in safety. The news of the arrival of Columbus, and of

the discovery which he had made, filled the people with joy and wonder. Their absence had been so long, that they were given up for lost; therefore, the rejoicing of their friends was very great. The bells were rung, all the shops closed, and the people flocked in crowds to the harbour, to see Columbus land. The sight was, indeed, remarkable. First walked Columbus, followed by some of his crew carrying beautiful parrots, cotton, and various other plants and animals, which they had brought from the new world. Then came the most curious sight of all—six natives of Cuba, who were painted after the manner of their country. The streets were so thronged that the sailors could hardly get along, while the shouts of joy and welcome were so loud as to be quite deafening. Columbus, occupied with his own thoughts, walked along in silence. In the midst of all this rejoicing, he could not but remember the time when he had first arrived at this very town, with his little son on his back, and had been obliged to beg his bread.

For a long time, nothing but Columbus and the "new world," as the Spaniards called it, were talked of. He was received with

kindness by the King and Queen, rewarded with numerous presents, and shortly afterwards, was engaged to make another voyage, that he might proceed with his new discoveries.

NOTE.—It was not till his third voyage that Columbus discovered the continent of America.

Part Fourth.

You may imagine what were the wonder and joy of the people of Europe when they heard of this discovery. Nothing like it in the world's history had been known.

But Columbus was unjustly deprived of the honor of giving his name to the land he had found. It was called America, from a man named Amerigo, who visited the country seven years after Columbus had discovered it.

Amerigo wrote a book about the country; and then some one made a map, and wrote the name "America" on the land described by Amerigo. And in this way people fell into the habit of calling the new land *America*, instead of *Columbia*.

It is now too late to redress the injustice. But the fame of Columbus, I think, is not to be lessened by it.

THE HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN
EMPEROR PETER THE GREAT.

PETER, afterwards called Peter the Great, was born in the year 1672. His father, the Emperor Alexis, died when he was only ten years old, and at the age of seventeen Peter was acknowledged as Emperor by the Russians.

At that time the Russians were a very ignorant and barbarian nation; but Peter, though wanting instruction quite as much as the people over whom he was ruler, was fortunately aware of his ignorance. When he began his reign, Russia was without trade and almost without manufactures. Peter saw the importance of introducing these into his country; but he also saw that before he could teach others he must first teach himself.

He began by learning the Dutch and German languages, for there were hardly any books in Russia.

In these studies he was assisted by a man named Le Fort, who came from Geneva in Switzerland, and who was a very clever well-educated man.

There was nothing which Peter so anxiously

desired his country to possess as ships, because he perceived that without them it was impossible for the Russians to trade with other nations. He got a Dutch ship-wright, whom he employed to build some ships; but in this, as in all his early endeavours, he found himself greatly hindered by the ignorance and want of skill of the Russian workmen. To remedy this evil as far as possible, he selected a number of young men, whom he sent into foreign countries to learn different useful arts.

But he did more than this—he determined to leave his country for some time and learn, by his own observation, whatever he wished his people to know. Accordingly he left Russia, taking but a few persons with him, among whom was his friend Le Fort, and concealing his name and rank, that he might meet with no interruption from the curiosity of strangers.

Peter travelled through Germany into Holland, where he intended to stay for some time to learn the art of ship-building, and many other things, which could be learned there better than anywhere else. He did not stop at Amsterdam, but proceeded in a boat

to Saardam, a small town on the sea-coast, where most of the Dutch ships were built.

On his arrival Peter represented himself and his companions as carpenters, who had come to Saardam in search of employment. He took his place among the other workmen, and laboured as industriously as if he had had to earn his bread, for he thought that in no way could he become so thoroughly acquainted with every part of a ship as by assisting to build one himself.

He was called, by his own desire, Peter Timmerman, which means a carpenter, or more commonly Master Peter. But the People of Saardam soon found out who Master Peter really was, and crowds went to the dockyard (as the place where ships are built is called) to see the Emperor at his work, dressed like a Dutch seilor, in a red jacket and white trousers. But Peter disliked such interruptions, for he did not come to Holland to surprise strangers, but to gain instruction.

When he had made himself acquainted with every thing connected with ship building, down to the making of ropes and sails, he left Saardam, and travelled all over Holland, visiting the principal towns and manufactories.

After leaving Holland Peter visited England, and then returned to Russia through Germany and Austria.

Peter now began to teach his countrymen what he had taken such pains to learn for himself. He instructed them in the building and navigation of ships, and in the cultivation of land. He also founded schools, and caused many useful books to be translated into Russian from other languages. Meanwhile he was executing a plan he had long formed, for raising that great city near the shores of the Gulf of Finland, of which I have spoken, and by means of which he hoped to carry on a successful trade and useful intercourse with other nations. Till Petersburg was built, the Russians had no seaport except Archangel, which is situated, as you know, quite at the northern extremity of Russia, and is only to be approached by sailing all round Norway.

Peter was so anxious to complete his new city, that he not only planned and directed the whole, but to encourage the workmen, he even assisted with his own hands in building the first house. Petersburg is now one of the finest cities in Europe, and has taken the place of Moscow as the capital of Russia.

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When we think upon the energy and perseverance with which Peter laboured to improve the condition of his people, we must allow that he well deserved the title of *Great*. You must not suppose, however, that Peter was without faults, he had many, but I do not tell you of them here, because, as he had none of those advantages of instruction which we possess, it is better to be silent upon errors which were probably in a great measure the effects of his ignorance.

Before I conclude I will tell you an anecdote which shows the value he placed on early education. One day seeing two of his little daughters, Anna and Natalia, reading a French book together, he desired one of them to translate a passage into Russian. He was struck with the ease and readiness with which she complied. "Ah, my children," said he, "how happy are you who are taught in your youth, and enjoy all the advantages of instruction, which were wanting to me!"

HISTORY OF ISAAC NEWTON.

Part First.

Men of great learning and talents, whom all people admire and praise, are often found to be more modest than persons not so wise and good. Sir Isaac Newton was one of these great, and, at the same time, modest men. When a little boy at school, he surprised every body by the curious little machines which he made with his own hands.

He had a number of saws, hatchets hammers, and other tools, which he used very skilfully. A windmill being put up near the place where he lived, he frequently went to look at it, and pried into every part of it, till he became thoroughly acquainted with it, and the way in which it moved.

He then began with his knife, and saws, and hammer, and made a small windmill, exactly like the large one: it was a very neat and curious piece of workmanship. He sometimes set it on the house-top, that the wind might turn it round. He also contrived to cause a mouse to turn his mill. This little animal being put inside a hollow wheel,

its endeavors to get forward turned the wheel and set the machinery in motion. There was also some corn placed about the wheel, and when the mouse tried to get at the corn, it made the wheel go round.

Having got an old box from a friend, Isaac made it into a water-clock—that is, a clock driven by a small fall of water. It was very like our common clocks, and about four feet high. At the top was a dial-plate, with figures of the hours. The hour-hand was turned by a piece of wood, which either fell or rose by water dropping upon it. This stood in the room where he lay, and he took care, every morning, to supply it with plenty of water.

It pointed out the hours so well, that the people in the house would go to see what was the hour by it. It was kept in the house as a curiosity long after Isaac went to college. The room in which he lodged was full of drawings of birds, beasts, men, ships, and mathematical figures, all neatly made upon the wall with charcoal.

When Isaac grew a little older, and went to college, he had a great desire to know something about the air, the water, the tides,

and the sun, moon, and stars. One day, when he was sitting alone in his garden, an apple happened to fall from a tree to the ground. He then began to ask himself, What is the cause of the apple falling down? Is it from some power or force in the apple itself, or is the power in the earth, which, draws the apple down?

When he had long thought about this subject, he found out that it was the earth that attracted, or drew the apple down, and that this power of attraction is one of the laws of nature. By it, loose objects are retained upon the surface of the earth, instead of flying abroad through space. You have learned, from the picture on Geography, that this earth is a globe, which turns over, day after day.

Part Second.

It is attraction which gives weight to objects; hence it is sometimes called gravitation, which means nearly the same thing as weight. Isaac Newton also discovered that all objects whatever have an attraction for each other, and always in proportion to their size and the distance at which they are placed.

Thus the moon, though a large globe, is under the attraction of the earth, and the planets are under the attraction of the sun. And it is by attraction they are all made to keep their proper distances from one another.

These discoveries were justly considered as among the most important ever made; and, for his having made them reflecting men will ever venerate the name of Newton. He was also the first who showed that every ray of white light from the sun consists of seven different colors; and he made known many other curious and wonderful things which were never known before.

He was of a mild and equal temper, and was seldom or never seen in a passion. He had a little dog which he called Diamond. He was one day called out of his study where, all his papers and writings were lying upon a table. His dog Diamond happened to jump upon the table, and overturned a lighted candle, which set fire to all his papers, and consumed them in a few moments.

In this way Newton lost the labor of many years. But when he came into the study, and saw what had happened, he did not strike the little dog, but only said, "Ah, Diamond,

Diamond! thou little knowest the mischief thou hast done!"

Though Isaac Newton was a very wise and learned man, he was not proud of his learning, but was very meek and humble. He was kind to all, even to the poorest and meanest man. Though he was wiser than most other men, yet he said, a little before he died, that all his knowledge was as nothing when compared with what he had yet to learn.

He was sometimes so much engaged in thinking, that his dinner was often three hours ready for him before he could be brought to the table.

He was born at Woolsthorpe in England, on the 25th December, 1642; and died on the 20th March 1727, at the age of eighty five.

HISTORY OF JAMES FERGUSON, THE ASTRONOMER.

James Ferguson was born in the year 1710, a few miles from Keith, a little village in Banffshire, one of the northern counties of Scotland.

His father had a large family, and being a poor man, was obliged to work hard in

order to support them. After a day's steady labour, rest and quiet are agreeable to most men. But he was so fond of his children, and knew so well how useful learning would be to them as they grew up, that when he returned to his home of an evening, instead of indulging in ease, he employed himself in teaching his children to read and write. He took each in his turn, as they reached the age at which he thought it proper for them to begin to learn.

James, however, learned to read before his father thought of beginning to teach him. He used to listen attentively while his father was teaching his elder brother, and afterwards study the lesson himself. That he might not disturb his father, whose time was much occupied, he was in the habit of applying to a kind woman in the neighbourhood, when there was any thing he could not understand. Pleased at his earnestness and industry in learning to read, his father gave him some further assistance, and also taught him to write, and afterwards placed him at a school at Keith. When only eight years of age, he already showed a taste for examining machines, and he even tried to make imitations of parts of them, such as

wheels, with an old lathe and a little knife.

While still very young, he was put out to earn his own bread; but being too weak for hard labour, he was employed by his master to watch sheep. He continued at this employment for many years. Looking after sheep, however, was not occupation enough for so inquisitive a boy as Ferguson. In the daytime he amused himself with making models of mills, spinning-wheels, and such other things as he happened to see, and at night he watched the stars.

As he grew old and stronger, he was put to harder work, and he had, accordingly, fewer hours of leisure. But still he steadily persevered in his endeavours to make himself acquainted with every thing around him. The difficulties which he had to surmount, only made him the more eager to seize every opportunity of gaining instruction. His contrivance for marking down the positions of the stars was very ingenious. He used to go out into the fields at night when his work was over, with a blanket around him, and a candle in his hand; and spreading the blanket on the ground, he laid himself on his back upon it, to survey the stars. He had provided

himself with a long piece of thread, upon which he had strung some beads. This piece of thread he used to stretch at arm's length between his eye and the stars, and then sliding the beads along the thread, until they hid particular stars from his eye, he applied the thread to a piece of paper, and marked the spot where the beads touched. He continued to do this till he had marked down on his paper the position of a large number of stars. The fair copy of this paper which he afterwards made, he called his "star-paper."

His knowledge of the stars brought him acquainted with some persons who were able to explain many things to him, and to assist him in various ways. From one person he learned that the earth is round, and from others he received a pair of compasses and ruler, and a good supply of pens, ink, and paper. His master, too, was very kind and considerate, and took so much pleasure in observing Ferguson's proceedings, that he often took the thrashing-flail out of his hands, and worked himself, while Ferguson sat by him in the barn, busy with his compasses, ruler, and pen.

Among other things, he made a globe of

the earth, from a description which he had met with in a book. He turned the ball for it out of a piece of wood, covered the ball with paper, and then traced upon this paper the different oceans, seas, continents, and islands.

He had now become a man; but owing to his poverty he had many difficulties to struggle with. At one time, by over-working, he fell ill, and was obliged to return to his father's house. In order to amuse himself while in this low state, he made a wooden clock, and it kept time pretty well. The bell on which the hammer struck the hours, was the neck of a broken bottle. This clock which he had made had a weight and line, for he had no idea how a clock could go without them. It was also a matter of wonder to him, how a watch could go in all positions. "Happening," he says, "one day to see a gentleman ride by my father's house, which was close by a public road, I asked him what o'clock it then was. He looked at his watch, and told me. As he did it with so much good nature, I begged of him to show me the inside of his watch; and though he was an entire stranger, he immediately opened the watch,

and put it into my hands. I saw the spring-box, with part of the chain round it, and asked him what it was that made the box turn round? He told me that it was turned round by a steel spring within it. Having then never seen any other spring than that of my father's gun-lock, I asked how a spring within a box could turn the box so often round, as to wind all the chain upon it? He answered, that the spring was long and thin—that one end of it was fastened to the axis of the box, and the other end to the inside of the box—that the axis was fixed, and the box was loose upon it. I told him I did not yet thoroughly understand the matter. 'Well, my lad,' says he, take a long thin piece of whalebone; hold one end of it fast between your finger and thumb, and wind it round your finger; it will then endeavour to unwind itself: and if you fix the other end of it to the inside of a small hoop, and leave it to itself, it will turn the hoop round and round, and wind up a thread tied to the outside of the hoop.' I thanked the gentleman, and told him that I understood the thing very well. I then tried to make a watch with wooden wheels, and made the spring of

whalebone, but found that I could not make the watch go when the balance was put on, because the teeth of the wheels were rather too weak to bear the force of a spring sufficient to move the balance; although the wheels would run fast enough when the balance was taken off. I enclosed the whole in a wooden case, very little bigger than a breakfast tea-cup; but a clumsy neighbour, one day looking at my watch, happened to let it fall, and turning hastily about to pick it up, set his foot upon it, and crushed it all to pieces; which so provoked my father, that he was almost ready to beat the man, and discouraged me so much, that I never attempted to make such another machine again, especially as I was thoroughly convinced I could never make one that would be of any real use."

James Ferguson now began to consider what he should do to gain a livelihood. He tried several occupations; but his fondness for astronomy, the pursuit of his early years, induced him at last to devote himself to that science. His good conduct in time brought him friends, and his friends provided him with all the assistance he required in his studies. This was not thrown away upon him.

That same application which had enabled him in his childhood and youth to do so much with little or no help, was of as much use to him in his later years, when he was aided by books, telescopes, and instruments of all kinds, and thus he succeeded in mastering the most difficult parts of astronomy. In 1743 he came to London, where he earned his bread by teaching astronomy, and became famous for explaining, clearly to others, all the difficulties which he had himself so happily surmounted. In this honourable way he spent the remainder of his life, constantly increasing his own knowledge and instructing others. With a steady economy, he earned enough to maintain himself in comfort. He had learned the difficulty of earning money; and he prudently laid by while young and in health, to support himself in sickness and old age. He died on the 16th of November, 1776.

WASHINGTON'S REGARD FOR HIS MOTHER.

George Washington, when a boy, had made preparations to go to sea, as a midshipman. Everything was arranged for his departure.

The vessel lay opposite to his father's house on the river Potomac; the small boat had been sent to the shore to take him off, and his heart was bent on going.

After his trunk had been put on board the boat, he went to bid his mother fare-well. He saw the tears in her eyes: she was sad at the thought of his leaving her.

George said nothing to her; but he saw that she would be greatly distressed if he went; and he resolved that, for his mother's sake, he would give up his wish to go to sea.

He said to the man who had carried his trunk to the boat: "Go and fetch back my trunk; I will not go away, if my mother is to be made unhappy by it."

George's mother was glad at his decision; but still more glad because of the filial piety it showed; and she said to him: "My dear boy, you will not repent this step. Our

heavenly Father has promised to bless the children who honor their parents; and I believe He will bless you!"

How entirely was the mother's fond belief fulfilled! who is there among men more honored by his countrymen, and by good men and children all over the world, than George Washington?

He was one of the best of boys. He was diligent, punctual and obedient. Some of his school writing-books still remain, and show how careful he was to write well.

He was born in Virginia, on the 22d of February, 1732. He was the first President of these United States. He died in the year 1799. His fame is most dear to us all.

THE HISTORY OF FRANCH REVOLUTION, AND NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.

In 1788, King Louis the Sixteenth was induced to call an assembly of the States General of the kingdom, which had not been convoked since 1614. This was, in fact, the commencement of that memorable revolution, which,

after promising to France a well regulated government, and the enjoyment of rational liberty, was soon sullied by the murder of the king and queen, and by a scene of sanguinary tyranny unparalleled in the history of the civilized world. During the long wars which ensued with all the European states, Buonaparte attained the supreme power, and was crowned emperor of France and king of Italy in 1804. He defeated all the coalitions against him, formed by the other powers, and conquered nearly the whole of the continent of Europe. But his army being overthrown in Russia, in 1812, and driven from Germany in the following year, he was obliged, in 1814, to abdicate his crown, and was allowed to reside in the isle of Elba; upon which the brother of the late king ascended the throne by the name of Louis the Eighteenth, his nephew the Dauphin, called Louis the Seventeenth, being dead. Buonaparte, however, escaped from Elba and returned in 1815, and Louis was obliged to flee to the Netherlands. Buonaparte again ascended the throne; but all the powers of Europe declaring against him, and his army having been totally defeated at Waterloo, he was again obliged to

abdicate, and surrendered himself to England. In conformity with a convention between Russia, Great Britain, Austria, and Prussia, he was sent to St. Helena (where he died in 1821), and Louis the Eighteenth again recovered the throne of his ancestors.

ALFRED AND HIS MOTHER.

Ten hundred years ago there lived in England a boy, named Alfred. His father was a king. The son of a king or of a queen is called a prince: Alfred was then a prince.

He had a mother who was a good woman, and fond of reading. One day she had in her hands a book which had large letters in it, painted and gilded. Alfred and his brothers wished to look at the book.

The art of printing books was not known till long after that time. All books were then written with a pen; so that they were quite rare and costly.

Alfred and his brothers liked the book much; and their mother said, "I will give it to him who shall first learn to read in it."

Alfred went that same day to a man who

could teach him to read; and, so well did he give his mind to study, that he soon learned to read, and so won the book. He was proud of it all his life.

When he was twenty-three years old he became King of England. He was so wise, and did so much good, that he has ever since been called "Alfred the Great."

His good deeds are felt even at our own day, and in our own land. All his greatness and goodness may be traced back to the time when he saw the book in his mother's hand, and made up his mind to learn to read.

The aids for teaching you to read are much greater than those which Alfred had, though he was a prince. You may not become, as he did, a king; nor should I wish you to, even if you had the power: but you may become, like him, a good man; which is better than being a king.

168

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