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William Fordyce Mavor
Frontmatter
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The English Spelling-Book

Various a teacher, clergyman and town mayor, William Fordyce Mavor (1758–1837) wrote prolifically on a range of literary, historical and educational topics. This work, first published in 1801 and reissued here in a corrected and improved edition of 1843, is Mavor's most famous. Intended to 'sow the seeds of useful learning', it is both a reading primer and a compendium of general knowledge. Beginning with the alphabet, with each letter illustrated by the delightful wood engravings of Thomas Bewick, the book presents vocabulary of increasing complexity together with simple and amusing stories for reading practice, as well as guidance on spelling and grammar. General knowledge is addressed through sections on such topics as weights and measures, geography, key dates in history, and the solar system. So successful was the work that it ran to 500 editions, had sold more than 2 million copies by 1823, and was translated into Hindi and French.

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WILLIAM FORDYCE MAVOR



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FRONTISPIECE TO MAVOR'S SPELLING-BOOK.



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AN INTRODUCTION
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READING AND SPELLING
OF THE
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BY WILLIAM MAVOR, LL.D.

A NEW EDITION, CORRECTED AND IMPROVED.

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PREFACE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the vast number of initiatory books for children in the *nursery*, which have been written within the last few years by persons of distinguished abilities, and sanctioned with their names, it must be still allowed that there has not appeared one Introduction to Reading, for the general use of Schools, that rises above the vulgar, though popular, compilations of Dyche, Dilworth, and Fenning. The superstructure has been attended to with sedulous care, and writers of the first eminence have contributed to rear the fabric of learning, while the foundation has almost invariably been suffered to be laid by the most tasteless and ignorant workman. The consequence has frequently been, as might be expected from such a circumstance, that the taste has been vitiated at the very commencement; and it has often proved more difficult to remove error, than it would have been to plant originally the principles of truth.

For the neglect here alluded to, it would be impossible to produce any consistent reason. Perhaps the pride of acknowledged literature could not stoop to an occupation reputed so mean, as that of compiling a Spelling Book. Yet to lay the first stone of a noble edifice has ever been a task delegated to the most honourable hands; and to sow the seeds of useful learning in the nascent mind, is an employment that cannot be disgraceful to the most industrious talents.

The Editor of the following sheets is fully convinced of the solidity of his inferences and the justice of his remarks, in whatever light his present undertaking may be regarded. Humble or degrading as it may appear to those who perhaps have no higher pretensions than himself, he cannot think that labour dishonourable which is so manifestly beneficial to the rising generation; nor has he any reason to fear but the candid and judicious will adequately appreciate his motives and his production; for he feels convinced that the child who may be unable to acquire any other literary knowledge than what can be learnt even in this elementary and familiar book, need never have reason to blush from ignorance, or to err from want of a solid foundation of moral and religious principles.

Woodstock, Feb. 12, 1806.

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THE ENGLISH ALPHABET.



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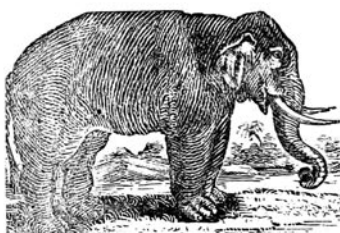
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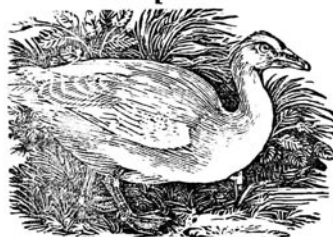
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THE ENGLISH ALPHABET.

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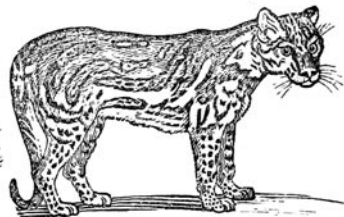
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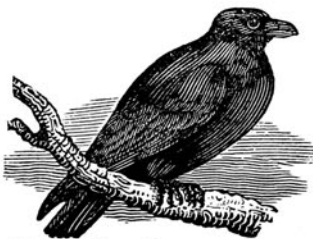
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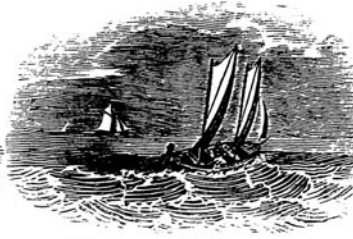
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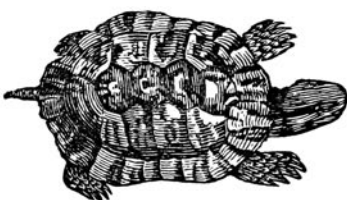
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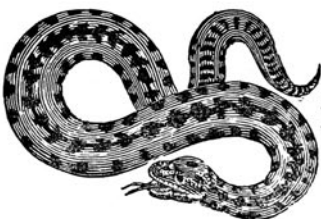
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