

P R E F A C E.

THE compiler of this elementary work, having long observed the difficulties of little children in acquiring a correct knowledge of the alphabet, and the combination of the sounds of letters so as to form words, has been induced to present to parents and teachers another attempt to aid the young pupil in the arduous path of learning to *spell* and *read* the English language.

The notes, suggestions, directions, and questions, printed in small type, it is hoped will claim the attention, and merit the approbation and adoption of those who may be engaged in communicating instruction to, or aiding the efforts of the learner. If it should take twice as long time to attend to one lesson of four letters, or four words, in this way, as to go over the whole alphabet, or over a much longer lesson of words, in the customary way, it may not only smooth the arduous path of the pupil in his first efforts, but be a means of fixing his attention, aiding his memory, and inciting him to exercise his own mental powers. This may, eventually, save half or three-fourths of the time often spent in acquiring a distinct knowledge of the whole twenty-six letters, or the powers of these letters in the spelling of words. But it will be obvious to the patient parent or teacher, that when one of these elementary lessons is learned, and another commenced, the preceding one must not be neglected, nor suffered to be forgotten for want of frequent recitation.

As *spelling* is the reading of letters, and forming words by the combination of their various sounds pronounced in rapid succession, so *reading* is the mental or silent spelling and vocal pronunciation of words, as seen by the eye. The questions are intended to embrace the *reading* of words, as well as *spelling* them, from the first combinations of two letters, through all the successive lessons in spelling and reading. The teacher may vary the questions, and increase or diminish them, as appears requisite.

The compiler of this work differs in opinion from some who have composed or selected elementary lessons for reading, and who say, "those lessons should treat only on subjects within the range of the pupil's understanding." The fact is, that in the first efforts to read words, the attention of the learner is engaged with the *sound* more than with the *sense*. Hence he pronounces only a single word at a time, without reference to others; and it matters not to him, whether he reads words backward or forward in the sentence. On this principle, the reading of words in the spelling