

The Sparrow

Book 5



An updated reprint of

‘Nature Knowledge The Newton Readers Book 1’

Reading Made Simple

The Newton Readers Book 1 (Published by Blackie and Son Ltd. in the 1800's) was an early reader many years ago, which imparted nature knowledge to children as they learned to read. It must be one of the greatest advantages of learning to read, that the world of knowledge is opened to the young mind, which is ready to absorb all manner of fascinating facts, so taught in an interesting manner. Few copies of this book remain in existence. I can find no record of the subsequent books.

In order to preserve the book for future generations, I have reprinted this first book in sections to make it more accessible for the early reader, and given it a more updated feel with a colour frontage while keeping the original line drawings alongside the text. I have modified the text only slightly where it was necessary, due to the age of the original publication, whilst by no means detracting from its charm. I have not added more pictures to the text as I believe that children should be taught to focus on the words for meaning, and to avoid seeing all literature as entertainment.

You will find that the stories depict the age in which they were written and as such also impart historical knowledge to the reader, which the wise parent/teacher can use profitably

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Published by:

Reading Made simple,

Rowdean, West Beeches Rd. Crowborough, UK. TN6 2AG

How to help your student with harder words in the text.

There are a few words, that the early phonic reader may not yet have encountered. I explain below how to approach them. Teacher/parent - read this page first yourself so that you are equipped to help. If you know that there are any/some words that your student cannot sound out in this book, then simply supply them to keep the sense of the passage. Most of these harder words do belong to a phonic family, but you don't want to spoil the flow by using them as a teaching point while they are reading the text. If you feel it is appropriate, then you may use the notes below to draw the student's attention to a few.

THE SPARROW

because - just tell them the word.

backward - break it into **back** and **ward**. The **ward** sounds different to its spelling.

'W' words belong to a phonic family of their own.

THE SPARROW

1. When Dick was tired of looking at the ducks, the two boys went to fetch some corn for the hens. They came back with their pockets full, and both boys threw out handfuls to them. The hens came running to pick the grains up.
2. Some little sparrow's also flew down from the roof of the barn, and ate some of the corn.

“The sparrows can fly well enough,” said Dick.

3. “Yes,” said Jack, “their wings are strong and their bodies are very light.”

“What make their bodies so light,” asked Dick.

4. “Well,” said Jack, “Percy told me that some of their bones are hollow, and that they have much air inside their bodies.”



Sparrows feeding their young.

5. “Do sparrows go into the water?” asked Dick.

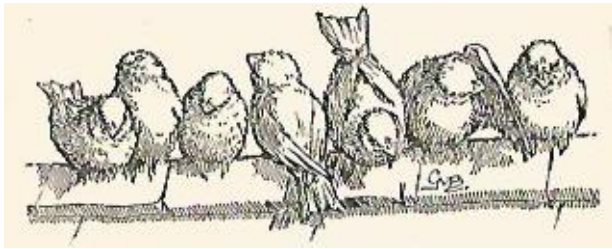
“Not very much, Dick. They sometimes come down to the duck pond to have a bath; but they cannot swim, because they have no skin between their toes.”

6. “Do their feathers get wet, Jack?”

“Yes, but the birds shake off most of the water after they have had their wash, and then they soon get dry in the sun. Sometimes they will also rub themselves in the dust to get dry.”

7. "See how tame these sparrows are," added Jack. "They always come down to feed with the hens, and we never drive them away."

8. "Here is one so close to us," said Dick, "that I can see its toes, and the shape of its beak."



Drying their feathers in the sun.

9. "It has four long toes with long claws, and one of them points backward."

"Yes," said Jack. "Percy says that is the kind of foot all birds have that perch on trees. With three toes in the front and one behind they can hold on to a twig very well."

10. "Oh, I see!" said Dick. "The hind toe has the same use as my thumb."



Heads and Feet of
Perchers.

“Yes, so it has,” said Jack.
“Now look at its beak, and
you will see that it is not like
a duck’s beak.”

11. “No, it is short, and round, and pointed,”
said Dick. “But why is it that shape?”

“Well you see, sparrows do not get their
food out of the mud as ducks do. They live on
seeds, insects and worms; and their beaks are
just the right shape for picking up small
things.”

12. Jack then put a ladder against the barn so
that Dick might go up to see a sparrow’s nest.
It was made of hay and straw, and in it were
five little spotted eggs.

More About Sparrows

Can you remember?

Tell me about the sparrows':

Wings

Sparrows have strong wings, so they can fly well.

Body

Their bodies are light, because they have much air inside, and their bones are hollow.

Toes

Sparrows have four long toes with long claws. One toe points backward. With this and the other three they can hold on to a twig.

Beak

The sparrow has a short, round-pointed beak; just the right shape for picking up seeds, insects, and worms on which it lives.

Nests

The sparrow builds its nest of straw.

Eggs

The sparrow lays little spotted eggs.

