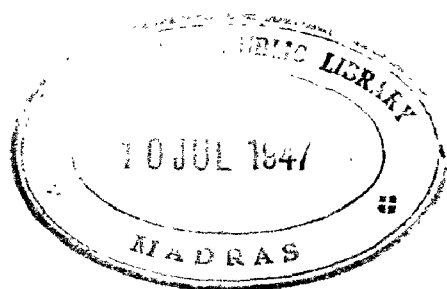


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FOR CHILDREN

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EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH SERIES NO. 26



ABOUT BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

ABOUT BOOKS
FOR
CHILDREN

by DOROTHY NEAL WHITE



NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL FOR
EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
in conjunction with
NEW ZEALAND LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
1946

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Foreword

IT is a pleasant task to record the way in which the New Zealand Library Association has come to be associated with Dorothy Neal White and the Council for Educational Research in the publication of this book. The Association has had so much help from Dorothy White, as will be shown later, that it is hard to imagine the future in library service to children without her. But now that her husband and her daughter have rightly claimed her from library work it is good that some of her highly original and imaginative studies in the little-known field of children's books should be available for publication.

Although the Library Association would have been able to assume responsibility for publishing this book, it was hoped also that the Council for Educational Research would be willing to give it a place in its notable series of publications. There will be little disagreement, I think, that the study is a first-rate contribution to education, and none at all that the subject itself is of great importance. The decision of the Council to act as joint publisher of the book has been welcomed both by its author and by the Library Association. The considerable experience and knowledge of the Council in the technical side of publishing has, too, been most generously applied to the long task of seeing the work through from manuscript to publication.

Dorothy White was one of the two New Zealanders chosen in 1936 to be trained as children's librarians at the Carnegie Library School in Pittsburgh. After her return she helped to direct the 'quiet revolution' against cheap readers and virtuous hand-me-downs, which for too long had been the fare of too

many New Zealand children. The questions at once arose, and they are here to stay, as to what books and what authors were to replace those dull and out-of-date ones, and how they would satisfy New Zealand children.

In 1937 Dorothy White was appointed Children's Librarian at the Dunedin Public Library. In addition to her work in the children's library she launched the splendid service to schools operating in the Otago Education Board's district. She also found time to begin her admirable list *Junior Books*, which was published by the New Zealand Library Association in 1940. That list is one of 2000 titles suitable for school and public libraries, with brief critical annotations. In introducing the section on fiction she says that 'the selection, almost completely on use and popularity of various titles in the boys' and girls' department, represents an attempt to list together those stories which style, subject matter, and general popularity place well above the standard of the usual mediocre juvenile books'.

The change in ideas about children's books has brought new developments in library policy. As convener of the New Zealand Library Association's planning committee for school and children's libraries Dorothy White has helped formulate proposals which it is hoped will make possible a soundly based library service for children. During the last four years, and in spite of the war, a good deal has been done to increase the supply of books to children in country schools. Much remains to be done. This study, by helping parents, teachers, and librarians to evaluate children's books, is therefore most timely and useful, especially since it deals with books which have been available to, and appreciated by, many New Zealand children.

WELLINGTON
August 1946

G. T. ALLEY
Honorary Secretary
New Zealand Library Association

Preface

IN a general way this book grew out of ten years' experience of children's library work, but more precisely it developed from the New Zealand Library Association's correspondence course in children's literature which I prepared in 1940-1, and a series of articles for *National Education* which were written intermittently from 1940 to 1946.

Although the writing of the book was a solitary piece of work which at the time I discussed with only two friends, M.B. and R.M.B., I have several people to thank for what might be called the background situation of professional library work and children's book reviewing. My first debt therefore is to the Carnegie Corporation of New York, which made possible a year's study at the Carnegie Library School, Pittsburgh, in 1936-7. To the faculty of that school, particularly to Ralph Munn, director, Frances Kelly, assistant director, and Elizabeth Nesbitt, who was then lecturing on children's literature, I owe more than I can record here. Their lectures were worth crossing the Pacific for, but extra-curricular conversations meant much more.

It is one thing to learn about children's libraries and literature in a foreign country (which the United States was to me) and another thing to transplant what one has learned to one's native environment. On my return to New Zealand in 1937 I was ignorant of the administrative machinery of local body organization and the educational world. There is an elaborate and discouraging routine to learn before reform even in children's

libraries is possible. It is a necessary discipline, and from A.G.W. Dunningham, my chief in Dunedin, I acquired what insight I may have into the whole procedure of change. More than that, when the routines had been taught Mr Dunningham allowed me a freedom in which to work that was liberal and courageous. G. Carrington, the secretary of the Otago Education Board, who helped greatly in the establishment of the Otago school library service, has also my respect and gratitude. D. C. Cameron, both a city councillor and a member of the Otago Education Board, gave me a tremendous amount of encouragement at a time when I was feeling my way.

From the many keen and enthusiastic teachers in Otago it would be invidious to single out any but one, the late Dentford Elliott, teacher and librarian at Macandrew Intermediate School. His best memorial is the school library now named after him. That library was a practical demonstration that a centralized library room could be made to work, and it has been a formidable argument for school library expansion.

When I came to write the correspondence course in children's literature the whole project was discussed at length with E. J. Carnell, then the lively liaison officer between the New Zealand Library Association and the Country Library Service. We had a discursive and vigorous correspondence, and I very much doubt whether without Miss Carnell's support, or rather prodding, I should have ever finished the course. The *National Education* articles were the joint idea of E. S. Andrews, then editor, and Dentford Elliott. This initial experiment in the criticism of children's literature was more important than I realized at the time and again I am grateful for the opportunity. I must acknowledge the generosity of the New Zealand Educational Institute in allowing me to reprint a considerable amount of

material which originally appeared in the pages of *National Education*.

G. T. Alley, director of the National Library Service, carried out all the negotiations between the New Zealand Library Association and the New Zealand Council for Educational Research over the publication of this book, and arranged for bibliographic assistance. Kathleen Harvey, of the schools' division National Library Service, and Marion Dawson, children's librarian at Dunedin Public Library, both helped considerably with the work of checking the manuscript.

The editorial burden has been borne by H. C. McQueen whose help was more considerable, I should think, than his official duties would demand. Enough to say that I found the experience of having a work in the press much less wearisome than I expected and at times really pleasant.

If this book had a dedication, it would be dedicated to Richard, my husband, who for once in his life, during the writing of this book, suffered himself to be read aloud to on the understanding that it established no precedent.

DOROTHY NEAL WHITE

DUNEDIN
June 1946

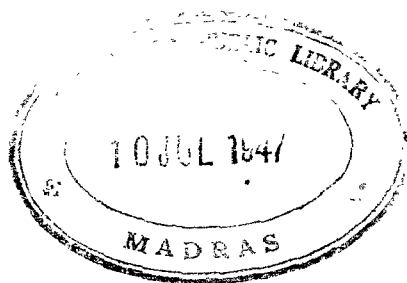


Contents

	<i>Page</i>
FOREWORD <i>by</i> G. T. ALLEY	v
PREFACE	vii
<i>Chapter</i>	
1 INTRODUCTORY	I
2 PICTURE BOOKS	13
3 HOMAGE TO FAIRY TALES	45
4 MODERN FAIRY TALES	51
5 REALISTIC STORIES—STANDARDS 2 TO 4	68
6 REALISTIC STORIES—STANDARDS 5 AND 6	86
7 HEROES WITHOUT HERO-WORSHIP	109
8 SOCIAL STUDIES	119
9 BOOKS ON ARTS AND CRAFTS	135
10 NATURE STUDY AND SCIENCE	152
11 POETRY	165

Chapter	Page
12 PLAYS	180
13 MAGAZINES	186
14 CHILDREN'S ENCYCLOPÆDIAS	198
BIBLIOGRAPHY	203
APPENDIX I <i>Myth, Legend and Folk Lore Round the World</i>	209
APPENDIX II <i>Some Longer Plays for Children</i>	217
INDEX	219

ABOUT BOOKS FOR CHILDREN



★ ★ ★ ★ ★
★ ★
★ I ★
★ ★
★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Introductory

CHILDREN receive their books for the most part through intermediaries. Their bookshelves are stocked by the middlemen: parents, teachers, uncles, and grandmothers, who when they choose presents are often thinking in terms of the past rather than the present generation. Most parents and many teachers imagine that children's literature is a narrow field, bounded by Louisa Alcott on the distaff side, and by R. M. Ballantyne on the other. They forget (if ever they knew it) that Ballantyne died in 1894, and that in the half-century since his death, while the map of Europe and the length of skirts altered two or three times, children's books, like the social background which produced them, changed too. A father in a bookshop will choose the *Fifth form at St. Dominics* in preference to *Call it courage*, a recent Newbery Medal winner, because Talbot Baines Reed is familiar ground, while Armstrong Sperry is a name without boyhood associations. A young mother with modern views about spanking, dummy-sucking, or sex-instruction may be convinced that her daughter will read nothing but the school stories which were her own staple diet when young. In fact, a sentimental and unrealistic attitude to child-

ren's books persists long after men and women become enlightened about the food, the clothes, and the behaviour of their offspring. Parents' vague memories of their own childhood reading, frequently aided by a certain nostalgia, are strong enough to outweigh any pronouncements which seem inconsistent with those memories—though this book has not been written to discredit the childhood favourites of an earlier day. Many of the nineteenth-century children's books were models of their kind, which satisfied boys and girls of the Victorian period and still find an honoured place in a modern children's library. *Silver Island*, *Little women*, and *From powder monkey to admiral* have found favour with three or four generations. Long live Ballantyne and Louisa Alcott, but faithfulness to their memory should not blind us to the virtues of a later group of writers for young readers. One may compare the former to the mahogany dining-room tables of yesterday, which are still attractive to look at and still able to stand up to daily wear and tear; nevertheless there are the newer kinds of tables which are more in keeping with the décor of a modern house. Likewise during the last twenty years there has been a minor revolution in children's literature. The following chapters briefly chronicle the results while paying tribute to the survivals of an earlier era.

The most obvious change in children's books is the alteration in their physical appearance. Compare the old Elsie Dinsmore books with the Sue Barton series which have taken the place of the former in the affections of modern girls. The two offer a contrast as startling as that between model T and the latest Ford V8. Type, for example, is now clearer and larger; pages no longer suggest that printers and opticians are in some nefarious alliance. Bindings too show invention and ingenuity, and manifest signs of becoming more than utilitarian wrappings

for an otherwise flimsy commodity. At their best modern bindings manage to suggest something of the spirit of the books they hold together, are gay on a gay book, sombre on a more serious volume—a not unimportant point since books like wives are sometimes chosen on their appearance. The greatest change, however, has been in the illustrations. Colour is being used these days with courage and verve. The old tradition of lingerie pinks and blues is dying, although more slowly in England than in the United States, where artists have been profoundly affected by the barbaric harmonies of Latin America. Another vitalizing influence in the United States has been the influx of European artists into New York City—Bemelmans, Rojankovsky, Petersham, and the d'Aulaires—all of whom migrated to New York in the period between the wars, and brought a fresh life into book illustration. They possessed an inheritance—the European peasant's sense of colour and pattern, at times naïve, but always fresh and spirited. Thus, although the outstanding modern picture books are mainly New York by imprint, their real origins are further back in Hungary, Russia, Poland. Some of the transplanted artists have undoubtedly found in the illustration of children's books a freedom of expression which an adult public denied them. For although children may not always give an artist's work that mature appreciation of which the adult is capable, they make up for it in the wholeheartedness, freshness, and enthusiasm of their response. Whatever the reason, it is a fact that numbers of modern artists have turned to children's books, and some of the most original contemporary painting can be found not in the galleries, not among the reproductions in popular magazines, but in the pages of children's favourite stories. Not all the credit for the fine flashes of colour should be given to the artists, however; modern methods of colour

printing must be taken into account. Gradations of colour are not necessarily reproduced any better today than in the time of Baxter, but colour prints can now be reproduced in greater quantities and at lower cost. Illustrated books as we know them today were possible in the last century, but not as commercial propositions for mass distribution.

So much for the outward and visible signs. Children's literature has also changed inwardly: it has broadened its range and increased in depth. Inoffensive travel stories, the potted lives of the great (usually military), and a surfeit of animal stories once made up the field of reading available to a boy or girl. The field was remarkable for what it omitted. As the years have gone by, however, children's literature has been slowly maturing, as modern knowledge—political science, sociology, anthropology, economics—all impinged upon it. Some men and women will regret that children's literature is becoming more and more concerned with the facts of life, in both a political and biological sense, and there may be some cause for melancholy whenever the sweet swift dream of childhood is disturbed. I think, however, that children's literature has gained rather than lost by its new awareness of the world and the way it works. James Daugherty, in a great speech made to the American Library Association, when he accepted the Newbery Medal in 1940 for a 'most distinguished contribution to American children's literature', poured scorn on 'the complacent oldsters satisfied with handing the rising generation a gas-mask and a copy of *Alice in Wonderland* with which to tread the bomb-strewn path of childhood'. He pointed out then that children's literature was devitalized when writers refused to look the present in the face, and enriched when writers confronted and made their readers confront the problems and paradoxes of their own time.

Books which do look the present in the face will be discussed fully in the chapter on 'Social Studies', but some random examples illustrating Daugherty's contention, are books like *Child of China*, *Missing from home*, and Florence Means's *Shuttered windows*. Maria Gleit in *Child of China* describes the Japanese invasion from a child's point of view; appalling it is, but no unrelieved horror. This is the story of a young girl, Sa Tu Sai, faced with a tragic situation, who is not crushed by it, but fights back. There are parents probably who would withhold this book from their daughters, in fear of the nightmares which might follow its reading. The only answer to that objection would be, that this story, which is in essence true, will do less harm than some of the garbled stories of war which circulate in the playgrounds. A comparable book for boys is Geoffrey Trease's *Call to arms*, an adventure story based on that half-forgotten war of the 1920s, the Gran Chaco. Both books are strong meat, but children on occasion can be carnivorous little animals; they may as well have the real thing if they want it. I do not wish to suggest by the phrase 'looking the present in the face' that children's literature must concern itself solely with warfare and the clash of arms. Consider for example the following books, which are all peaceful in setting, and are concerned with conflict only in the figurative sense of that word: the struggle between man and environment, the clash of ideas between two characters, or the warring of disparate instincts within one individual. *Shuttered windows*, by Florence Means, a moving story of the difficulties experienced by a young negro girl in making the necessary social adjustments in white America; Stephen Meader's *Lumberjack*; Warren Miller's *Tiger-bridge*, a story of bridge-building in Indo-China, complete with engineers' plans; Geoffrey Trease's *Missing from home*, about young people in depression England;

Sue Barton, visiting nurse, about New York tenement life: these are all popular modern children's books, which do not whitewash the world, and in fact gain some of their robustness and vitality from their intense realism.

Also a source of vitality is the contribution of the specialist writer. I remember reading a preface by a famous sailor writer, Villiers probably, in which the author inveighed against the numerous writers on ships and sailors, who had obviously never been to sea, the scissors-and-paste authors who could not distinguish port from starboard. That jibe might be applied to a certain type of book for children. Every teacher is familiar with the hack writers, who rabbit-like in their fecundity produce dozens of scrappy little books covering a wide range of subjects—lumbering, Julius Caesar, popular science, selections from literature—on all of which no one man can be an authority. In contrast with these the best children's books, platitudinous though it is to say so, are written by people who know what they are talking about. If a man knows his subject intimately and writes from a wealth of experience, he will write a better book than the hack who makes the most of a little knowledge. Sometimes, particularly in America, the specialist will cooperate with a children's librarian or established author for young people, and this working combination of the authority on a subject, and the authority on children's reading tastes, can be a richly productive one. Further examples of hack work may be found among the many 'books on other lands' which are written by confirmed stay-at-homes: the stories about Holland where the local colour consists of a passing reference to windmills and that much-praised little boy who put his arm through the hole in the dyke; the African tale in which natives are the bad 'uns; the Chinese story in which the rice, the chop-sticks, and the swaddled feet of young girls are the only clues to the setting.

Compare such inaccurate and uninspired writing with Armstrong Sperry's almost epic story of the South Seas, *Call it courage*. This book is a magnificent adventure story, a penetrating psychological study of cowardice, and a sympathetic picture of Polynesian civilization in the era before the traders and the missionaries came to Oceania. Sperry himself knew whereof he wrote. He had at one time lived with an island people through a great crisis in their existence, when a storm tore asunder their little world. He saw primitive instincts reassert themselves, saw fear, saw courage, saw leaders arise and rally their people. He turned back through the centuries with them, and watched them act as they might have acted in a similar crisis, before white men had undermined their civilization. *Call it courage* is a fine book because its author had a passion for his subject; he wrote with knowledge and he wrote with feeling. The book had to be written, it was not a made-to-order product, as the inferior children's books often are.

The successful writer for children respects his audience, and more than that he chooses his child audience from an inner necessity comparable to that which makes a writer for adults select poetry or prose as a medium. The latter does not arbitrarily say 'this idea will make a good poem'—the idea and the form are indivisible. Similarly when a writer for children has an idea for a story, the story is conceived as a children's story, not as an adult story 'made over'. It is not easier or harder to write for children than it is to write for their parents, any more than it would be true to say that it is easier or harder to play the violin than the piano. The technique is different, that is all. Nor, contrary to popular prejudice, is it necessary to write down to boys and girls. Hugh Lofting, creator of Dr. Dolittle, expressed the matter very well, when he said it is on the other hand rather more necessary to write up to them.

The best writers do make an unconscious adjustment in writing for children and because their adjustment is an unconscious one, the reader is not aware of it. It is when writing for children becomes arch and playful, and the writer shows only too clearly that he feels he is coming down to a lower level, that the child is irritated. It is as though a spotlight were directed on that gap between childhood and maturity, of which the child is too painfully aware in real life to be able to meet it with any pleasure in his reading. Really able writers for children are not conscious of this gap because they themselves are invariably citizens of good standing in both worlds: the classics of children's literature have been written by men and women who have enjoyed some close intimacy with children. The memory of one's own childhood is usually not sufficient stimulus. There are certain exceptional men and women, like Walter de la Mare and E. Nesbit, who do retain throughout life an image of their own tiny world when young, who remember their impressions and reflections and ways of thinking, but such people are rare. Usually a writer can only recapture his own time past by intimacy with another generation, and it is from this synthesis of two childhoods, as it were, that good literature for children mainly comes. Parenthood is the most obvious way to achieve this intimacy, and family men have produced some notable books—Miska Petersham, A. A. Milne, and Jean de Brunhoff are well-known examples. The origin of Brunhoff's 'Babar' series is a not uncommon one. Brunhoff, a young Parisian architect, was pestered by his small sons for a bed-time serial with accompanying pictures, and he obliged with singular success. His tragi-comic saga of elephant life and loves became known outside his own family circle, and he was finally persuaded to publish it. Babar achieved a European reputation and became a best-seller on both sides

of the Atlantic. Stories like Babar, planned for particular children, verbally recounted by their maker, and often modified by listeners' comment and criticism, are successful because, as with the old folk tales, story-teller and audience are in such close communion that both share in the tale's creation. Not that parents have a monopoly; aunts and uncles, real or adopted, are often in quite a strategic position to gain the friendship of children. The young mathematician Lewis Carroll, recounting the adventures of Alice to Dean Liddell's young daughters, is the classic example. Richard Hughes, Arthur Ransome, Pamela Travers, are more modern adopted aunts and uncles, who have had the joy of being accepted among boys and girls with that frank lack of reserve which youngsters usually keep for their contemporaries, and who have planned stories for or about families of children with whom they were intimate. A feminist may be galled at the number of men's names mentioned above, but it is a fact worth recording, that, although women are prolific contributors to children's literature, the kings of the golden river are usually men. Whether men see children with a greater objectivity than women find possible I do not know; the fact remains, top-notchers are usually male.

It must not be forgotten that there are second-rate books as well as first-rate ones. Adults out of touch with children's books frequently infer that the bad book can have only two vices, immorality and bad grammar. If a book is not littered with split infinitives, and does not incite its reader to arson or robbery with violence, it is assumed to be harmless. In actual fact comparatively few junior books laud violence, except in so far as it may be a weapon for bringing the vile villain to a well-deserved end. Few mangle the King's English so flagrantly that any but parental pedants would be aware of the mutilation. Profanity and obscenity are much farther

removed from children's books than from their everyday lives, as those parents will bear witness who have heard a six-year-old extend his vocabulary during the first year at school. Parents and relations do the buying of most children's books, and few authors would be doughty enough to offend their best customers by strewing their pages with those sundry curses which, harmless enough in general conversation, always look so potently evil in print. The worst fault in present-day children's books is not any flagrant departure from formal grammar, but the colourless, dull, passionless use of language which ultimately ruins for a child his sense of the resources and vitality of the English tongue.

The harm done by 'cheap' books is of an insidious nature, as the harm done by cheap songs and cheap films is insidious. They set up false standards. The average run-of-the-mill school story for instance is deplorable propaganda for second-rate standards and values. It is full of latent snobbery—remember all the acid references to board schools, to cads and bounders whose only qualification for caddishness was having a butcher, not a squire, for a father? The ridiculous Billy and Bessie Bunter were foolish among other reasons because of their 'lower-class' birth. Sport is overstressed, and brain belittled. How unpopular the swots were in every 'Fourth Form At St. Bunkums' which fell into my hands! These and similar books are bad, because they treat of an unreal world, not the unreal world of the fairy tale which makes no pretensions to reality, but an unreal world which is dangerous because it sometimes pretends to mirror actuality and is often accepted by children as doing so. The adventure story in which callow and inexperienced youth outwits maturity and experience may be condemned for similar reasons.

Another common fault in second-rate books is the mishand-

ling of personal relationships. The basic relationship which children know is the parent-child relationship, yet in the majority of tales authors do not even try to handle this theme; they exile father to Poona or despatch him on an expedition, they massacre mothers at child-birth or invalid them for life. Shadowy puppets at best, parents remain in the background, grateful for a brief and tardy appearance in the final chapter, when bearing gifts they return from foreign ports. On the other hand Margaret Raymond's *Bend in the road* and M. I. Ross's *Back of time* are two unusual books, in which authors courageously handle the theme of antagonism between parents and children. The child who reads either book will achieve an insight into character he could never gain from a book whose adult characters had neither flesh nor blood. I remember the tremendous difficulty we had in Dunedin to find a story which would handle the relationship between a stepmother and stepdaughter in a sympathetic way. The woman who made the request, which was ultimately satisfied by Eliza Orne White's *Farm beyond the town*, had found that so many books her stepdaughter read were actually spoiling the relationship between the two of them.

Children read comparatively few books. It has been pointed out that if one estimates one book a fortnight from seven to fourteen years (and actually this a generous figure), the number read during the period is 416. These four hundred books often influence a child far more powerfully than parents realize, and the attitudes and conduct of the authors' heroes may be temporarily adopted by the reader. A steady diet of second-rate reading can be as deleterious to the mind as poor food is to the body. There is more than one form of malnutrition. Am I then advocating censorship? Not precisely. In my experience as a children's librarian I have found that good books drive out bad.

There is a law of economics, formulated by one Gresham, that bad money drives the good out of circulation, but the opposite kind of process operates with children's books. In Dunedin from 1937 we steadily withdrew the second-rate books, the Westermans, the Brent-Dyers, and the Hadaths from our shelves. We deliberately maintained a high standard of book selection. Nothing was bought unless it had some literary merit and some originality, unless it was a contribution to modern children's literature. It might have been expected that while the standard of books issued would improve appreciably the number circulated might conceivably have fallen. The reverse was the case. As the quality of our stock improved, the quantity we were able to issue increased. Children had confirmed our trust in their good taste. The range of good children's books is somewhere under 5000 titles; this offers any child a wide choice in selecting his 400-odd books between seven and fourteen years. If children have access to a well-selected children's library, the question of arbitrary censorship by parents does not arise.

In the following pages I shall have something to say about each of the main types of books for children. Some readers may accept the suggestions given for individual titles, but others may ignore the specific suggestions and explore the field for themselves, reading and discovering in company with their children.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
★ ★
★ 2 ★
★ ★
★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Picture Books

THE first books a child encounters in his reading life are perhaps the most important books he will ever read, because, depending on the amount of pleasure he finds in them, he may or may not become a lover of books for the rest of his days. They are important books too, because though later he may forget the stories and remember the pictures only dimly, they will stir his imagination at the time as few books will later have the power to do. They will be among the most beautiful books he will ever see, because it is a charming commentary on our civilization (one of the few such) that artists and authors have conspired and contrived to make the picture books for the under-sevens a thousand times gayer and more attractive than the books which fall to the lot of any other age-group of readers. When we look at the Petershams, the d'Aulaires, and the Haders, we realize that a picture book is as much an art form as a film, a fabric, or a piece of sculpture. Many picture books indeed bring almost as much pleasure to the parent who reads aloud as to the child who listens on the knee.

Long before a child can read, when words and phrases are but arabesques among the drawings, he can listen to a story

and trace the action of the plot in the pictures when the reading is over. If parents will only read aloud to boys and girls, children can be introduced to the drama of Peter Rabbit and the comedy of Little Black Sambo years before they have mastered the elaborate science of reading. The books discussed below cannot be arbitrarily classified as suited to a girl of four or a boy of six because most of them can be enjoyed equally by those of three and those of eight, depending on the intelligence of an individual child and on whether he reads the book himself or has it read aloud. A bright child of three will be absorbed listening to *Angus and the ducks*; another child whose parents have taken little or no interest in his reading may discover the book and read it for himself with pleasure even when he has reached the dizzy heights of Standard Two.

First a definition: a picture book is not merely a book of pretty pictures or even an illustrated book. The term is used here to mean a story told in pictures and text, one complementary to the other. In the picture book for the youngest child the pictures will actually repeat the events related in the text, as in Jean de Brunhoff's *Babar the elephant*. The large gay illustrations crammed with detail will be pored over by a child until the trappings of Babar's habitat are as familiar as the chairs and tables of his own home. Text and illustration should make up a unity. Neither of the component parts is really complete without the other. Take a Beatrix Potter story known in childhood. We invariably remember the story of Jeremy Fisher together with a picture of him in his mackintosh and goloshes—story and pictures are inseparable. This close connection between picture and text is most easily achieved when author and illustrator are one, and the book the product of one imagination, conceived and executed as a whole. There can never be quite the same unity when two different people are responsible unless,

as very often happens, the illustrator and author are sisters, or man and wife.

Some sisters who collaborate include Dorothy and Marguerite Bryan whose dog stories *Fun with Michael* and *Frisky finding a home* have an extensive circulation on both sides of the Atlantic; and Margaret Baker whose modern fairy-tales with a folklore tang about them are illustrated with silhouettes by Mary Baker. The most fruitful combination, however, is the husband-wife collaboration. Three married couples, Ingri and Edgar Parin d'Aulaire, Maud and Miska Petersham, and Berta and Elmer Hader, have among them produced the most distinguished picture books of our time. The richness of their offering to children's literature may be due in part to the fact that each couple is an example of international marriage, but in part also to the intimacy in which each pair planned its work. Gilbert and Sullivan may have been mutually antagonistic and yet they produced admirable comic operas. Picture-book makers have to be in somewhat closer harmony. If picture and story diverge, the text mention a green shoe, the picture display a yellow one, children are quick to notice. That is a crude instance of lack of unity. There can be less obvious divergence between author and illustrator. Sometimes we find a simple tale with elaborate illustrations, or a fantastic story with unimaginative pictures. The reader will not always be conscious of the incongruity and dissonance. Nevertheless when he is presented with an instrument that is out of tune his pleasure is lessened. Most grown men and women can remember books in which pictures spoiled the story. I know I can remember tearing pictures out of books (barbarous days!) because the illustrator's conception of the hero or heroine was not mine.

Many picture books which at first glance look attractive and suitable for children amuse no one but their parents. Of such

books I can only say that they are too clever by half, with their arch and sophisticated jokes which only bore or bewilder the generation to whom they are directed. Their vocabulary is often far beyond the understanding of any but the most precocious youngster. Not that a solitary long word will ever distress a child. The word 'soporific' in one of Beatrix Potter's books fascinates children, who mutter it to themselves and treasure it like a precious shell. Lear's fantastic verbiage is half his charm. Polysyllables, one must admit, on occasion bring nothing but delight. They are pleasant enough as a garnishing but should never be the main ingredient. Conversely there is the danger that a story may consist entirely of everyday words and fall completely flat. Beginners in an endeavour to gain simplicity sometimes become merely banal. I am tempted to think that the best rule for anyone wanting to write for under-sevens, is Walter de la Mare's precept: 'Be master of as many good, old, sound, exact, subtle, sweet-sounding English words as you can.'

The plot of a picture book will never be a very complex elaborate affair, but whatever the exact shape a story takes it should be constructed compactly and carefully with its own rhythm and gradual ascent to a climax. Good stories for children have form and pattern like every other type of writing; in fact good plot construction is almost more necessary in children's literature, because the attention of a little child is easily distracted, and the author must use every device to retain it. And although children's stories are short and simple, they must still contain exciting incidents; the element of drama is as essential in *Peter Rabbit* as in *War and peace*. This point is well illustrated by the work of MARJORIE FLACK, an author already well established in New Zealand kindergartens, who has an unparalleled gift for finding just this element of drama in the everyday life of the nor-

mal child. For example, in *The new pet* the plot hinges upon the coming of a new brother into the family circle and *What to do about Molly* is a 'problem novel' about coping with a very little sister. Such stories are the most difficult of all to write, for it is not easy to create romance from mundane material, and in the wrong hands this type of realistic story can be flat and uninspired. The Flack animal stories, *Angus and the ducks* and *Angus and Topsy*, are also full of action, recording events which, although they might not appreciably raise the blood pressure of an adult, seem really exciting to a tiny child. I think Marjorie Flack must have learned something from those old-fashioned little books of pictures which one could flick through to get an effect of a cinematograph speed, for she has a trick of carrying over her action from one page to another, creating a feeling of suspense and movement. She has a trick also of using repetition of phrase and sentence, satisfying to the youngest listener who can chime in with the reader at appropriate moments to show her he knows what is coming next. Marjorie Flack's pictures have not the aesthetic appeal of a Bemelmans or a Petersham book, her colour harmonies are not striking, her sense of pattern is mediocre, but she is able to create for five-year-olds a completely satisfying world.

The 'Ameliaranne' books illustrated by Susan Pearse, and variously told by Constance Heward, Natalie Joan, and Eleanor Farjeon, have a similar appeal. They present a story-book world which is similar to the child's own environment. Ameliaranne has no fairy godmother, no magic carpet, meets no witches, encounters no goblin on the heath who can solve her troubles. She is on the other hand an inveterate minder of children, she plays shop, goes to a farm for her holidays, has on occasion assisted at washing day and given a Christmas party—the bread-and-butter nature of her life is the reason for her

Empire-wide popularity. It is noteworthy that whichever author recounts her adventures, Ameliaranne maintains her identity, as a figure in legend retains his personality through dozens of retellings of his exploits.

Another type of book which reflects the child's own environment is the photographic picture book. William Steichen, the pioneer American photographer, whose early photographs are now collectors' pieces, showed the way, when with his daughter Mary he published *A first picture book*, a collection of photographs of the familiar objects a young child sees round him from day to day—shoes, blocks, wash-basin, clock, and clothes. The book was such a success that it found imitators in both England and America.

The original Steichen book is no longer obtainable, but it showed the way for many followers. There exists today a large school of photographers specializing in books for the great kindergarten public. Of the English photographers Gilbert Cousland is perhaps best known in New Zealand. He photographs familiar scenes and places, as the titles *My little farm friends* and *My little London book* indicate. Ingenious covers make *Zoo friends* and *What my camera saw beyond the farm gate* particularly intriguing to a child. The cover of the first is printed like the entrance to the Zoo with a hole made to represent the gate-keeper's box; the second is shaped and cut out like a farm gate. Such tricks and devices raise the production costs of a book, and may displease the pennywise. Both covers, however, show evidence of an experimental attitude to children's books, still rare enough among English publishers. *Zoo friends*, with its spectacular page lay-out of pictures and text, has an interest to the adult on typographical grounds alone. There are other photographic picture books published in England: Harold Burdekin's *Child's Grace*, beginning 'Thank you for the world

so sweet', is the ideal present for the godmother who takes her duties seriously; Lena Towsley and Ruth Nichol's books illustrate children at play—the only lack in these books is that they tell no story; Anne Lamplugh's *Jannifer Jane—and her dolls* must not be forgotten. Marjorie Poppleton's *We go to nursery school* is a useful book to show to children before they begin kindergarten, to show them what to expect there. Kindergarten is a charming place, but it represents a new world, and this little introductory book is valuable with the shy four-year-old.

American librarians on summer vacations in Europe often spend a busman's holiday looking through continental bookshops. Many European children's classics have been discovered in this way, and introduced to the United States market. Such a discovery was MAJ LINDMAN, the Swedish author of the *Snipp, Snapp, Snurr* and *Flicka, Ricka, and Dicka* books. These in spite of their occasional splash of magic are like the Ameliaranne stories, in that they centre on home and family. Maj Lindman's writing is what one would expect from Sweden, full of homely unspectacular virtue, her children helping parents and one another (a reflection, perhaps, of the co-operative attitude for which the Swedes were eulogized in the *Middle way*). These stories have developed from a kindly reasonable social background. They are illustrated in clear bright colours (with the colour quite disciplined and kept in its place however), and printed in a large san-serif type which is admirably suited to the needs of children who have just learned to read. Librarians are grateful to the publisher of these books, who, realizing that boys and girls are likely to play tug-of-war, or pitch and toss, with even their favourite volumes, has bound them accordingly. Too many books these days are manufactured as though for dream children. There is a lot to be said for those old rag books of yesterday.

Another popular Swedish author is ELSA BESKOW, whose record of international success compares with Beatrix Potter's far-flung fame. Her picture books, the first of which was published in 1892, have been translated into French, Finnish, Polish, German, Czech, Russian, Danish, Norwegian, Dutch, and American. When she was a girl of fifteen, her father died and she went to live with two aunts and a bachelor uncle (the originals of her Aunt Green, Aunt Brown, and Aunt Lavender stories). Theirs was a kind of collective household in which everyone did his or her share, and all things were shared in common. The short accounts of her life to be found in various places would indicate a very wholesome, sane existence of the kind that is found in all her stories. Her book *Pelle's new suit* is typical. A little boy who wants a new coat shears his lamb, and takes the wool to his grandmother, who cards it while he weeds her garden. His other grandmother spins the yarn as he tends her cows. His mother weaves the yarn while Pelle minds his little brother—and so it goes on. In story form Fru Beskow gives the whole history of a suit of clothes and a pleasant lesson in co-operation. In such a brief outline the story may sound priggish; actually it is nothing of the kind, for the events alone are recorded. There is no moralizing. Although Beskow books are published in the United States the actual printing is done in Norway and Sweden. They are interesting examples of continental colour printing.

But to leave the Continent, Stephen Bone's *Little Boy and his house* is the story of Little Boy who didn't know what kind of house to build, and so went round the world with his uncle looking at igloos, wigwams, house-boats, and cabins. It is really a primer of architecture for eight and under, illustrating Little Boy's final discovery 'that it all depends on where you live and what you have to build with'. Frequent repetition makes the

story easy for a child to follow, in spite of the immense amount of information which is unobtrusively worked into what appears to be only a picture book.

ELLIS CREDLE is a school teacher become author. She hails from North Carolina, in the southern section of the United States, and knows intimately life on the tobacco plantations among the 'poor white' share-croppers. Her school in the Blue Ridge Mountains gave her the inspiration for her picture books *Down, down the mountain*, *Across the cotton patch*, and *Little Jeemes Henry*. *Down, down the mountain* is about two barefoot children of hillbilly origin, each of whom has a passionate desire to own a pair of boots. Hetty and Hank grow turnips in an endeavour to earn some money, but on their way to market they generously give away the greater part of their crop to people who beg for them. Finally they are left with one outsize turnip, which ultimately saves the day, winning a prize at the County show and bringing in as much prize money as the whole sack was worth. This is a trans-atlantic version of the well-known folk-tale *motif*, that it is good to give away to those who ask, and generosity reaps its own reward. Ellis Credle does not romanticize the world she knows: the wretched hovels where the cotton pickers live are drawn as they are, in shabby decrepitude. Little Jeemes Henry's father leaves home tired of the poverty of his farm. There are no white-washed pillars and 'Carry me back to old Virginny' touches, less of 'Gone with the wind' than 'Tobacco Road' in the work of the observant young school teacher who saw the story-telling material in the lives of the South's dispossessed people. Ellis Credle's drawings are all crayon sketches in two colours; the type is printed in one of the colours of the drawings, giving an open page of any of her books an attractive harmonious appearance. Her sweeping curves are reminiscent

occasionally of Thomas Benton's work—all her work is bold. I was not surprised to learn that she has had some experience painting murals, for wall decorating does give artists a new boldness and freedom.

ALICE DALGLIESH is teacher, writer, and critic; much of her success can be explained by the very broad background of experience which she has brought to the making of children's books. Formerly a teacher of primary school children, at one time an assistant in the famous Horace Mann kindergarten of New York City, she is now children's book editor for the famous old-established publishing firm of Scribners. She also gives a lecture course in children's literature at Teachers College, Columbia, a position which has brought her into touch with many of the forward spirits in American education. Her interest in children's books is that of the practising teacher, and most of the books she has selected for Scribners to publish are titles which teachers have heartily approved. Further, it is noticeable that teachers in Dunedin children's library often name Miss Dalgliesh's *Choosing book* and *Little wooden farmer* as ideal books for the infant room. Miss Dalgliesh has pointed out in her book *First experiences with literature* that 'Adults sometimes fail to recognize the very important point that books for little children often go over into action—the child draws, or dramatizes what is read to him or incorporates it into speech.' Both her picture books, therefore, are not only exercises in reading. *Choosing book* consists of pictures of houses, dolls, dresses, and animals, about three pictures of each subject, followed by an exercise—'Choose the one you like best.' Even an adult can find this fun; it is on the same principle as some of those 'How good is your taste?' quizzes in the American magazine *Coronet*. The real pleasure of those is deciding what one likes best, not getting the right answers. *Little wooden farmer* is a story about wooden toys;

the toys themselves can be copied in cardboard models, and the tale itself can be made into a play, to act either in class or around the fire with brothers and sisters. Both are admirable books 'to carry over into action'.

During the last decade, there has appeared a new type of picture book, about the gear and tackle of modern life. Some of those books have been anathematized by one critic as those 'dreary books in which the central character . . . [is] a vacuum cleaner, or a steam-shovel or a carpet-sweeper'. They have been metaphorically hissed because they represent Materialism rearing its ugly head even in the *Child's World*, etc., etc. The charge of dreariness against them is unfair. Any badly written, ill-conceived book by a mediocre hack can be dreary whatever its subject, be it steam-shovels or one of those torpid animals in tight-buttoned coats which inspire the pens of would-be Beatrix Potters and imitation Kenneth Grahames. Frankly, I find the books about trains, steam-shovels, and aeroplanes a refreshing change from the adventures of Mr. Hedge-hodge-podge and Mrs. Pig-Bore. Modern city children too, who watch the mail plane daily and see rabbits only on the dinner table, who study the actions of a road-grader but not the hen in the hen-house, are genuinely interested in the new picture books which are so different from anything their parents knew. The pioneer book of this type was Edelstat's *Steam shovel for me* which showed the possibilities, but did not fully exploit them. It took VIRGINIA LEE BURTON in her *Mike Mulligan* to make an entertaining story from the vicissitudes of a steam-shovel's existence. In its prime, Mike Mulligan's steam shovel, Betsy Ann, could dig in a day more than one hundred men. Mike Mulligan in the eyes of small boys was a figure of some importance until the inevitable day when the petrol- and Diesel-engine shovels eclipsed Betsy Ann. No longer wanted in the metropolis

where the foundations of skyscrapers were dug by usurpers, Mike Mulligan took his steam-shovel to a small county town where, again a minor wonder of the world, he had a new day of glory. The story is quite an exciting variation on an old plot, decline, fall, and reascension, and it is in essence true of what does happen to old machinery. Small boys love *Mike Mulligan*, as they do Virginia Burton's later story *Katy and the big snow*. Katy is an 'ambidextrous' crawler tractor with a bulldozer for pushing dirt about and a snow-plough for ploughing snow. To the little municipality which owns Katy, a great snow comes and dislocates life completely—crisis number one. For life is paralysed until Katy the snow-plough goes to work steadfastly and efficiently, and in a modern version of the seven labours of Hercules, clears the essential roads. The final paragraph recapitulates the results of Katy's activities.

The Fire Department had put out the fire.
The doctor had saved his patient.
The Water Department had repaired the main.
The telephone and electricity were on.
The mail could go through.
And the Police could protect the city.
Thanks to what Katy did

The story is 'crowded with incident', and contains action thrilling to an under-seven. Both these stories were written for Virginia Lee Burton's two small sons, yet another example of the parent-child inspiration referred to in the first chapter.

Railway trains have inspired a much more extensive literature than that comparative newcomer the steam shovel. Many teachers and parents have favourite stories—Lois Lenski's *Little train*, H. Gramatky's *Little Toot*, Lewitt and Him's *Locomotive*, a brilliant picture book by three Polish exiles in London, or Hildegarde Swift's *Blacknose*. My own favourite is Diana

Denney's *Little red engine gets a name*, recently dramatized with success by the National Broadcasting Service. The little red engine which runs on the secondary tracks is contrasted with the great expresses of the main line. When in a moment of crisis it is necessary to bring the little red engine to the main line to carry the King, the story becomes a modern version of the Cinderella or ugly duckling story in a railway setting. Much of the dialogue of the story, when read aloud, simulates the various sound effects of a train—an excursion into onomatopœia which catches a child's ear and imagination. This story was particularly well suited for radio adaptation.

LOIS LENSKI'S stories were also written for her own child. One could guess this on internal evidence alone, as her three books *Little baby car*, *Little sailing boat*, and *Little aeroplane*, published in that order, grew progressively difficult as her child grew in stature and understanding. *Little baby car* is a kindergarten favourite when read aloud, for it discusses in simple terms all those activities connected with a car in which small children take an interest. Little boys can identify themselves with Mr. Small who drives the car, in which they themselves by reason of age are condemned to take a back seat in real life. No attempt is made at naturalistic drawing. The little men in all three books are rather like wooden dolls in appearance, a device frequently used in modern children's books, for it inspires the readers to play over the plots with their own toys. *Little aeroplane* is rather too replete with technical terms to be read with full enjoyment by a six-year-old; nevertheless it is an invaluable book to the children's librarian, who can use it with older backward boys of limited reading capacity who find the usual aeroplane books too difficult. Actually many picture books are used in this way. Teachers of 'special classes' in our primary schools tell me that there is no difficulty in persuading backward children to read

by themselves, provided simple attractive books are offered them. Any picture book about a machine is admirable, because backward children have their pride and do not take kindly to reading about little children; a story about a machine or any inanimate object does not obtrude the fact that it was intended for kindergarten perusal.

So far the books reviewed have all been down to earth: they have treated of the real world, real people, or real things. Such stories satisfy some children completely, others only partially. As children between eight and ten will go to the library and choose a book on coal and a collection of fairy tales for weekend reading, so younger children, too, enjoy not only the realistic stories set in an environment similar to their own, but also the fantastic tales, the wildly funny books where the impossible reigns supreme. It is as well that they do. Most of the stolid people who are proud to have feet on the ground, the opposers of change, the men and women with no faith in a brave new world, are the way they are, because rarely in childhood, and never in adult life, have they believed if only for an hour in some tale, farcical, preposterous, or grotesque, which could have taken their imagination and blown the cobwebs from it. In some countries, Ireland or Italy perhaps, the funny book would need no justification. In New Zealand where loud laughter like loud colour is not considered refined, where shrieks of merriment in a classroom may bring down the headmaster's wrath upon a young teacher, it is perhaps necessary to explain my inclusion of the following excursions into the ridiculous. The short annotations of books will give no inkling of their full flavour, for the humour of most children's literature is not of the verbal kind which can be quoted like a Noel Coward or an Oscar Wilde wisecrack. It develops rather from a whole comic situation, which may be elaborately built up. Only a long quotation can convey the fun.

Published at the turn of the century, *Johnny Crow's garden*, by LESLIE BROOKE, owes its continued popularity over almost half a century to the mass of impudent detail in the line drawings. Each picture looks immediately funny at first sight, but closer examination reveals further tiny jokes in every corner of the page. All the animals in creation, dressed in sundry garments they certainly were not wearing on that early occasion, appear as guests at Johnny Crow's garden parties. The stories of their ridiculous encounters are told in jingling rhymes, which although not quite in the Lear and Carroll class, have an effortless absurdity which is really charming. Like this:

*And the lion
Had a green and yellow tie on
In Johnny Crow's garden.
And the rat
Had a feather in his hat;
But the bear
Had nothing to wear
In Johnny Crow's garden.
So the ape
Took his measure with a tape—*

Brooke is English, English as Lob-lie-by-the-fire, although curiously enough he had in the last years of his life a far greater fame in America than in Great Britain. American children's librarians, trained to recognize merit in children's literature no matter what its period or place of origin, have made the name of Leslie Brooke known in homes from Boston to San Francisco. When he died the American magazine *Horn book* devoted an entire issue to tributes to his work. Leslie Brooke had carried on the fine tradition of Randolph Caldecott, the famous nineteenth-century illustrator of *John Gilpin's ride* and creator of the *Hey diddle diddle* picture books. Although the American artists excel in coloured books, as line artists the English remain

unequaled. It is one thing to create an effect with every shade of the palette at one's disposal, and quite another to create an effect when one relies on black and white alone. It says much for Leslie Brooke's genius that, using a medium not a favourite one with young children, he could make picture books of first rank, which will have an enduring popularity.

One American line artist in the same class as Brooke is ROBERT LAWSON, who has illustrated *Ferdinand* and *Wee Gillis* by MUNRO LEAF. I have always thought it a matter for concern that Ferdinand, the pacifist bull, may be remembered by many children in the Disney version, not as Lawson originally delineated him. Lawson's pictures have a wit and delicacy the film did not capture. Like Brooke, Lawson fills his pictures with not easily noticed jokes (corks on the cork tree for instance). The fun of Ferdinand is the fun of an absurd situation, but the story is too well known to recapitulate. *Wee Gillis* is a Dunedin favourite, its tartan cover appealing to every McDonald and McGillicuddy in the town. This saga of one Alastair Roderic Craigellachie Dalhousie Gowan Donnybristle MacMac (Wee Gillis for short) is concerned with the dilemma of a boy torn between the Highland and the Lowland—a case of 'environmental maladjustment'. The ultimate solution is farcical but logical, and appeals even to those children without Scots antecedents. *Noodle*, another Leaf story, illustrated by Ludwig Bemelmans, describes the adventures of a dachshund who has considerable dimensions longways, and none at all the other. In true fairy-tale fashion Noodle has a chance to change his shape, through the agency of a 'dog fairy'. A comical tale by the mad for the mad, the unimaginative may say, but children love it.

Next to *Ferdinand*, Munro Leaf's best-known book is probably *Manners can be fun*, an etiquette book without tears, or to

put it positively, a guide to manners via laughter. This picture book is little more than a folio of naïve ink sketches of a group of regrettable beings—a Touchey who touched everything he saw and grew extra hands to do it, until finally he lost his head altogether; the Whineys with perpetual lumps in their throats, not to mention Yawners, Snoopers, and the destestable Me Firsts. Leaf's philosophy of good manners is simple and reasonable. 'Having good manners is just living with other people pleasantly; if you lived by yourself on a desert island others would not care whether you had good manners or not, it wouldn't bother them.' That, of course, does not fit in with a popular symbol of good manners, the solitary gentleman on a desert island conscientiously using a butter-knife, but it is a conception which at least seems reasonable to children. One warning tale in connection with this book must be told. A friend of mine went carefully through this book with her three-year-old niece. Young Deirdre was apparently enthralled by Leaf's cautionary tale. Going home she soon revealed how deep an impression had been made. 'Me First,' she cried, pushing her way past the elderly woman climbing on to the bus. 'I'm a Touchey,' she murmured, pressing her fingers against the window pane. *Manners can be fun* had put plenty of ideas into her head.

Amongst the funniest books in existence is probably Helen Bannerman's *Little Black Sambo*. (His father was called Black Jumbo and his mother was called Black Mumbo.) I believe this story came into existence as an attempt by a harried mother to amuse two children in a train—what trainloads of children it has amused since. A friend of mine telling this story to some Italian children in an American library one afternoon discovered that it threw her listeners into such paroxysms of laughter she almost doubted their sanity—and Mrs. Bannerman's. It is not easy for adults to guess exactly what it is that makes this story

so funny; the climax of the tale where the tigers run so fast round a tree that they turn to melted butter, is indeed a curious event, seen through adult eyes, but not necessarily hilarious. Children, however, consider it riotously funny, as they do Claire Huchet Bishop's *Five Chinese brothers*, a retelling of a Chinese folk tale, by a Frenchwoman married to an American, with illustrations by a German. It has the same extravagant humour as *Little Black Sambo*. Another humorous tale with an international background is *Five silly cats* by Alina Lewitt, illustrated by Lewitt and Him. All three, author and illustrators, are Poles now living in London, and their books are published by the Minerva Press, a publishing house established with the object of introducing contemporary Polish literature, both adult and juvenile, to the British public. 'Lewitt-Him', as the combination is called, have also illustrated *The football's revolt* and *Locomotive*, each with text by the young Polish poet Julian Tuwim. In *Locomotive* the illustrators show a keen sense of the fantastic, building up a series of pictures one following the other with cumulative effect until a tremendous climax is reached. Incredible colours are combined, and letterpress and pictures blend together in a brilliant page design. *Five silly cats* is an absurdity in sixteen pages. So little sense, so many cats!

Humour and extravagance also characterize the work of DR. THEODORE SEUSS GEISEL. Geisel is a graduate of Dartmouth College, who aimed to be a professor of English literature, and became a highly successful writer for children. He may solace himself perhaps with Tolstoi's declaration that 'to compose a fairy tale, a touching little song, an entertaining riddle, an amusing jest, or to make a sketch which will delight dozens of generations or millions of children and adults is incomparably more important and more fruitful than to compose a novel or paint a picture which will divert some members of the wealthy

class for a short time and then be forgotten'. Actually it is possible to be both a professor and a writer for children. Academics in their lighter moments seem to have a flair for successful fantasy; Lewis Carroll was a professor of mathematics when sober and serious, J. R. R. Tolkien expounds the glories of English literature at Oxford; nor must we forget McGill's famed professor of economics, Stephen Leacock. Theodore Geisel spent a year at Oxford, and afterwards travelled extensively in Europe, the Near East, and South America before returning to learned circles in the United States. His habit of drawing the strange pictures conjured up in his dreams became stronger and more insistent, until finally he decided to abandon ideas of an academic career and practise commercial art. At the latter profession he was highly successful, as humorous and fantastic advertising has a considerable vogue in America. That ultimately he should turn to writing and illustrating for children was inevitable.

His first attempt, called *And to think that I saw it on Mulberry St.*, is, briefly, the development of a child's lie. A small boy who is usually catechized by his parents regarding what he has seen on the way home, sees a horse and a cart on Mulberry St., a fact which he feels is barely worth chronicling. Naturally he begins to embroider, changing the horse to a zebra, the cart to a chariot, the zebra to a reindeer, the chariot to a sled, until in the final pages the double-spread of the book is cluttered with a gaudy fantastic picture of a magnificent procession with the town band, a corps of cycling policemen, aeroplanes, rajahs, etc. It is a crazy story with this to be said in its favour, that this imaginative extension and development of a simple incident into something more rich and strange is a not unusual mental process. To children this book is just funny, to the adult it is psychologically correct.

Geisel's second book was *The five hundred hats of Bartholemew Cubbins*, one of the most striking book titles I know. The story is up to the promise of the label. It begins thus:

The Kingdom of Didd was ruled by King Derwin. His palace stood high on the top of the mountain. From his balcony, he looked down over the houses of all his subjects—first, over the spires of the noblemen's castles, across the broad roofs of the rich men's mansions, then over the little houses of the townsfolk, to the huts of the farmers far off in the fields.

It was a mighty view and it made King Derwin feel mighty important.

Far off in the fields, on the edge of a cranberry bog, stood the hut of the Cubbins family. From the small door Bartholemew looked across the huts of the farmers to the houses of the townsfolk, then to the rich men's mansions and the noblemen's castles, up to the great towering palace of the King. It was exactly the same view that King Derwin saw from his balcony, but Bartholemew saw it backward.

It was a mighty view but it made Bartholemew Cubbins feel mighty small.

WANDA GAG's background is European, albeit she has never been out of the United States. Her parents were Bohemian peasants who settled in New Ulm, Minnesota, a village which, despite its American location, remained Bohemian in its way of life. All the old-world traditions of craftsmanship, singing, and story-telling were transplanted to the new setting. The Gag parents were a gifted pair and Wanda herself has written:

"the most vivid note of my childhood was the wealth of creative activity pervading our household; for although my ancestry (of which I am very proud) was one hundred per cent peasant, it is a curiously articulate peasantry—each Gag born into this hopelessly artistic family accepted pencil and paper along with the rest of life's inevitabilities. In fact, for years I thought everybody drew, just as everybody ate or

slept, and I have never quite recovered from the shock of my disillusionment."

Her parents died when she was fourteen, and incredible as it may seem she battled to see that the family slogan 'high school for all' became a reality. With six younger brothers and sisters to amuse, Wanda had ample opportunity to learn the art of story-telling. All her stories now published have a peasant folk-tale flavour, and tell or read aloud particularly well. *Gone is gone; or the story of a man who wanted to do house work* (obviously a fairy tale), a microscopic book, similar in format to Beatrix Potter's books: *Snippy and snappy*, about two mice; *A B C Bunny*; *Nothing at all*; and *Millions of cats*, about an elderly couple who wanted a cat and found themselves 'with thousands, and millions and billions of cats'; all these prove Wanda Gag a born story-teller. Latterly she has done translations of several of Grimm's fairy tales, for which her upbringing made her peculiarly fitted.

In her childhood and girlhood Wanda Gag was cut off from the main current of American life and in consequence we find in her work no slickness or sophistication. Her illustrations to 'Snow-white', when compared with Disney's efforts, make an object lesson in how and how not to illustrate. Imaginative and fantastic as her pictures are, with their curves and swirls, they have a basic sturdiness as well, a homely down-to-earth flavour. Her wicked stepmother wears an apron, has disguises hung on pegs, and is a far cry from the evil terrifying creature of the film.

EDWARD ARDIZZONE is yet another of the father-authors referred to in the introductory chapter. *Little Tim and the brave sea captain*, *Tim and Lucy go to sea*, *Lucy Brown and Mrs. Grimes*, were all three originally told to his own children Phillip and Christianna, who made demands for tales at bedtime, often with such specific directions as 'please a story with danger in it' or

'tell us a story about someone who is sick and has to have an operation'. In *Little Tim and the brave sea captain* (glorious title), the hero enjoys a maximum of danger in a minimum of time. He stows away on a boat, goes for a long voyage, is almost shipwrecked, is saved and finally rowed home to pleased but not unduly perturbed parents. The book is all action, full of verbs, each sentence carrying the plot forward to a smashing climax. Time is not, in this ingenuous tale; whether action takes days or weeks I do not know. Adjectives are few and far between, apart from ones like 'little' and 'brave', which are really part of the concepts 'Tim' and 'Captain' respectively. The plot rushes on with no time spared for description, rather like a child's own narrative of imaginary adventures. Ardizzone's pictures, too, resemble drawings a child might make. There is a growing tendency to illustrate children's books in this way. It has occurred for two reasons. Many authors, without much formal talent for drawing, but anxious to get pictures more intimately connected with their stories than those an outside illustrator might make, have illustrated their own stories as well as they could, a little childishly or amateurishly, but successfully. Other artists of ability have felt that their own children or pupils did not respond to the usual adult illustrations with their scrupulous naturalism, and in experimental mood have deliberately created pictures rather like the child's own work. Ardizzone is of the latter type, I should imagine. The classic example of such pictures is the work of Jean de Brunhoff, mentioned earlier. His giant-size picture books, with their naïve illustrations in bright primary colours, were at the time of their publication one of the most original contributions to modern children's literature. His *Babar the elephant* is already ensconced in the hall of immortal characters, in company with Alice, Jo March, and Toad from *Wind in the willows*.

Two or three years ago a collection of tales was published called *The famous cats of fairyland*, cats of myth and legend and folk lore. Their number was legion. In modern children's picture books, too, the cat holds a premier place, for the inspiration it has given to authors and illustrators. Cats are at once commonplace and exotic, with us but not of us, and as such for children especially they have an especial fascination. Queen of the cat artists is CLARE TURLAY NEWBERRY, who has evolved an individual and effective technique for conveying in her illustrations the soft smudged effect of a cat's coat. In her book *Drawing a cat* Mrs. Newberry describes making dozens of pencil sketches of cats and kittens from life, dropping a sketch as soon as her subject changes its pose, to ensure accuracy of record. Her final picture is really a composite picture from these sketches, drawn with charcoal grey paint on wet paper. This wet-paper technique requires speed and accuracy and she sometimes finds it necessary to spoil thirty or forty pictures before obtaining one which is good enough to use. As she says, 'I draw more boldly and decoratively, simplifying the design with each repetition, and no longer thinking of the drawing as a representation of a cat but rather as a problem in abstract design.' Fortunately the printers have paid attention to the matter of reproducing Newberry drawings. All are printed by gravure, an intaglio process in which the ink is filled into depressions on the plate. The paper pulls the ink out and thus the ink stands microscopically above the surface of the paper. *April's kittens*, *Babette*, and *Mittens* were all printed in this manner. Of Mrs. Newberry's other books *Barkus* is a dog experiment, *Herbert the lion* an extravaganza in quite a different technique, *Marshmallow* is a rabbit. In spite of these sundry deviations towards the rest of the animal kingdom Mrs. Newberry remains 'queen of cats' (in no Clare Boothe sense of that word

however). Rather a contrast to the Newberry cats, who are mainly in the genteel tradition, thoroughly domesticated with bows round their necks, is Peggy Bacon's *Buttons*, an alley cat, from the world of the garbage cans, a cat without refinement, but with greater robustness. Wanda Gag's *Millions of cats*, Zhenya Gay's *Sakimura*, Mary Baker's *Black cats and the tinker's wife*, and Katherine Hale's *Orlando* are some other chronicles of feline activities which deserve a passing mention.

CLIFFORD WEBB is an English artist so enthusiastic about his craft that during a temporary paralysis of his right arm he taught himself to draw with his left. He is a member of the Royal Society of British Artists and of the Society of Wood Engravers. The pictures of his first book, *Story of Noah*, originally painted as decorations for his eldest son's nursery, were so generally admired that he made them into a book. If one may judge from his other books, animals presumably hold an irresistible fascination for Webb, not from any interest in natural history, but because of the patterns which can be woven in pictures of animal bodies in motion. In *Butterwick farm* he drew the animals of the English countryside, in *Jungle picnic* the denizens of Central Africa, in *North Pole before lunch* the dogs, bears, and reindeer of the Arctic. It seems as though Webb has worked so long with the woodcut that his work in other mediums shows traces of woodcut treatment. Many of his picture-book illustrations look somewhat like colour woodcuts at first glance. His animals are stylized, simplified beasts, not at all in the Landseer tradition.

Some other modern animal picture books are Joan Kiddell-Munroe's *In his little black waistcoat*, Cicely Englefield's miniature books, and the Père Castor books, translated by Rose Fyleman from the French, with Rojankovsky's illustrations.

DOROTHY LATHROP'S animal stories are all illustrated with

lithographic pencil. This process is particularly effective when used to reproduce the fur of those small woodland animals which are Miss Lathrop's favourite characters. She draws those creatures with eyes as living and bright as those in Sir Thomas Lawrence's portraits. In black and white she obtains depth and tone. The liveliness and movement in her pictures is so authentic because, as she herself has written, her studio is at the back of her house 'set back among the apple trees, and there we have all the animal models, permanent and transient, that we need. It is far enough from the heart of the city to be noisier with birds than with traffic, and many wild animals, bird and flower models walk conveniently up to our windows.' All her animals have a solidity about them which contrasts with the ethereal remote character of her fairies in books for slightly older children. This solidity may happen so, because Miss Lathrop shares a studio with her sculptress sister Gertrude, and the two must inevitably discuss the problems of conveying three dimensions in their chosen mediums.

Dorothy Lathrop is particularly interesting as one of the relatively few book illustrators in America who is not only a native-born American but who is quite untouched by European influences. It has been pointed out that in her own home she was from earliest years familiar with Japanese and Persian prints, and that if she derives from any source at all it is from Persian art. Nevertheless, she stands apart from the Petershams, the d'Aulaires and Kurt Wiese, all of whom have European origins. As an illustrator of Hans Andersen, George Macdonald, and Walter de la Mare, Dorothy Lathrop is a restrained interpretative artist. Every book she touches gains immeasurably.

EMMA BROCK is one of the most prolific of modern author-illustrators, with something approaching twenty books to her credit, *Till potatoes grow on trees*, *Heedless Susan*, *who sometimes*

forgot to remember, *One little Indian boy*, and *Runaway sardine* to mention a very few. She usually restricts herself to black and one colour, and creates within this limit pictures as gay and attractive as artists who use all the colours of the rainbow. Most of her stories have a folk-tale quality, and are usually of that cumulative type which is exceptionally popular with young children, particularly when the stories are read aloud. Emma Brock was for six years on the staff of the children's department of the New York Public Library. This library has always specialized in storytelling to the children of the city, and the experience must have made a deep impression upon Miss Brock. She is obviously well grounded in children's literature, and although her work is original and not in any way derivative, it is linked with the past and has developed almost along traditional lines. Her characters are peasant types, old men and women, parents and children, delineated without romanticism in a black charcoal line which seems to suit their ruggedness. All her animals are individual, with some quality which sets them apart—'the pig with the front porch', 'the runaway sardine', and 'the hen that kept house'. Although the incredible may occur in her stories it is always enacted against a homely background. Emma Brock is interested in the apparatus of everyday life—all kitchen utensils, pots and pans and jugs and dishes, wells, fireplaces, chimneys, hens, and carts—and her pictures are filled with such gear and tackle. Probably the artist's early childhood accounts for this. Her parents were army people and the family moved nomadically round the United States from one military post to another. Like many people without a permanent home she was interested in the life of people who had been for a long time established in one place. Later she spent long sketching holidays all over Europe, as the widely diverse backgrounds of her books bear witness.

In 1940 the Caldecott Medal for the outstanding picture book of the year was presented to INGRI and EDGAR PARIN D'AULAIRE for their *Abraham Lincoln*. The award was a significant one, for Ingri, a Norwegian by birth, and Edgar, an Italian, had in that particular book expressed all their feeling and affection for America, the country of their adoption. Both were European artists, who after their marriage, had painted landscapes in France, Italy, Germany, Dalmatia, and North Africa, each of them working separately as at that time like many young artists they were mortally afraid of being influenced by each other in any way. It does not seem to have occurred to them that their marriage had destroyed any real basis for such rugged individualism, and that whether they liked it or not, their art would alter by reason of their personal proximity.

When ultimately the peripatetic pair reached New York, Anne Carroll Moore of the New York Public Library, who has brought dozens of authors and artists of genius to children's literature, suggested to them that they might co-operate on a story book for younger readers. Unwilling at first, they agreed and found their *métier*. In *Children of the northlights*, *Ola*, and, *Ola and Blakken*, they gave American children three imaginative, exquisitely beautiful picture books about Norway, picture books which expressed the whole spirit of the north, lonely fjord, high mountain, remote valley, and the fantastic creatures of Norwegian folk lore who have their dwelling there. Ingri wrote and drew as a native does, from deep-rooted affection; Edgar wrote and drew as the newcomer does, with the sharp eye for what is unique to an individual country. Working as they do directly on a lithographic stone, a laborious process which gives a soft blurred tone which no other technique can produce, they make all their picture books with the same

care and integrity which Ingri had formerly given to her child portraits and Edgar to his murals. They soon became established as two of the most gifted picture-book makers of this century.

Later they made distinctly American books, notably *George Washington* and *Abraham Lincoln*. Both these, as I have said, symbolized their Americanization. The two elder statesmen of the United States are described almost as legendary figures for the benefit of youngest readers, and the general result is charming. In preparation for these books, the d'Aulaires tramped and camped in the Lincoln and Washington country, but they did not come as close to it as to the country of the northlights. The Norwegian stories are fuller, richer, and more deeply rooted than the books about their adopted country.

Ingri d'Aulaire brought not only her art training but a knowledge of children to their collaboration. In a fragment of autobiography she has written:

As the youngest of a great family I was an aunt long before my skirts reached my knees, and being an aunt brings you in a different position to the small children of a closely related family than having a string of smaller brothers and sisters trailing you. When you are an aunt at a very young age, you get a poise and an authority that very much impresses your own friends—you are almost a mother yourself Though I was deeply respected and obeyed as an aunt, we spoke the same language. I remembered my childhood ways of thinking and reasoning even after I was grown up. And this has never left me. . . . Perhaps an important factor also is that my own childhood was so very very sunny and happy, the memory of which is a joyous and creating well, from which I can draw the rest of my life.

Also international in background are the HADERS. Berta Hoerner Hader was born in Mexico, but lived much of her early life on the Pacific Coast of the United States. Her husband

Elmer Hader is another Californian who like most artists of his generation spent the inevitable two or three years in Paris studying at the Academy. Like most American artists of his generation also, he made the ultimate discovery that it was in America that he had to work out his artistic salvation. The Haders are essentially romantic artists, whose pastel work is similar to contemporary English illustrating in its appeal. *Cock-a-doodle do, the story of a little red rooster*, and *Farmer in the dell*, both give rather nostalgic pictures of the sort of farm which vanished at the turn of the century from America. *Billy Butter*, a tale of a San Francisco goat, *Spunky the circus pony*, and *Midget and Bridget*, are all stories for children slightly past the picture-book age, but they will read aloud well, although not at one sitting.

MAUD and MISKA PETERSHAM, the daughter of a New England parson, and a Hungarian artist, he born in some little town with an unpronounceable name, near Budapest, she, a scrubbed, starched child listening every Sunday to her father's sermons—there you have their respective childhood backgrounds. Fortunately Miska did not stay round Budapest and Maud eventually left her vicarage. The two ultimately met and married in New York where the talent of three continents congregates. It was Willy Pogany, another successful transplanted Hungarian, who suggested that they illustrate children's books. For many years they merely decorated other people's books, until a third Petersham appeared on the scene and proved, like many a child of gifted parents, an inspiration for story-telling. The result was *Miki*, a small boy who goes to Hungary and travels round with a green goose and a sheep dog, listening to tales told by shepherds during the long nights on the great Hungarian plain. *Miki* is such a story as any father born in a faraway country might tell to a young son

asking the old familiar question 'What did you do when you were a little boy?' The book is gaily written, with illustrations in luscious reds, blues, and yellows. *Miki* was followed by three other books, all costly and beautiful, *Miki and Mary*, a sequel; *Get-a-way and Hány János*, about a wooden toy horse and a wooden soldier doll from Hungary; and *Auntie Celie Jane and Miki*, a rare story about a friendship between a very old person and a very young one. The next Petersham venture, the *Story books of real things*, is discussed in a later chapter, but I should mention here their latest series of stories from the Old Testament. Maud with her parsonage upbringing may have remembered somewhat arid little books of Bible stories with pictures which ill fitted the dramatic narratives they illustrated. Too many publishers of devotional books for children appear to imagine that piety is some excuse for second-rate art. Many of us recall those Sunday School prizes in which that most satisfying tale of the huge but moronic Goliath outwitted by the small and shrewd David always fell a little flat because the pictures of the two contestants were never as thrilling as the story itself. No such anti-climax occurs in the Petersham *David*, or its accompanying books *Moses*, *Ruth*, and *Joseph*. Goliath is an impressive giant, Ruth is a lovely girl amid the alien corn, the coat of many colours is as gaudy as any youthful imaginings conceived it. Their finest book, however, is *The Christ child, as told by Matthew and Luke*, reverently and dramatically illustrated. The Petershams, inspired by the greatest story in all literature, have pictures worthy of their theme.

BEATRIX POTTER, creator of Peter Rabbit, Squirrel Nutkin, Mrs. Tittlemouse, Jemima Puddleduck, and Pigling Bland, died early in 1944, and although a world war was raging, newspapers the world over found space in which to mourn her passing. Solemn *Times Literary Supplement*, smooth newsmagazine

Time, left-wing *New Statesman and Nation*, one and all paid tribute to a genius of the nursery, a story-teller without parallel for the youngest readers of all.

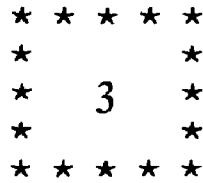
Beatrix Potter wrote the *Tale of Peter Rabbit* about 1900 to amuse a little lame boy. It was written, as were several of the earlier books, in illustrated letters, the story scribbled out in longhand with funny wash drawings to illustrate. Peter soon joined the company of the immortals. Beatrix Potter herself said she never quite understood the secret of his perennial charm, but she made a shrewd guess when she hazarded that perhaps it was because 'he and little, little friends keep on their way, busily absorbed with their own doings. They were always independent.' All the Potter characters, whether Timmy Tiptoes or Mr. Jeremy Fisher, are all individuals, clear-cut, well-developed personalities. Sometimes we learn a great deal about them, at other times the small-part actors may be summed up in a phrase, as old Mr. Bunny 'who had no opinion whatever of cats'. Take Nutkin, the impertinent squirrel who barely escaped disaster; it is significant that he is not one jot more polite at the end than at the beginning. Beatrix Potter knew better than to whitewash her characters; she described them as she found them in her imagination, and never touched up a portrait. Well-loved but fussy Mrs. Tittlemouse 'always sweeping and dusting the floors. Sometimes a beetle lost its way in the passage. "Shuh, shuh, little dirty feet," said Mrs. Tittlemouse clattering her pail.' She is a universal figure, Mrs. Tittlemouse, representing the eternal feminine much more accurately than Venus or formidable Minerva.

And the action of these stories. Something happens on every single page, the onward sweep of events is as irresistible and inevitable as history. In the pictures the Potter world consists of cosy country kitchens, of pleasant meadow and water. It has

charm and outward serenity. Nevertheless pitfall and snare and danger await the unwary: Mr. McGregor the testy gardener, the fierce bad rabbit, man with gun and maid with broom all await alike unwary mouse and squirrel. Here is villainy, here is peril. As Elinor Whitney says, there's nothing wishy-washy about their adventures.

The twenty-one microscopic Potter books, only four by five and a half inches in size, in themselves could compose a tiny child's own library. If he read nothing else, he would have encountered in them the basic human types, and the basic human emotions—but more than that what tremendous fun he would have.

However, children are not limited to the books of Mrs. Potter. She is one writer of genius among the many gifted men and women who have turned to a section of children's literature once almost completely neglected by authors and artists. Parents who have shared picture books with their children and enjoyed d'Aulaires and Bemelmans and their kindred may find even a measure of regret, when their family grows up and the pictures in their books wane as the prose waxes. But the transition is inevitable. Mike Mulligan, Peter Rabbit, and Johnny Crow are replaced by the Little Mermaid and Lazy Hans as Doulton mug and spoon are replaced by cup and knives and forks. The baby's eating utensils are outgrown forever and never used again. The small child's reading may continue to provide him with the images of delight though the plot of the story which originally occasioned them be almost forgotten. Perhaps after all Mike Mulligan is never replaced by Lazy Hans. He is merely joined by him.



Homage to Fairy Tales

TODAY we use the word fairy tale in a rather slipshod fashion in the Humpty-Dumpty manner, 'words mean what I want them to mean'. We use fairy tales to mean both the peasant folk tales current in the vernacular for hundreds of years until collected painstakingly by scholars in the nineteenth century, and also the modern fanciful stories of magic and fantastic adventure, very often similar in pattern to the folk tale but with few or no roots in a folk tradition. Hans Andersen's stories are the outstanding examples of the latter type. Admittedly he frequently gave the world his own versions of traditional tales, but he did not collect these directly from old wives and gaffers as did the Grimms and Asbjørnsens. For the most part his stories were his own invention, the sublimation in an exquisite literary form of his personal sorrows and joys. Andersen is the 'ugly duckling', Andersen the 'little mermaid'. Folk tales proper are completely impersonal, embodying as they do the dreams of a whole people, sometimes of a whole race. We say Grimms' fairy tales, forgetting that the brothers were the collectors not the creators (as if the Australians were pleased to call a collection of Maori myths and legends Cowan's fairy

tales). The modern fairy stories of Eleanor Farjeon, Lawrence Housman, and Walter de la Mare are all of the Hans Andersen type, but it is not with the Farjeon-Andersen school I am immediately concerned, but with the folk tale proper, the peasant traditional story.

Our best known examples are to be found in the Grimm collection, which is now so much one of the main staples of children's literature that it is not always easy to remember that until the nineteenth century these stories had never existed in printed form, but were handed on from generation to generation by word of mouth. They might have remained part of a purely oral tradition but for the energies of the brothers Grimm, who collected them directly from the peasantry of Hesse and Thuringia. They listened personally to hundreds of stories of which the published collection as we know it is but a selection. In an introduction to a recent edition Harry Hansen describes the brothers 'clad in black coats, with high collars and tremendous black cravats, two sedate and dignified men sitting stiffly in the midst of a typical German cottage household gravely writing down stories as they were told by the father of the house'. Lest a mistake arise, it should be made clear that Jakob Ludwig Karl Grimm and his brother Wilhelm Karl did not spend months and weeks listening to often garrulous men and women in order to add to the sum total of reading available to children. They had no more notion of writing for children than had Jonathan Swift when he wrote *Gulliver's Travels*. The brothers were primarily philologists who stand in much the same relation to the German language as Johnson does to the English, or perhaps it would be more accurate to cite Murray of the Oxford Dictionary. Together they were 'the founders of modern German philology', more famous in their day for their

Deutsche Grammatik and *Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache* than for their collection of *Kinder und Hausmärchen*. Because the Grimms were philologists they accurately reported the colloquial slangy stories as told them, and did not attempt to apply any so-called polish.

Actually the fairy tales have their own kind of polish. Re-read your Grimm and you will realize what remarkably disciplined pieces of writing those stories are. As they were told over and over again through the centuries superfluities fell away. Time pruned these tales. During the hundreds of tellings poor jokes would be dropped, climaxes heightened. It is interesting to compare these tales, which are the product after all of a fairly mature if peasant culture, with the formless crude folk lore of the African native. We must admire not only the economy and directness with which the former are told, but the cohesive plot construction, the simple clear patterns of the tales. Certain conventions are followed: three wishes, three sons, three tasks.

Bizarre and fantastic are many of the stories, the impossible becomes possible, men and beasts have strange powers. But side by side with the fantastic is a measure of homely peasant wisdom, good sound common sense. We can believe in the incredible, because so much that is credible is there. The adult reader has the feeling that though magic might come to their aid, the men and women in Grimm are the embodiment in literary form of other men and women whose experience is not dissimilar from our own. *Six soldiers of fortune* begins thus: 'There was once a man who was a jack of all trades; he had served in the war and had been brave and bold, but at the end of it he was sent about his business with three farthings and his discharge.' After that the story goes on to tell about a huntsman who can sit two miles off from a tree and aim at the left eye of a

fly sitting on a bough. We can believe in the incredible marksman because we believe in the jack of all trades. He at least is not confined to Grimm. Similarly, there is the king who could ask only twelve of the thirteen wise women to a christening feast, because he had but twelve gold plates. For him anyone who has curtailed hospitality because of a shortage of chairs or sherry glasses has a little fellow-feeling. Now admittedly children reading Grimm may not know how true, in the widest sense, many of the stories are; all they know is a tale 'which holdeth them from play' and which they instinctively feel to be genuine.

I was surprised on re-reading the tales to find how little actually is told. Many of the tales are outline pictures only. We are told the princess is beautiful but rarely much else about her. The King, her father, may be wise or good or bad, or occasionally be merely a king without an adjective. Their castle is not described. This is what happened to them—that is all. It is as though all that is given is a framework in which the imagination can work. Our own childhood pictures of Sleeping Beauty and Rumpelstiltskin are all the clearer because we were never told exactly what they looked like. Nor did Homer describe Helen. Many of the Grimm stories are merely variants of parallel tales existing in the folk lore of other countries. In the nineteenth century the Grimms were not alone in their interest in peasant traditions.

Lönnrot in Finland, Asbjørnsen and Moe in Norway, and Topelius in Sweden, all did work of almost equal value to that of the Grimms, although the results are not so well known to English readers, and there are others whose names are known only to scholars. Of the great number of stories collected many are almost parallel in plot. Parallelism in folk lore was a question which greatly exercised the minds of

nineteenth-century folk-lorists. Stories would conceivably spread from one country to those adjacent to it. Discharged soldiers, brides of alien stock, itinerant priests and traders would spread tales throughout Europe. It is not surprising that Grimms' *Poor miller's boy and the cat* has Finnish, Russian, Czech, and Serb versions. It is less easy to explain why the Maori story of Maui stealing the fire should have a parallel in one of the episodes of the Finnish Kalevala. Andrew Lang, famous for his *Red fairy book*, *Blue fairy book* (and so on through the spectrum) believed that widely separated peoples at the same stage of civilization would produce very similar stories.

Similar conditions of mind produce similar practices, apart from identity of race or borrowing of ideas and manners. . . . Myth is a product of the early human fancy working on the most rudimentary knowledge of the outer world the student of folk lore thinks differences of race do not affect the early mythopœic faculty. He will not be surprised if Greeks and Australian blacks tell the same tales.

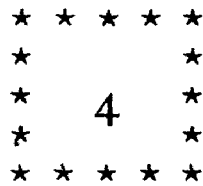
There is a political side to the collection of folk tales, for much of the activity in the early nineteenth century was part and parcel of the liberal nationalist movements current at that time. Here is Benedetto Croce on the subject.

The movements for independence that began to stir among . . . peoples . . . in Norway, in Bohemia, in Croatia, in Serbia, had their initial symptom in the effort to restore national languages to honourable place, to elaborate them artistically, to restore them to common use; and in general in the cult of customs and national history.

In many countries national languages were spoken only by the peasantry, as in Finland where Swedish was the dominant aristocratic language or Norway where the 'cuckoo' language was Danish. Nationalists in these and other countries

believed that national unity could only be achieved if the native languages were officially recognized and spoken by all classes in the community. The language question indeed was one of the main political issues in several European states almost up to our own time. (Ireland is a modern case in point.) Thus the new science of philology raised its head, and with the study of peasant dialects it was a small step to the study of peasant literature—the folk tale. Patriots became philologists and folklorists. Probably the task of collecting the peasant stories was undertaken in the nick of time, for as the effects of the industrial revolution spread, the old social fabric was destroyed. The spread of cheap printed books gradually did away with the necessity for the oral tale. The old traditional stories have gradually disappeared until today Albania is the only European country with no written literature apart from collections of folk tales.

(A list of books of myths, legends, and folk lore will be found on pp. 209-16.)



Modern Fairy Tales

IT is a sidelight on national character that although the Americans excel in writing realistic stories the best imaginative writing comes from the other side of the Atlantic. (I had been about to make the generalization that English writers were pre-eminent in this type of story, until I remembered that a little Irish blood in the veins is a distinct asset to most writers of fantastic tales.) Many American children's librarians are concerned about the very down-to-earth quality of American children's fiction, and it is perhaps cause for alarm when the ability to create and believe in legend appears to wither. However, one might equally well be alarmed that the waggon of children's literature in Great Britain is too securely harnessed to the stars. We in New Zealand are fortunate perhaps that in our libraries we can treasure fact and fancy alike. Without paying his penny the child can take his choice, for the shelves of our children's libraries bring together the children's literature from two continents. I am reminded of that great Irishman Æ (George Russell), who was at once an authority on Irish agriculture and a mystic and visionary—surely a desirable union of qualities. Children in a library who march

out with the *Song of Roland* in one hand and *The march of science* in the other are in a similar state of being.

FORERUNNERS

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN was the first creator of the 'modern fairy tale'. Certainly some of his stories are folk tales retold, but these are retold not with the zeal of the Grimm brothers, who were anxious to preserve the remnants of a decaying tradition, but with the nostalgic tenderness of a man recalling tales told to him in childhood. Andersen wrote his original stories to comfort himself for the pricks and pains he had received, transmuting the real incidents into allegory. It was his good fortune and ours that the allegories he created for himself were also fine narratives, stories which children have delighted in for over a hundred years. That the *Princess and the pea* was written about a friend of Andersen's who showed undue sensitiveness over a slight matter does not concern children. It is a fine extravagant tale and few children there must be who at some time or another have not tried putting a pea under a mattress in a mock-serious attempt to discover whether the blood-royal runs in their veins. In *Thumbelina* Andersen imagined a delicate fairy girl who was but an idealized portrait of a little hunchbacked friend; an unhappy love affair was symbolized in the *Little mermaid*; the allegory in *The ugly duckling* is obvious.

In the early 'modern' fairy tales the same process is at work as in the traditional folk tale, in which the allegory had by reason of its origins a relevance to a whole people's emotions; the folk tale could not help but be universal. Andersen's greatness lies in a similar popular appeal. The failure of many modern writers of fairy tales is that they merely invent a legend for themselves, very often a legend which is neither good

narrative nor significant allegory. Andersen's stories are similar to folk tales in another way: they are written in the style of everyday speech, for Andersen had that healthy respect for the vernacular which we find in most gifted writers of fairy tales. He wrote simply and racy, incorporating the phrase and idiom of his native Odense.

The traditional folk tale has always exerted a healthy influence on the modern fairy story, and many successful writers have observed some though not necessarily all of the folk-tale forms and conventions. Some writers, Mrs. Ewing, Eleanor Farjeon, and Carl Sandburg, have followed Andersen and learned to retain the flavour of speech in the written word. E. Nesbit in *Nine unlikely tales*, and Howard Pyle in many stories, have used the plot patterns of the three brothers, or curse and disenchantment type. Kipling used the repetition and refrain of the traditional tale with good effect. With most of these people the imitation, if imitation it can be called, was subconscious: half-remembered stories of childhood were probably their inspiration in using old but not outworn devices. The writers used the folk-tale form as a jumping-off place much as a choreographer might take an old legend and use it as the basis for a ballet plot.

A few years before Andersen's stories were issued in an English edition JOHN RUSKIN published his *King of the Golden River*. It was written little more than a decade after the appearance of Grimm's tales in England, and as Harvey Darton has pointed out, the tale has a 'half-German atmosphere: it is of the legend of the Rhine type'. The three brothers Hans, Schwartz, and Gluck have affinities with any three brothers of folk lore, especially Gluck, the Cinderella man, yet there are differences. For one thing, the characters are delineated in greater detail than is the custom in the true folk story. We read of Hans and Schwartz that they were

very ugly men, with over-hanging eyebrows and small dull eyes, which were always half-shut, so that you couldn't see into them, but always fancied they saw very far into you. They lived by farming in Treasure Valley and very good farmers they were. They killed everything that did not pay for its eating. They shot the blackbirds . . . and killed the hedgehogs . . . they poisoned the crickets . . . (They) were, in a word, of so cruel and grinding a temper, as to receive from all those with whom they had any dealings, the nickname of the Black Brothers.

Possibly the *King of the Golden River* is one of the most dramatic of children's tales. Some may remember the opening of the story where the old man, the Southwest wind, comes and sits by the fire where Gluck is turning the mutton at the spit. We have a clear picture of the brightly burning fire and the old man dripping among the cinders, till the fire fizzes and splutters as the rain runs off every fold of his cloak. Then the valley which has been rich and fertile is swept desolate and ruin comes to the once wealthy brothers. Finally Gluck makes his fortune, but Hans and Schwartz are turned to great black stones in the valley.

Maybe it is right that professors of English literature and others in places where they teach should honour John Ruskin for the *Stones of Venice* and *Munera Pulveris*, but most children's librarians and a legion of children are far more truly grateful for the *King of the Golden River*.

Granny's wonderful chair was written by FRANCES BROWNE, a woman blind almost from birth, whose formal education was negligible. To offset these disabilities, she had the advantage of spending her childhood and youth in Ireland, where the richness of the vernacular made her lack of sight a less serious deprivation than it might have been had she lived elsewhere. Moreover, she had Byron's *Childe Harold* and Pope's trans-

lation of the *Iliad* read aloud to her. Her phenomenal memory coupled with her blindness perhaps helped her to enjoy a more intense experience of literature than falls to the lot of many sighted people.

Granny's wonderful chair was only a device, and a very old device it is, for giving a miscellany of stories some unity. In the *Arabian nights*, readers will remember Scheherezade's telling of the tales serves a similar purpose. Whenever the child in this story wants a tale told she has only to chant 'Chair of my Grandmother tell me a story', which is almost as satisfying an incantation as 'Open Sesame'. The best-known story is probably that about 'Lady Greensleeves' called *Lords of the white and grey castles*. Here in this story is the same dramatic quality which one senses in *King of the Golden River*. It demonstrates the author's gift to create what Stevenson has called 'fit and striking incident'. Some of the tales of Frances Browne have traces of that dreary Victorian didacticism and deserve in consequence to be forgotten. Not so Greensleeves.

'The most wonderful sight that ever I saw,' replied the Traveller, 'was at the end of yonder forest where in an ancient wooden house, there sits an old woman weaving her own hair into grey cloth on an old crazy loom. When she wants more yarn, she cuts off her own grey hair and it grows so quickly that though I saw it cut in the morning, it was out of the door before noon.'

That little passage, fantastic yet credible, seems to me wholly satisfying, as satisfying as one of those elaborate excuses one may invent to avoid a dull engagement, improbable but told with such sureness, one almost convinces oneself.

Adults re-reading the *Water babies* may find the reason for its popularity difficult to explain, for CHARLES KINGSLEY, a nineteenth century parson wrestling with Darwinism, clogged the action of his story with long passages attacking the scientists

of his day. *Water babies* is one of the few books which should be given to children in an abridged edition. The story should be released from its chrysalis of philosophizing, for once this is cast aside *Water babies* emerges as an admirable tale. The book opens well. Little Tom the Sweep lost in the mazes of chimneys at Harthover Hall makes a startling entrance into the clean white bedroom of a clean small girl. Like the picture of Little Lord Fauntleroy with his grandfather leaning on his shoulder the scene of Tom's entrance from the chimney is one of the more vivid in children's literature. Tom is cuffed and beaten in the early pages, and these scenes though melancholy give the child reader an enjoyably harrowing time. The depressed heroines and heroes of Sunday school prizes, a much beattered crew, rarely bored us as children: they had our sympathy from the first cuff. So with Tom. Moreover in their under-water setting his later adventures have the charm of novelty. It is a matter of continual surprise to me that the English have produced so little imaginative writing about the under-water world. Some rhymes from the *Tempest* like 'Full fathom five' and Arnold's 'Forsaken merman'—what else is there?

LEWIS CARROLL published *Alice in Wonderland* in 1865. Much critical force has been spent on Alice and still left her unexplained, but of all her critics Frederick Harvey Darton has discussed her most wisely when he wrote in his monumental *Children's books in England*:

. . . it was the spiritual volcano of children's books as the activities of John Newbery had been their commercial volcano. . . . It was the coming to the surface powerfully and permanently, the first unapologetic, undocumented appearance in print, for readers who sorely needed it, of liberty of thought in children's books. Henceforth fear had gone and with it shy disquiet The Alices were pure invention with nothing in their elements which was humanly old or made familiar through

generations of mankind; nothing that is, which any prose writer for children up to that time had dared to think immediately acceptable to such readers. Yet they fell then and still fall into the category of fairy tales; and as Dodgson himself once thought of calling the Wonderland book 'Alice's Hour in Elfland' this is perhaps justifiable, though neither fairy nor elf appears from one end to the other. There is simply Magic and even that is treated as just an extension of the natural—'curiouser and curiouser'. The essence of the story is the translation of the ordinary into the extraordinary in a plausible way—not as a conjuring trick (a white rabbit out of a madman's hat, so to speak) but as an almost logical extension of properties inherent in this or that person or animal.

Carroll read his 'Alice's adventures underground' to the family of his friend George Macdonald and it was the latter's son, Greville, who expressed the wish that there should be sixty thousand volumes of it. Little of childish hyperbole has been as accurate as that prophecy. GEORGE MACDONALD, author of the *Princess and the goblin* and *Princess and Curdie*, was, like Charles Kingsley, a clergyman, and like Kingsley felt the full impact of the scientific thought of that day. Much of the nonsense and fantasy of Macdonald's stories arises out of the scientific discoveries which were being discussed in nineteenth-century England. Scientific discovery had suggested possibilities of fantastic adventure beside which the miracles and magic of traditional folk tale seemed almost tame in comparison. The well-known story *The light princess* is a good example of the new form of fairy story. To a certain extent the story follows the traditional pattern—christening, curse, spell, disenchantment—but the pattern is given a slight twist in that there is a suspicion of parody about the plot, a gentle irony in the treatment. The christening curse cast upon the 'light princess' was a curse which bore the full imprint of scientific learning. An atrocious aunt deprived the infant princess of all her gravity and the

unhappy child was in consequence fated to float through the air laughing extravagantly, for her loss of gravity was a double loss, physical and mental. Not only the wicked godmother who casts the curse but those about the court who attempt to mitigate its effects are all educated in the sciences; nevertheless tradition wins in the end. It is love not science that ultimately finds the way.

Granny's wonderful chair and the *King of the Golden River* were modern fairy stories in that they were written in the modern period, but they were both medieval in their background. The fairy stories of MRS. MOLESWORTH were modern in both senses for she brought the old magic into everyday contemporary life. Her stories were the ancestors of books such as *Mary Poppins* and *The phoenix and the carpet*, in which ancient enchantments are proved to have lost none of their efficacy when brought forward in time and mingled with today's realities. Mrs. Molesworth's life (1842-1921) covers a span of one of the richest periods in the history of children's literature, and it is noteworthy that her own stories published in the middle period of her life have dated far less than many of the books which she saw achieve popularity and then oblivion in her own lifetime. Several of her books were realistic, but her two most popular are the fanciful stories *The tapestry room* and *The cuckoo clock*, both of which have that type of romantic setting which appeals to an imaginative child. Griselda, who finds her adventures through the cuckoo clock, lives in an old house in an ancient town, a house behind which is such a garden as Arthur Rackham might have drawn or Walter de la Mare written a poem on. The tapestry room was to be found in an old French chateau. Here two children, accompanied by Dudu the raven, Houpet the cock, and Nibble the guinea-pig, enter the castle on the tapestry. Even those names show a

modern spirit. Charles Kingsley might have been tempted to call the guinea-pig 'Don't-bite-if-you-don't-want-to-be-bitten' and Frances Browne too would have infused a little morality into the fur and the feathers. Always Mrs. Molesworth's tales astonish us by their modern style. She never preaches and she never submits to that overwhelming temptation of all nineteenth-century writers, to murder the main characters in the closing chapters for their misdeeds in earlier pages.

EDITH NESBIT AND HER PERIOD

EDITH NESBIT wrote her children's stories primarily to make money. A brilliant gay person of hospitable turn of mind, she filled her house with friends and learned the lesson—full house, empty coffers. If her reasons for writing were not wholly admirable, the results were. She wrote two main types of books for children: realistic and fantastic. In the realistic tales, of which the Bastable family books are best-known, she created children who were perhaps touched with the Don Quixote brush, children with a desire for high adventure, treasure-finding, banditry, mystery, and the joys of discovery. Their adventures were never of the magnificence they had hoped for and most of the fun of these stories lies in the contrast between lofty aims and lowly achievement. In her other tales, *The phoenix and the carpet*, *The five children and it*, *The story of the amulet*, she experimented with magic and found it worked as satisfactorily in the Tottenham Court Road as in any castle in Grimm or Andersen. In *The phoenix and the carpet* that fabulous bird with the magic carpet of legend appears in a shabby London nursery. Inevitably the magic carpet means travel in the Arabian Nights manner but with this difference: Edith Nesbit, a woman, realized the transient nature of all carpets. They are not everlasting. The threads of the magic carpet wear out and the magic

becomes thin too. Thus on one occasion, towards the close of the book, the children Cyril, Robert, Anthea, and Jane see the place of their magic wanderings only dimly through the walls of their schoolroom. They are standing on a worn patch. (A good example of that ever underestimated quality, feminine logic.) In *The story of the amulet* the same children with a magic amulet return through time to Babylon, ancient Egypt, Atlantis. This device of letting characters from the present slip back into the past has been used since over and over again both in adult and children's literature. The films have made it seem almost a stale trick but Edith Nesbit was an early exponent. She took her characters backward into time, sometimes only three hundred years, as Dickie in *Harding's luck*, sometimes thousands of years. Nor was her purpose didactic. She made her ancient cities alive.

Edith Nesbit was friendly with Dr. Richard Garnett of the British Museum and it was he who encouraged her to write of the past as she did. But there was another spur. As a child wandering among the courts of the Crystal Palace, she had seen Hermes in the Grecian section and felt the spirit of the Alhambra in the Spanish court. She had become excited about and personally involved with the past in her own childhood: she wanted other newer children to find the same measure of excitement in her books.

It was about this period that KIPLING published the *Jungle book* (1894) and *The just-so stories* (1902). He had taken Indian and African folk lore and, infusing it with his own genius, created a new type of children's literature. Where previous writers of modern fairy tales had looked to Europe he had gone East and discovered a richer vein. He knew India and he remembered his own childhood with a bitterness which showed itself in various ways. Once I collected comments on the

'Elephant's child' from a class of Standard Four and Five girls in a private school. They all liked the story but less than a third mentioned that it was funny. The majority however admitted that they were attracted by the idea of retribution. To quote three of them: 'I like it because of the spanking bits and I think they mean his relations deserve to be spanked.' 'The curious Elephant child was sweet the way he put his uncle the baboon in the hornets' nest.' 'I thought it was lovely the way the baby was when he came home and spanked all his people.'

THE GENESIS OF DR. DOLITTLE

In 1896 there appeared Belloc's *The bad child's book of beasts*, in 1900 Helen Bannerman's *Story of Little Black Sambo*, in 1903 Barrie's *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, in 1908 Kenneth Grahame's *Wind in the willows*; all pointed the way to a new era in writing for children. But after this there was a long lull until 1920 when *The adventures of Dr. Dolittle* was published. HUGH LOFTING, away at the front, wanted to write regular letters home to his children but about the holocaust which was his daily life he could find little to say, until looking at the heroic animals of the Flanders battle-fields, he had the germ of an idea. He began to imagine the life of a country physician with a great love of pets who gives up his human practice for the more attractive therapy of the animal kingdom. Once one begins to imagine, there is sometimes no stopping, and so Lofting's imaginary doctor and imaginary animals took the 'leap out of circumstance' and began to develop. They are a noble host who bear thinking upon—Dab-Dab the duck, Gub-Gub the pig, author of one volume of a projected twenty on food, and that not unfamiliar Pushmi-Pullyu (whose form might make at some future date a telling heraldic device on the arms of the Civil Service). Each strange character was an individual and the strangeness of each was

peculiar to each. Lofting is a master of nonsense, a nonsense with roots in his observation of human nature generally, and particularly his knowledge of his own children's quirks and fancies. It will be noted that originally the fantasy arose out of necessity. It was impossible to write about an existing situation and the fantasy developed. When the war was over and the prompting necessity was a thing of the past the fantastic world was well established and the fantastic characters were bent on pursuing their own destinies. Thus the original book was followed by a long series of sequels, in which there was no lessening of sincerity. The author did not have to invent, each character had vitality, and could pursue a course of action as any 'normal character' in a story pursues a course of action, very often in direct opposition to his creator's dearest wish.

Dr. Dolittle books are probably the most sought after of all books for the eight-nine-ten-eleven-year-olds, although his position of late has been challenged by the Mumfie books of KATHERINE TOZER. Mumfie is an elephant, one of the many literary elephants whose company includes Babar, the elephant's child in *Just-so stories*, Toomai's elephants, and Mukerji's poetically described 'chief of the herd'. Mumfie is not one of the greatest of these but he is probably the funniest. Katherine Tozer is primarily an artist and her vigorous illustrations in black and white with splashed blue and lolly pink show much more inventiveness than her writing. The first book *Here comes Mumfie* is spontaneous enough but the later books show a falling-off in quality. Children, however, appear not to be aware of it and read and re-read the series.

Howard Spring wrote once in the *Junior bookshelf* to this effect:

If I hold one opinion more than another it is that we must give children characters to read about. They are the very pith

and essence of fiction and as I read the innumerable books for children in which every character is as dead as a winter fly, I know in my bones that those books will never be among the fortunate few that children read again and again Don't make the mistake of supposing that by a character I mean the sort of person you meet in the street You wouldn't have found Don Quixote if you had raked Spain from end to end in his day we can trust children to understand and accept characters that have a touch of allegory and fantasy. Too many books for the young are concerned with dull adventures that might conceivably happen. There is room for the heavenly ones that never could.

'The heavenly ones that never could.' It is this human desire for the heavenly ones that never could that accounts perhaps for the slight distrust of the well-organized state, the organized Europe, or the organized world, for men feel (that they may be in error I have no doubt) that a limit to possibilities of human life has been set, and that the 'leap out of circumstance' is no longer possible in a completely rational universe such as the Laskis and Coles envisage.

But to return to our modern fairy tales. Mary Poppins, heroine of PAMELA TRAVERS'S story of that name, should meet Mr. Spring's requirements very well. Mary Poppins was a children's nurse who blew into the Banks household with the East wind and blew out again a year later when the wind changed. She was a young woman of strange powers, able to slide up banisters better than down, rude, intolerant, vain and conceited, snub-nosed and plain, laconic, mysterious, a beloved tyrant. Never yet have I given this book to a small girl who has not returned inquiring for *Mary Poppins comes back*. And now there is a third sequel for her delectation, *Mary Poppins opens the door*.

In the *Turf-cutter's donkey* and its sequels, PATRICIA LYNCH,

like Edith Nesbit and Pamela Travers, mixes magic and normal everyday activities almost carelessly. When the incredible occurs in a mundane setting it is, one might argue, given an edge: the dramatic contrast of possible and impossible makes the impossible stand out in high relief. Eileen and Seamus are brother and sister who live in Ireland on the edge of a great bog where their father is a turf-cutter. This is the story of all the adventures which befall the turf-cutter's children after they find Long-Ears the donkey; they catch a leprechaun and are thrust back into Ireland's legendary past where they meet Finn and his warrior band. A surprising number of animals helps out the progress of this tale—elephant, salmon, donkey, pig, and dog. In any other country but Ireland where peasants and their animals live in such close physical (and possibly mental) communion, this might be merely absurd. In Ireland it is inevitable. Patricia Lynch's style has a pleasantly colloquial flavour, simple in sentence style and vocabulary. This is typical: 'They had a grand little red cow from Kerry, an elegant pig in a neat tidy sty, when the creature would stay there, and any number of hens and chickens so they didn't do too badly.' The adult reader going through this book and its sequel *The turf-cutter's donkey goes visiting* is conscious of the family likeness to the work of Yeats, Synge, and Sean O'Casey—a characteristic Irish 'something' unobtrusively but definitely there. No hard-and-fast line can be drawn between the reading of a child and the reading of an adult, for one book is connected with another in the reader's mind though fifty years separate the two. An Irish fairy tale read at ten may well be preparation for Yeats's *Tower* read at thirty.

RICHARD HUGHES'S *Spider Palace* is a collection of fanciful stories which occasionally in their logic recall Lewis Carroll. In the 'Dark child' for instance the hero Joey was not 'black

like a negro . . . he was black in the way night is: in fact he was so black that anyone anywhere near him could hardly see anything. Just as a lamp gives out light, he gave out dark.' The conclusion of this story develops logically out of this situation: that is, if there is an initial act of belief the end is really satisfying and sensible on its own peculiar plane. Hughes is known in the adult world as the author of *High wind in Jamaica*, and he is furthermore the extremely popular adopted uncle of the children of Clough and Amabel Williams-Ellis. Much of his fantasy is based on this friendship; for example his story which begins: 'Once there was a man who said he didn't like the sort of houses people lived in, so he built a model village. It was not really like a model village at all, because the houses were all big enough for real people to live in, and he went about telling people to come and live in Wales.' That man is obviously based upon the character of Clough Williams-Ellis, an architect who really did build a complete village on the edge of a cliff in Wales, all the houses different colours and shapes with balconies, steps, towers, ponds, and statues.

Carroll's Ugly Duchess was based on Matsy's picture and Lofting's Dr. Dolittle was an imaginative projection of what the author himself would have liked to be. The point about the roots of fantasy may not be important but I think it is true to say that people with minds richly stored with scene and incident, who have known many people and laughed at the quirks and idiosyncrasies of human nature, are likely to know how to write good fantasy from the very odd juxtaposition of fact and memory in their own heads. It has been said of Hughes that he sees things 'suddenly sharply newly . . . he sees things in the kind of mixture there is in *Midsummer Night's Dream*'. Since he was a boy he has been excited by physics and mathematics as Carroll was, and it is possible that this knowledge of physics and mathematics

and the study of relationships which these two sciences imply do explain Hughes's success as a creator of the fantastic.

J. R. R. TOLKIEN, author of the *Hobbit*, also suggests a comparison with Lewis Carroll, for, as Dodgson was, he is a professor at Oxford and the Rawlinson and Bosworth professor of Anglo-Saxon and fellow of Pembroke College. His book was written for a specific group of children, Tolkien's own young family. The paragraph below has all the rhythm of a story originally told aloud, the rapid asides and corrections which occur in a spoken story. It smells of the family fireside. Listen to the way the *Hobbit* begins:

In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty dirty wet hole filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare sandy hole with nothing in it to sit on or to eat; it was a hobbit-hole and that means comfort. It has a perfectly round door like a porthole, painted green with a shiny yellow brass knob in the exact middle. The door opened on to a tube-shaped hall like a tunnel: a very comfortable tunnel without smoke, with panelled walls . . . and lots and lots of pegs for hats and coats—the hobbit was fond of visitors. And what is a hobbit. . . . They are (or were) small people, smaller than dwarfs (and they have no beards) but very much larger than Lilliputians. There is little or no magic about them, except the ordinary everyday kind which helps you to disappear quietly and quickly. They are inclined to be fat in the stomach; they dress in bright colours, wear no shoes, have long clever brown fingers, good-natured faces, and laugh deep fruity laughs.

Need one add more except to say it looks extremely likely that the hobbit will become one of the immortals along with Alice and Toad of Toad Hall.

The modern fairy tale includes the worst and the best of writing for children. In the hands of a writer of near genius it can scale the heights with its triumphant imagination; at the

other extreme, when it is the product of a feeble and infertile fancy, it becomes lost in the marshes of absurdity. Such poor books are often taken as typical of the group and bring discredit not only upon the modern fairy tale but upon children's literature as a whole. Imitation Alices, barely disguised Dr. Dolittles, and fake winds in willows are bad enough in themselves, but they may cause a distrust in the adult mind of the originals which is near tragedy.



Realistic Stories—Stds. 2 to 4

AUTHORS writing for children of eight, nine, ten and thereabouts, have concentrated on the imaginative tale, and it is not always easy for parents, teachers, and librarians to find enough realistic stories for boys and girls of this age. In fact one might name them like a certain famous regiment 'nobody's own'. Of the books there are, the majority deal with children of other lands, for the unaffected internationalism of childhood is reflected in reading at this period. In part the school curriculum accounts for much of the interest, as children in Standards Two to Four are enjoying their first taste of geography. The deeper reason must surely be that after eight children are becoming aware of the world outside home; they are delighted with the novelty of different manners and customs portrayed in books like *Little Pear* and *The Dutch twins*. Unlike a certain type of fossilized adult they are not affronted or repelled by differences in national behaviour. On the other hand one might argue that the similarities between children of different countries are as numerous as the differences. Jane Jones of Kaikohe may be amused at the clothes of the Mexican children and a little envious of their bright colours, but she is careful to notice that

Mexican children have a capacity for mischief equal to her own, that retribution follows disobedience with a like speed in Yucatan or North Auckland.

Books about children of other lands have a marked appeal for children between eight and ten and this reading has a value for the individual child and for society as a whole. When a boy reads an exciting or moving story about a boy in another country the child in his own mind identifies himself with that country: he is in Donne's phrase 'involved in mankinde'. One may learn that China produces rice or one may trace the course of the Yang-Tse River and still remain indifferent to China's destiny. Facts will be forgotten when there is nothing to give them life. But if a child has read a story about China and identified himself with its characters, any formal facts he may acquire afterwards become interesting and memorable because their significance in the lives of actual human beings can now be visualized. If the Yang-Tse River should flood and the rice rot in the fields, *Little Pear* or the *Mulberry Village* children might drown or starve. From reading such books as *Mulberry Village* our own English-speaking children do literally become citizens of the world. If there is any ultimate hope for lasting world peace, that peace may come when children of all countries have read about one another; and have read about one another not in formal old-style geography books but in well-told tales of the world over.

The word 'well-told' is used deliberately. Some writers make a story set in another country a geography book in disguise: they kill the narrative by overloading it with extraneous facts and thus defeat their own purpose. The value of stories like *Little Pear* is that they kindle the imagination, and once the imagination is kindled the relevant logs of information can be gathered anywhere. That is not to say that local colour

should be barred from books. In many stories the plot arises directly from distinctly local situations—certain plots can only occur in certain places. Take as an example the well-known story about that virtuous Hans who stopped the leak in the dyke by pushing his hand in the hole in the sea-wall. It is not really necessary in telling that story to mention how much Holland is below sea-level or at which parts of the coast the dykes occur. The story itself by being dramatic has driven home the most important point—Holland is a low-lying country and no one ever forgets it. It is probably the one fact about Holland with which every New Zealander is familiar. In a child's story set in a foreign country, the action of the story is the most important thing about it. Whatever local colour or regional peculiarities contribute to the action is legitimate, but a good tale is sufficient in itself; it is not a mere vehicle for an arbitrary selection of facts.

ELEANOR LATTIMORE'S stories illustrate this contention. Her *Little Pear* for many children must personify the Chinese Republic. Little Pear with his round solemn face and eyes like black apple-seeds is a mischievous child who shows faint signs of reformation at the conclusion of his adventures, but signs not sufficiently marked to affect his popularity. When he runs away he covers a fair mileage of Chinese territory which is described accurately and in an interesting way. But this landscape is an integral part of the story. A lesser author than Miss Lattimore would have made Little Pear run away in order to describe the landscape which would then have become more important than running away and possibly marred the plot. (Incidentally the amount of running away in children's literature is colossal and presents a pretty problem for the child psychologist who can explain these things.) Eleanor Lattimore knows her China so intimately that she is not self-conscious about describing it. It is a part of her life and she writes of it with ease. Born in

Shanghai, she spent the greater part of her childhood and youth in China where her father held various academic posts. Primarily an artist by inclination, she became an author because she wanted something to illustrate.

China has attracted an undue proportion of authors for children. Among the better known are Mary Brewster Hollister with *River children* and *Mulberry Village*; Joanna Hekking, *Pigtails*; Arthur Chrisman, *Shen of the sea* and *Wind that wouldn't blow*; Pearl Buck *Water-buffalo children*. Very few stories are set in Japan except Sugimoto's *With Tao and Hana* and Phyllis Sowers *Yaso-Bu and Ishi-Ko*. Neither of these books is in the first rank. Dorothy Rowe, whose Chinese stories *Rabbit lantern* and *Travelling shops* have been widely popular, has written one Japanese tale *Begging deer*. One is at a loss to account for the difference except that possibly the Japanese child knows less happiness than the Chinese child. The paucity of fiction about Japanese children is some support for this view.

Many of the stories of other lands are written by Americans, although the majority are reprinted in England and consequently freely available in New Zealand. The great American trek to Europe in the 1920s when the exchange position was favourable produced a crop of both adult and children's books. While American novelists were writing all those autobiographical novels about the Yank in Paris, the children's authors were writing of Little Jacques the Breton or Pierre from Alsace. Much of what they wrote has long been out of print, for it was superficial and based on too brief an acquaintance with the localities in question. However, many Americans stayed and became semi-permanent residents in Europe. Many came to write with sympathy and understanding of the countries of their adoption. Two such people were Violet Hill and Helen Maxwell, who have made in addition to their children's stories

a very scholarly collection of Provençal carols. They know France and they love her. *Little Tonino* is a story of a brother and sister who raise flowers for the perfume industry in a small Provençal town; *When Marius was ten* describes a boy's life in one of the ancient walled towns of the south.

There was another reason why American writers began to describe life in other countries. The presence of many foreign groups in the United States accounts for much of the vitality and variety in its contemporary culture; Finns, Poles, Russians, Germans, and Hungarians have all made their original contribution to American art and letters and have influenced the work of others of Anglo-Saxon stock. Yet their presence has also created problems ranging from the extreme form of race-riot to the unseen barriers which are raised against people of Latin or Central European descent. One need only examine American slang to discover how many ugly words have been coined to describe people of other than British descent. Language reflects attitudes. Many thinking Americans have been deeply concerned over these racial antagonisms and have seen that much distrust was caused by ignorance and lack of understanding of national customs. Such a person was LUCY FITCH PERKINS, known throughout America and the British Commonwealth as the author of the 'twin' books—Dutch, Spanish, Chinese, Swiss, French, and others—a miniature League of Nations. Mrs. Perkins lived much of her life in Chicago, where she became more and more impressed as time went on by the mixture of races in the city. She saw schools where children of twenty-seven nationalities were taught in the same building and she marvelled at what the teachers were able to accomplish. It seemed to her that it would help in the fusing process if these children could be interested in the best qualities which each nation had brought to America. That briefly was the genesis of the 'twin' series.

How successful she was to be in her self-appointed task! She was never didactic or dull or moralizing but in her 'twin' books she surely gave children some conception of the lives and problems of various nationalities. Mrs. Perkins believed that a 'really big theme may be comprehended by children if it is presented in a way that holds their interest and engages their sympathies'. She would probably have agreed with George Moore that when passion dies the mind clouds. Conversely when the child's passion for justice is aroused his mind can comprehend even such problems as those connected with land ownership—several of her books have plots bound up with this question. (Mrs. Perkins in her younger days was probably criticized as a radical.) *The Scotch twins* shows the effect on the family of a Scottish shepherd when land is taken out of production and reserved for game. A Mexican story illustrates the state of peonage and serfdom which results from the ownership of large estates by a minority of the population.

Mrs. Perkins was interested in ideas rather than in the transmission of facts. Her stories have well-motivated plots and no 'twin' book is a disguised geographical text. The 'twin' device was a shrewd one, for her books have an equal popularity with boys and with girls. A mere girl heroine usually limits a book's circulation to readers of one sex. Lucy Fitch Perkins's views have proved correct. Her 'twin' books, many of them written as long as twenty years ago, are widely read. Judging by a show of hands with the senior classes of an intermediate school I should say that she has had more readers than Lofting, Ransome, Kate Seredy, or Elizabeth Lewis. Children have not only comprehended her 'big themes', they have enjoyed them.

Another 'big theme' one might have expected many writers to use as a background for children's fiction is the Russian experiment, but actually only three or four stories are available

for the younger reader. Marjorie Fischer's *Palaces on Monday* is an amusing account of a brother and sister who travel through the Soviet Union on their way to meet their father, an American engineer employed upon an important project. This book is a good 'child's-eye view' of the USSR, for the hero and heroine make a fair balance of the pros and cons of life in what they term this 'upside down land'. From the Russian itself comes Rosanov's *Adventures of Misha* translated by Ivy Low, the English wife of Maxim Litvinov. Misha is one more little boy lost; he eludes his father on large Moscow railway station and enjoys those adventures in discovery which the children of fiction can never make successfully when their parents are in the offing.

Books carry children round the world almost as easily as ships and planes carry their fathers to distant battle-fronts. This has been so for less than twenty-five years, but it is a movement, this 'internationalization' of children's literature, which will grow. Almost every country today is represented in the modern children's library. Sometimes the story will be a translation like Joanna Spyri's *Heidi* and other stories of Swiss life, or that Dutch classic *Afke's ten* by Ninke van Hichtum. Sometimes the books will be written by men and women who have lived and studied in certain localities and know the customs and peculiarities more intimately than do the natives. Such books are Muriel Fellows's story of Navajo children in Arizona *Land of little rain*, and a long list of books on pueblo Indian life by Grace and Carl Moon. From Java comes Adele de Leeuw's *Anim runs away* and Kathleen Elliott's *Riema* and *Soomoon*. Lide's *Yinka-Tu the yak* is a Tibetan tale, her *Ood-le-uk the wanderer* is set thousands of miles away in Antarctic wastes. For children who have access to such books as these the world is their oyster.

However, interested as they are in children of other countries,

readers in Standards Two to Four still enjoy books about children of localities like their own. For our purpose here we shall not consider the United States and England as 'other countries'. Boys and girls here accept New Hampshire or old Hampshire as being much the same in their way of life as New Zealand. In any case the style of dress is approximately the same and English is spoken. Even so, stories of the English-speaking countries are less easily found than books about the wider world. Girls fare well with authors like Joyce Lankester Brisley, Eliza Orne White, and Ethel Calvert Phillips, two of whom fortunately are voluminous writers. For the boy between seven and ten the search is less easy. If a boy is bright and reads well he can turn to the Hentys and the Ballantynes, but the average boy of this age who still does not read with great speed or fluency is sometimes at a loss for reading if his taste does not run to the fantastic tales reviewed in the previous chapter.

I remember discussing just this point with a young man in Washington who was at that time (nearly ten years ago) the one and only male children's librarian in the United States. This young man was particularly interested in the reading problems of younger boys, which he felt were not properly understood by the vast army of well-trained but strictly feminine children's librarians. As he worked in a branch library in a middle-class Washington suburb which was used by the local youngsters as their communal club, he had ample opportunity to talk over books and reading with the lads of the village. The boy between eight and ten often found it hard to find books of everyday life and conceivable adventures in a setting which was not exotically foreign. Much as a boy likes reading about little Tish the Eskimo and little Ching of China, some of the time he wants to read about Tim from Brooklyn or Fred on the farm. Sometimes he wants to read about yaks

and camels and water-buffaloes but at other times he likes reading about the commoner car and horse. My librarian friend was convinced that there was an urgent need for more realistic stories for younger boys' books with some of the robustness and humanity of *Tom Sawyer*. 'In fact', he told me, 'I want dozens of books like Phil Stong's.'

PHIL STONG'S stories are, like *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tom Sawyer*, epics of the backyard. His heroes are small-town boys with torn jerseys and the seats out of their trousers; they are interested in food more than somewhat; they are anxious for adventure and manage to find it despite the hampering nature of parental admonitions and a chronic shortage of ready money which establishes boundaries more effectively than a fence with a hole in it.

Stong established himself as a successful writer of regional fiction for the adult American public before he wrote for boys. While many of his generation were writing about the urban intelligentsia he turned and wrote of Iowa, doing in fiction for the Middle West what Grant Wood has done for it in painting. Like many English novelists of the nineteenth century, Stong discovered that by being faithful in one's description of a small locality, one did not necessarily destroy the universality of appeal and relevance. His boys' books have this same regional quality, 'real, cool and solid . . . unromantic as Monday morning', to borrow Charlotte Brontë's phrase. The boys' stories are set in time about the turn of the century, and in place, near the Des Moines River in Iowa.

High water, as its name suggests, is the story of a flood. Floods usually provide the raw material for tragedy—the Tullivers are but two among the many submerged characters in fiction. Nevertheless, all precedent to the contrary, the flood in *High water* is a funny flood. Human life either does not get

into danger or looks after itself adequately when it does. The real plot centres round the saving of the livestock, or rather one item of livestock, a donkey given rather to meditation than to motion. To save from drowning a donkey which is not aware it is drowning presents problems even to boy heroes. Heart-rending to the executive of the SPCA, this situation is merely side-splitting to the reader. *High water*, like many of Stong's stories, is a comedy of situation rather than a comedy of character. Stong has not Twain's psychological insight which could produce the episode of whitewashing the fence.

All the animals in the Stong books are leading comics. They do not act other than as animals but they always contrive to be funnier than the human beings, who sometimes indeed seem but attendant lords who 'swell a progress, start a scene or two'. My own favourite Stong animal is 'Blue Boy' from the story *Farm boy*. Blue Boy had 'decided almost as soon as he was born that he was the greatest hog on earth. It didn't make any difference to him what other people said. That was why he was the greatest hog on earth. It mightn't have made him the greatest person in the world but it was a good idea for a hog.' The cow in *Captain Kidd's cow* is not as important as Captain Kidd, although animal lovers should agree that a cow who deliberately stows herself on a river boat is of no ordinary bovine stock. This is a tale of six boys who float down the Des Moines River in a broken-down flat-boat; the gang give themselves pirate names and converse when they remember in raw 'piratese',—'Let us make our gullets run red with strawberry grog.' One of the gang, young Henderson the navigator, called Lafitte by the crew, is a lad in the Mark Twain tradition. Lafitte is the son of a river-man and knows every mud-bank and current of the Mississippi. An astute parent or teacher seeing a boy immersed in this book could not do better than introduce

him to Twain's *Life on the Mississippi*. *Captain Kidd's cow* is a jolly adventure story and a fine piece of regional writing for boys. The setting is regional and the plot is only possible because of the nature of the Des Moines river near where it joins the Mississippi. Some readers will notice the many Crusoe touches: the gang of boys on their own show considerable common sense and organizing ability, more particularly in the acquiring of provisions and in the management of their ancient and not very river-worthy craft.

Once only Stong moves away from Iowa. In *Honk the moose* the scene shifts to a small Finnish mining town in northern Minnesota. During an exceptionally cold winter a moose is driven out of the woods to seek shelter in little Birora; here the moose is befriended by two boys who christen him Honk from his characteristic melancholy cry 'Hawwnk-Hawwnk'. The nomenclature is typical Stong and reminds me of a mongrel in another tale whose name was No-Sitch (No sitch animal).

SANFORD TOUSEY'S books are simpler reading than Phil Stong's. They are read by boys between six and ten, the age varying with the intelligence and reading ability of the individual child. All are profusely illustrated and their plots fairly similar. Usually a boy goes to stay with a well-qualified specialist uncle of one sort or another. These uncles are, variously, expert fishermen or steamboat captains or cowboys, but whatever their trade they have this in common, a willingness to show a boy how everything is done. They are practical people who do things and enjoy showing nephews how to lasso cattle, or catch lobsters, or steer a steamboat round a bend in the Mississippi. Unlike the adults in Eliza Orne White's stories for girls, they have no philosophy of life which they give voice to; their relationship with children is a relationship which develops out of sharing an occupation, like the relation-

ship which exists between an electrician and his apprentice, or driver and fireman on a train. The great virtue of Tousey's stories is that the boy characters live for the duration of each holiday and each book in an adult world. The uncle usually manages to acquire for his nephew a costume which is a miniature of his own. *Steamboat Billy* has a pilot's navy-blue uniform and *Fisherman Tommy* is given an oilskin and seaboots. Even in appearance they are like grown men. Boys reading these stories identify themselves with the heroes and imagine themselves useful members of an adult society in which boats or beasts are temporarily under their control.

There are not many authors like Stong and Tousey who write almost all their books for boys between seven and ten. In looking for realistic stories for this age one can only pick a book or two from an author here and an author there. The Haders, who were mentioned in the second chapter as picture-book makers, have written *Tommy Thatcher goes to sea*, *Spunky*, and *Cricket* for those who have outgrown their earlier stories. Difficult as it is to find a good story about a boy who goes to sea, curiously enough there are several about animals who by accident or design manage to stow away on a sea-going craft—Alan Villiers's *Joey goes to sea*, the Carrolls' *Luck of the Roll and Go*, and Honoré Morrow's *Ship's monkey*. Madeline Horn's *Farm on the hill* is another Middle Western farm story, with illustrations by Grant Wood which are little known to many who admire his easel pictures. For sheer comedy there is little to equal Robert Atwater's *Mr. Popper's penguins*. Mr. Popper, painter and decorator, had an obsession. Polar exploration was his monomania. He read every book about every expedition, he saw every film, he decorated his living-room with pictures from the *National geographic magazine*. It was with some surprise however that he received a penguin as a present

from a notable traveller in the Antarctic. Penguins, for the the first penguin laid an egg, play havoc with the routines of suburban family life. Robert Atwater has Phil Stong's flair for the comedy of situation.

Among English writers for small girls, JOYCE LANKESTER BRISLEY holds pride of place. Superficially considered, her Milly-Molly-Mandy stories might be classed as a series of commonplace little stories about a commonplace little girl. They are stories inexpensively produced with a cheap binding and no vivid pictures—Milly-Molly-Mandy lives in an English village with her working-class parents, a grandmother, grandfather, aunt and uncle. It is conceivable that their small cottage might prove cramping to an adolescent, but to an eight-year-old it is a secure and comforting world in which close quarters seem to foster rather than destroy personal relationships. It is interesting that Joyce Brisley, like many writers for children of this age, should set her stories in a small village or town where real friendships between adults and children seem to blossom more pleasantly than they do in an urban setting. The modern novelist from Sherwood Anderson onward has written of his nausea over small-town and village narrowness. The modern novelist is possibly correct. A critic of children's literature on the other hand is driven to the conclusion that despite its horrors for the mature male and female, the small town must hold much joy and satisfaction for children, or else why are so many popular stories set in such localities? Biographers of Hans Andersen have pointed out that it was the miniature universe of the island of Odense, with its cross-section of humanity, which proved a stimulus for much of Andersen's later writing.

Joyce Brisley is no genius of Andersen's calibre, but she has a gift of portraying in an unpretentious way a tiny world in which children are valued and not unimportant citizens,

whose friendships extend from the infants in arms to the local octogenarians. Joyce Brisley has another gift, a knowledge of the minutiae of childhood. When Milly-Molly-Mandy goes looking for acorn-cups her biographer is aware of the importance of this search. The acorn-cup, useful for making dolls' bowls, wheels for matchbox carts, and little pipes, is as all-purposeful to the small girl as the soy-bean to Japanese. When M.M.M. is given a doll's tea-set, Miss Brisley describes the tea-set with the affection of someone who in her own time has gasped with excitement over the cups, plates, and jug fitting neatly into cardboard holes in a cardboard container. Owning a doll's tea-set is one of the major experiences of childhood and Joyce Brisley knows it. In this particular story, M.M.M.'s friend Susan acquires a tea-set at the same time and there is a slight tug-of-war as to who shall give the first tea-party. The situation is met by holding a combined tea-party with the two tea-sets and a guest to mark the importance of the occasion. There is more than a little knowledge of childish logic in the fact that guest Billy drinks two cups of tea and eats a double helping of food because he is after all the guest of two people. Children reading this episode accept all this as entirely reasonable and not particularly funny.

Careful attention is paid throughout the narrative to the highly important question of food: whenever two or three are gathered together we learn what they eat. Miss Brisley has that attractive trick of itemization. When M.M.M. goes fishing the reader is given a description not only of her lunch—bread and butter, and egg, and a banana—but of all her gear—a new tin mug to drink out of, a bottle for drinking-water, a jam-jar to carry fish in, a little fishing net, string and safety-pin, and her school satchel to put things in. This is a trick which Defoe knew and demonstrated in *Robinson Crusoe*. It is a trick which

satisfies a real human need. Older people have a delight in looking through mail-order catalogues, in reading recipes even when the ingredients are not available, in making lists of clothes to take on holidays, and in recounting to the family by letter a list of Christmas presents received. It is this passion for itemization which leads ultimately in the highest circles to the classification of species and the advancement of science, and among the rest of us to the making of lists for grocers or formidable columns of jobs to be done at weekends.

So we leave Milly-Molly-Mandy. She is not one of the entertaining mischievous children of fiction but she is no prig. Her slight acts of renunciation are usually not just that unadulterated unselfishness which is more bearable in fiction than in real life—they show sound common sense. Yes, possibly a commonplace little girl our M.M.M., but her faculty for simple enjoyment and her nice adjustment to her environment are almost enviable.

ELIZA ORNE WHITE is similar to Joyce Brisley in that she writes for children of the same age and sets her plots in New England villages rather like Milly-Molly-Mandy's home. She has the same understanding of the relationships between adults and children but with this difference, that Eliza Orne White is a more sophisticated writer and the situations she describes are more complex. Miss White does not subscribe to the beliefs that everyone is agreeable or that all men love one another. Even in these stories for young readers she describes tensions between adult characters and occasionally tensions between adults and children. Typical of her characters are a grandfather who does not care at all for his son-in-law, a mother who is trampled upon by a small daughter until she rebels, and a father who shows a lack of understanding of a motherless girl. These are all real-life situations but in portraying them Miss White reveals an

honesty which is rather rare. It should be pointed out that the bulk of her adult characters are affectionate people who deserve the trust and friendship which children place in them. Further, some of the more delicate situations are in the background of the stories and bear the same relationship to the main plot as do adult concerns to children in real life. Children are aware of the adult world but they do not always see its real significance, and when they do, they do not always bother their heads much about it. Eliza Orne White's gift is that she can recreate in fiction this foreground and this background of the real child's life.

Farm beyond the town is the best fictional study I have read of the relationship between daughter and stepmother. Because of the doubtful heritage of stepmothers in folk lore, many children are conditioned by their reading into a dislike of a stepmother which tends to be strengthened by natural youthful jealousy. In response to a reference request in Dunedin, as I mentioned earlier, we gave the *Farm beyond the town* to a stepmother who wanted a book which would show stepmothers in a more pleasant light than that cast by the Brothers Grimm in *Snow-white and the seven dwarfs*. The story did assist in the breaking down of barriers. To children who do not have to adjust themselves to new parents *Farm beyond the town* is a comforting story of country life, in the reading of which they can recapitulate the fun of their own holidays.

Training Sylvia is not the moral tome the title might suggest. A lively and high-spirited girl turns the tables and effects a metamorphosis upon adults who had hoped to mould her. Sylvia is more in line with the conventional heroines of children's fiction than many of the characters in earlier books, but Miss White is no longer a young woman and invention flags as the years pass. Mary Starr of *Lending Mary* is what tea-party-goers term a handful until a summer holiday spent not with her

yielding mother, but with a shrewd and understanding aunt by adoption, changes her attitude to life a little. Eliza Orne White is very capable at describing slightly difficult children, not the problem variety who cause headaches to social workers, but the slightly tiresome ones who worry their nearest and dearest. One suspects this author in her time of having had to cope with several such children, for the aunts of Miss White's stories fit in with my own mental picture of Miss White.

This is how one breezy quasi-aunt treats a homesick child on her first night in a strange bedroom. To Mary Starr her aunt presents six embroidered handkerchiefs and this thought. 'In books homesick children always cry themselves to sleep when they are in a strange house, so I thought six handkerchiefs would be very handy for you to use the first night. I've more I'll give you sometime but I think six will do tonight.' Wise Ruth. What children could produce tears for which such generous preparations were made? Certainly Mary Starr could not and did not.

Someone running a study course in child psychology might do worse than make Eliza Orne White compulsory reading for the group. This author knows children and their handling. From her books one can learn about children, and, more salutary, one can learn what children think of adults and what they expect of them.

Other writers on home life for younger girls include Grace James, who is responsible for a long chain of books in the John and Mary series, and Eve Garnett whose *Family from One-End Street*, the story of the vicissitudes of a dustman's family, won the Carnegie Medal in 1938. Enid Bagnold's *Alice and Thomas and Jane* is all one would expect from the author of *National Velvet*. Ethel Calvert Phillips, another American writer, is not as subtle in her character portrayal as Eliza Orne White; she

may be compared rather with Joyce Brisley. Miss Phillips has written some twenty stories all intimately linked with children's everyday life: the visit to the shoemaker, the quarrel over dolls, the arrival of a new baby—drama in Lilliput if you like, of great moment to the Lilliputians and not without considerable charm for those Gullivers who care to venture out of their own adult reading world.



Realistic Stories—Stds. 5 and 6

THIS chapter, on fiction for boys and girls in Standards Five and Six in the primary school and the Third Form at secondary school, will in two respects at least be incomplete. In a book of the limited dimensions of this one it is not possible to give more than passing mention to the many nineteenth-century children's books which are still read today. To analyse the reasons for the survival of Marryat, Kingston, Ballantyne, and Fenimore Cooper, the giants of boys' fiction, would be to cast light on the reasons for the popularity of Geoffrey Trease and Arthur Ransome today, but as the older writers are known and, in a sense, 'need no bush' I have decided to concentrate on present-day writers whose worth perhaps needs the sweet uses of advertisement. A second serious limitation of this chapter is that no consideration is given to the many books written for adults during the last forty years which boys and girls also could enjoy. We know younger readers like Max Pemberton's *Iron pirate*, Erskine Childers's *Riddle of the sands*, and James Boyd's *Drums*; but they might also like Kästner's *Missing miniature* and William Morris's *The roots of the mountains*. If children's libraries in New Zealand were not so shockingly

understaffed and short of funds it might be possible systematically to experiment in this way, trying out adult books on younger readers. Such an experiment would take time, both in the distribution of the books and in the noting of reactions to them. In the meantime, however, as no such experiment has been made, I have restricted the present survey, with one exception, to children's books written for children. There is no suggestion made nevertheless that children should be limited to children's books. That would be disastrous, but it is equally disastrous to foist upon a child an adult book for which he is completely unprepared intellectually and emotionally. In my own experience I have noticed that many parents, more particularly the intelligent ones, often overestimate their children's reading ability. One cannot help noticing the discrepancy between what a university professor may choose for his child, and what that same child may choose for himself when he comes to the library alone.

The interest in children of other lands, mentioned in the previous chapter, continues when children have passed to the upper forms of the school. Two outstanding best-sellers of the past ten years have been the books *Young Fu* and *Good Master*. ELIZABETH FOREMAN LEWIS has written four novels of China, which have earned for her the well-deserved title of the 'Children's Pearl Buck'. Her portrait of Fu the young brass-smith is a fine study of a boy's personal relationships, set against an almost tragic background, thriving Chung-King with its floods, its cholera outbreaks, its bandits and turbulent militia. Never once is China presented in falsely romantic colours. KATE SEREDY'S *Good Master* is a story of ranch life on the great Hungarian plains, an out-door book about wild horses, shepherds, and gipsies, all of which are seen through the eyes of a gay Budapest girl on holiday with her gentle country-bred

cousin. Something makes this story unusually satisfying and wholesome (in the unpriggish sense of that word)—possibly the rhythmical background of farm life, but more probably the warm understanding between the children of the story and the adults in it, between the shepherds who tell tales to Kate and Janesi, and between these two and the 'good master', Janesi's father, a magnificent peasant type. As the author of the story is also its illustrator, the book is a perfect unity, with pictures which are spirited as the tale grows spirited and become still as the pace of the story slackens. A sequel to this is *The singing tree*, which takes up the adventures of the cousins on the good master's ranch during the first world war. Kate Seredy is a Hungarian by birth and upbringing, but she writes English prose of a fine simplicity with no trace of a foreign idiom.

There are novels of other countries which have been popular, but they are not altogether typical of the books enjoyed by this age-group. We notice the growing interest in the historical story, which does indeed become almost a passion with some children, but the most popular type of book is undoubtedly the story of everyday adventures in a modern setting. With girls the story of home life or the vocational story are the current favourites, ousting the once popular school story, but very few read the more fantastic or more imaginative type of book, except perhaps *Just-so stories* and *Wind in the willows*.

ARTHUR RANSOME is, I think, the uncrowned king of modern English writers for children. Other people have written books that by themselves are better, but no contemporary British writer has such a long sustained record of success. Look at a list of his books: *Swallows and Amazons*, *Swallowdale*, *Peter Duck*, *Winter holiday*, *Coot club*, *Pigeon post*, *Secret water*, *We didn't mean to go to sea*, *Missee Lee*, and *The big six*. The very titles have their own unique flavour, and it is noteworthy that all appeal

equally to boys and girls. The first, *Swallows and Amazons*, was written for the grandchildren of old friends with whom Ransome, since childhood, had spent holidays on Windermere, and the story is as much about the children as for the children. One suspects the Captain Flint (*alias* Uncle Jim) of the books to be Mr. Ransome himself. The children of his books are alike in possessing a sturdy independence and a practical turn of mind: they are able to sail boats, pitch tents, build fires, and make camp meals, and rarely call for assistance to their elders, who leave them to their own devices in return. Their adventures are adventures of children on holiday, exciting at the time but not over-spectacular, garnished with the children's imagination (for no small brother can be a nuisance once he is named the ship's boy, and grown-ups are tolerable once called the 'natives').

His characters are delineated completely by their conversation and actions, by description never, except for such scraps of information as age and, where necessary, costume. Mate Susan's colossal sense of order and tidiness is built up with a hundred touches, until the reader becomes conscious of a cushion out of place (more or less) as soon as Susan appears on the scene. This probably is one of the reasons for the book's complete air of reality. Hundreds of children have been so convinced of the truth of the stories that they have written long letters to the Blacketts and Walkers, care of Jonathan Cape, publisher, about their own adventures or even asking for technical advice on the art of sailing. For Arthur Ransome excels at clear explanations, given without patronage. Whenever his staple characters, the Walkers or the Blacketts or the Callums, embark on something about which the reader is likely to be in ignorance, Arthur Ransome makes it plain exactly what they are doing. In this respect he has a gift. The reader

follows his careful description of Dick Callum fixing a trigger in the pigeon loft with the same careful attention one intelligent person will give another who is talking his own particular 'shop'.

And who is Arthur Ransome? He says himself he was 'the son of a fisherman who was a professor of history in his spare time', and that consequently his earliest memories are of rivers, lakes, and seashore. In Russia during the world war and revolution, as a newspaper correspondent, he managed to collect folk tales in his spare time, stories he eventually published under the title of *Old Peter's Russian tales*. He made solitary journeys to China, Egypt, and the Sudan, sailed round the Baltic in a little ship, and once drifted from England to Holland in the same yacht to get accurate details for *We didn't mean to go to sea*. But for all his international wanderings, the Lake Country and the Norfolk Broads remain his first loves, and are the scenes of most of his children's books. He follows the Stevenson precept that an author should know the country of his tales like the back of his hand: 'If you know a bit of country really well, it takes an active part in the making of your book. You can count on it. It is always there and life flows from it into your story.' All Ransome's books have good maps, and he has set quite a fashion for other children's novelists in this respect. Surely there are more maps in children's books than there were ten years ago. It may be wrong, however, to give Ransome all the credit, for when one comes to think of it, the course of European history in the last decade has sent everyone to globe and atlas.

Characters in NOEL STREATFIELD'S stories are like those in Arthur Ransome's in that they too do things, they too are independent, but with this difference: the Arthur Ransome children are independent only on holiday. We never meet them in term time when the chances are that their lives are no

more eventful than those of other middle-class English children. Noel Streatfeild herself had an orthodox, English middle-class upbringing and she was bored by it; in later life when she became an actress, she took a keen interest in the child professionals she met in pantomimes, ballets, and the occasional plays which require a young player or two. It occurred to her that these children who were trained to sing, or act, or dance as the case might be, had a confidence and a zest for life, which had been absent in her own childhood. She spent a summer tenting with Ringling's Circus round England and found the same to be true of the young jugglers, tight-rope walkers, and bareback riders of the circus world—all were disciplined not by their relatives, but by their training: they were mastering a technique and receiving a tremendous satisfaction from it. When Miss Streatfeild deserted the stage for novel-writing, she wrote of the child professionals she had known, and when five years afterwards she was asked to write a story for children themselves, she chose the same subject; *Ballet shoes* was the result. This story describes the training and study of three young girls for whom dancing was the only thing on earth. This same theme of course has been developed in Arnold Haskell's *Felicity dances*, Florence Choate's *Dance of the hours*, and Marie Jeanne's *Yankee ballerina*.

After *Ballet shoes*, her next book was *Tennis shoes*, the story of a family of children who have brilliant success in the English junior tennis championships. The story illustrates the point, though it never says so in as many words, that any child can become competent at some one thing (not necessarily tennis) if he chooses to practise hard enough. The youthful specialist, like the adult one, because of his honest and hard-earned knowledge of his subject, is set free from the need to brag and pretend, which overcomes less well qualified people. *Tennis*

shoes is a particularly useful book in a school or children's library because of its appeal to the games-mad girl who reads little if at all. The book is one of a series 'Tales of Sports and Games,' two other titles of which are Hugh de Selincourt's *Saturday match* and O'Brien's *Two boys go sailing*.

Noel Streatfeild's best book, which won her the Carnegie Medal, is *The circus is coming*. It has been said that 'you can smell the circus in it'. (The statement was intended as a compliment.) The studies of circus hands and circus animals, which are as individual as any of the humans, set this story apart from most 'run-away-and-join-a-circus' books, which are as a rule fairly mediocre. One other exception to the latter generalization is *Sampson's circus* by Howard Spring, whose plea for richer characterization in children's books is cited in an earlier chapter. To show that Spring practises what he preaches, I quote a description of Mr. Sampson himself:

An extraordinary figure came down the steps with slow dignity . . . an enormous body, so fat it was difficult to see where the legs ended and the stomach began; the tiny feet shod in boots with brilliant toes, dove-coloured cloth uppers and buttons; the grey trousers with a broad stripe of black braid down the sides; the black frock coat pulled so tight it looked as though it might burst asunder, scattering a trail of buttons at any moment. There was a white camellia in Mr. Sampson's button-hole. On his head was a tall grey topper, and between the topper and bright scarlet of his tie was a face like an immense Dutch cheese, ornamented with moustaches waxed to fine long points.

KITTY BARNE'S stories have a similar 'vocational' interest to Noel Streatfeild's. Barne heroines are young women of some talent and energy. *She shall have music* is a story of the vicissitudes of Karen Forrest, a young pianist, her battles with an indifferent family, her difficulties in getting even a piano to play

on, and her shortage of cash which made the purchase of sheet music a problem in elementary economics. All this is described with insight and with humour. The following passage occurs after Karen has played to a Women's League Meeting in a parish hall. It had not been a responsive audience. Karen had wondered 'Did you ever know whether people were going to listen to you or not? Did Wolfgang ever know? Did he just go on playing, whatever happened, moving chairs or anything else? Then she remembered something. Wolfgang had never played to a Women's Institute.'

Not only children but adult characters in Kitty Barne books are well delineated. Grown men and women in children's fiction are very often (if they are permitted to be present) merely stock types or puppets. They may be capable of all vileness and villainy on the one hand, or generosity and heroics on the other. Too rarely are they portrayed as people of flesh and bone, with all the frailties of men and women in real life. Rosalba in *She shall have music* is a woman of temperament who gives considerable help and encouragement to young Karen Forrest, but who nevertheless does infect the child with some of her own zeal for showing-off. In real life Rosalba would not appear remarkable, in fiction she is remarkable as a rarity. There may of course be a school of thought which believes adults in children's fiction should be seen through rose-coloured spectacles, lest all that respect which elders and betters demand from young fry may not be forthcoming. Other Kitty Barne stories, sane and of substance, include *Family foot-lights*, a story of amateur theatricals; a sequel *Visitors from London* (the evacuee problem) and *May I keep dogs?* This last is about Thirza who became involved in keeping kennels. It is a better-than-most dog story which contains no lush sentiment about friends dumb or otherwise. The dog-fanciers who deposit

their varied pets in Thirza's kennels are an entertaining troupe of people, as different from one another as borzoi from pomeranian. Kitty Barne well deserved the Carnegie Medal of 1940 for the best children's book published in England that year.

If the hospital boards of New Zealand want a new method of overcoming the shortage of nurses, they could easily ensure a stream of recruits for the next ten years by buying hundreds of copies of HELEN DORE BOYLSTON'S *Sue Barton, student nurse*, and distributing them to every girls' school in the country. A vocational guidance officer recently pointed out that the chronicles of Sue's career have attracted more girls to nursing than all the milk-and-water accounts of Florence Nightingale which are presumed by the aged to be such efficient propaganda for the profession. Red-headed Sue Barton, in the first book which bears her name, begins her career as a raw probationer in a great American hospital. The hospital life is not over-romanticized or presented as hilariously gay. All the irksome rules are described. 'Nurses are forbidden to eat in the wards. They must not wear jewellery on duty, and must rise to their feet when addressed by a doctor.' Sue breaks some of the rules and receives her just deserts. She is absorbed however by that curious complete world, the modern hospital. Moving up she becomes in the second story *Sue Barton, senior nurse*. In this story Sue gains experience in the operating theatre and earns the respect of a bad-tempered but brilliant surgeon who terrifies the nurses while he performs miracles with the scalpels. Some of the discussions between the nurses about working in the operating theatre are particularly interesting to those of us who remain outside the hospital walls and have little idea of how nurses feel towards their many duties. Sue's friend Kit liked the operating theatre.

Surgery's clean and quick—and one of the swellest things that have ever been done for human beings. That's dramatic

if you must have drama . . . I like the table with the instruments all laid in rows. I like the feel of them. I like it when a surgeon sticks out his hand without a word—and shuts it on the instrument I put there—the right instrument. I like seeing that he has enough of everything. I feel as if I were making history every time I go to an operation. It's exciting and satisfying.

Later sequels are *Sue Barton, superintendent nurse, Sue Barton, rural nurse, Sue Barton, visiting nurse*. Theoretically all are meant for girls of high school age. Actually, they are read by girls from about ten years and upwards.

L. A. G. STRONG, ex-schoolmaster, author of some half-dozen children's stories, is also one of England's outstanding minor novelists. Where a writer has two audiences, a junior and a senior, it not infrequently happens that his 'juveniles' are mere pot-boilers. Strong, however, writes as carefully for children as he does for adults, doing considerable research work before embarking on his historical stories, and what is quite significant, toning down nothing out of sentimental consideration for his boy reader. He has been criticized because many of his books contain 'unsuitable material'. The torture scene in *The Fifth of November*, the two murders in *King Richard's land*, the wrestling scenes in *Mr. Sheridan's umbrella*, are none of them for the squeamish—certainly they have little appeal to girls. A. S. Neill holds the view that children have urges to be cruel, and that the best method to get this out of their systems is to let them read or even make up stories in which cruelty and violence have a part. In this connection I remember a child Walter de la Mare quotes as saying 'Sad I hate sad, but cruel I love cruel.' Strong himself as an ex-schoolmaster would probably agree with Neill up to a point. Nevertheless, where instances of cruelty occur in his stories they are described as part and parcel of the life of the times, and contribute to the creating of atmosphere and the carrying forward of the plot. Nothing is included for the sake

of horror alone. Moreover, the author's attitude towards these incidents is unmistakable. In *Fortnight south of Skye* two boys see two strangers washed from a yacht before their eyes, in what appears to be an ordinary rough sea, but was actually a treacherous channel. The tragedy took place in a quiet, unspectacular manner and because the scene was not terrible to watch, the boys did not feel horror at what they had seen. Their fishermen friends with imaginations taught by a lifetime of experience were on the other hand deeply moved. Later the boys discuss their experience.

'I suppose,' said Jim slowly, 'that's the real difference between people that are cruel and people that aren't . . . Well, the people that seem to us cruel, the people that ill-treat animals—the sort of people that in the Middle Ages used to look on and laugh when people were being burnt at the stake, and that sort of thing—they weren't really cruel; they just couldn't believe what they saw. They hadn't got the imagination to understand it and realize what it really meant—just as we didn't realize what was going on to-day.'

Strong's first book was *King Richard's land*, which he wrote because he was deeply interested in the period of the Peasants' Revolt, felt it was a significant period in English history, and wanted boys to be interested in it too. It is an exciting story of two cousins, heirs to great estates, who, after quiet days being tutored in a Hampshire monastery, are suddenly pitch-forked by circumstances into an active part in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. Nigel and Bruce Redvens are at first antagonistic to the rabble they are thrust amongst, but their attitude gradually changes with their growing appreciation of the underlying causes of the Revolt, as they see its course from day to day. However, though revolt makes up the main plot, various side-issues, mysteries, and counter-plots prevent the story from ever becoming either a political or a historical pamphlet.

Artistic balance and historical accuracy are both served by the contrasting of the leaders of the various bands of peasants who converged on London. Wat Tyler, portrayed as a powerful, irresponsible, and on occasions drunken demagogue, is offset by the imaginary character, Yeo, who befriends the boys, a sturdy yeoman type, liberty-loving, tolerant and moderate, anxious only to cast off oppression. Interesting as the characters are, it is the historical events themselves which provide the real drama of *King Richard's land*. Individuals tend to recede into their background. *The Fifth of November*, about the Guy Fawkes plot needless to say, provides a parallel case. The conspiracy itself almost dwarfs the conspirators with the exception of Catesby and Fawkes, the attractive soldier of fortune from the Low Countries. A careful day-to-day chronology of the whole plot, which was worked out by the author before he began on the book, is given in an appendix for the curious together with a bibliography of source material. All conspiracies make good reading, and *The Fifth of November* is no exception. As the story is treated with a fine impartiality it should offend no denomination, and from the book it is quite impossible to tell what the author's beliefs might be.

For contrast, *Mr. Sheridan's umbrella* is a historical story, in which the historical background, Regency Brighton in this instance, is secondary. Will Maitland, hero of the story, is put in charge of his father's growing business, a factory manufacturing umbrellas (at that time only just coming into fashion). Previously the boy had been indifferent, and at times hostile, to the factory, but responsibility aroused his interest and matured him. Boys will be most interested in the smuggling side of the story, and Will's shrewd and on occasions not-so-shrewd handling of business deals. The critical parent or teacher going over the book will find in it a handling of personal relationships which adds value to a good tale.

Strong is also the editor of a series of boys' adventure books, the 'Tales of action,' issued by Basil Blackwell, a publisher who wanted to publish boys' books which would contain all the thrills and drills of the 'shocker' type of story but which at the same time would be well written. What was desired was melodrama on a high level. The publisher was not asking the impossible. The Elizabethan audiences which gaped wide-eyed at *Macbeth* and *Tamerlane* made exactly the same demands of Shakespeare and Marlowe. It is a comparatively modern idea that melodrama is unworthy of the pens of first-class writers. L. A. G. Strong was selected as editor for 'Tales of action' because he was an established novelist who had had years of experience in teaching boys, and who could be relied upon to gauge their taste. One of the first authors he approached to write for the series was Cecil Day Lewis, the poet and (perhaps more important) top-flight writer of detective stories under the pseudonym of Nicholas Blake. Day Lewis wrote a tale of Elizabethan adventure, *Dick Willoughby*.

Another recruit to the series was REX WARNER. Warner's novels for adults, *The aerodrome* and *The wild goose chase*, were brilliant allegorical melodramas which combined the rapid action and elaborate imagery of the Elizabethan play with passionately held political beliefs. Warner's writing contrasts strangely with the almost eventless prose of many of his contemporaries, in some of whose novels, as the more naïve section of the reading public often complains, 'nothing ever happens'. In *The kite*, his first and only book for boys, Warner built his plot round a Phillips Oppenheim situation, the Egyptian drug traffic. Here in the story are suspicion, codes, kidnapping, pursuit, rescue, and ultimate show-down, none of them precisely unusual ingredients in boys' fiction. What was unusual about *The kite* was its author's leftish-liberal attitude to the Egyptian people,

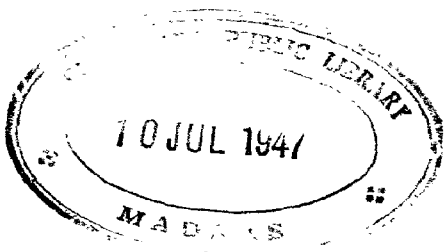
his craftsmanship as a novelist, and his sensitive description of landscape (but not too much of it, in old Sir Walter's way). In this passage below, the hero's uncle is speaking. The Egyptian boy Abd el Kadir has just made a joke about the English in his country.

We have done a lot of good, and of course that's the only part of the story that gets into history books. As a matter of fact, I have always thought the Egyptians are extremely fair in their attitude towards us. England has given Egypt some very fine men, and the Egyptians give us credit for that. No Englishman is unpopular here because of his nationality. But, though they are perfectly willing to have us here, they do want to control their own country. That seems to me perfectly right and proper. As for 'doing good', it's just humbug that Englishmen take jobs in Egypt 'to do good'. They take jobs in order to earn their bread and butter and may or may not do good incidentally. Given the technical skill and resources, the Egyptians have more powerful motives for 'doing good' here than we can ever have.

Other stories in 'Tales of action' include *Knights at bay*, a tale of the siege of Malta (1565, not 1942) by Philip Lindsay; *The China general* by A. F. Alington, a circus yarn; *Fire in the ice* by A. D. Divine, a story of modern whaling. It will be noticed that the material of each story is popular—siege, circus, and whaling, the subjects for which children's librarians are daily asked. Two aeroplane stories feature in the series, *Knight of the air* and *Wings over Eldorado*, both by Malcolm Taylor, another man of parts, sometime airman and journalist, and incidentally editor of the 'Shakespeare Head Edition' of Shakespeare. The willingness of 'men of letters' to turn to writing for boys and girls, illustrated in this series 'Tales of action', is no new trend. In the annals of English literature it will be noticed that Dickens, Thackeray, Ruskin, Wilde, and Goldsmith have all in their time

written at least one book for boys and girls. May New Zealand's intelligentsia soon see the moral. 'Tales of action' are a credit to the fine publishing firm of Blackwell. A possible criticism might be that it is neither good art nor good business to deck out a series of thrilling books for boys in a plain and decorous linen binding with prim gold lettering on the spine—a format more suited surely to an edition of *Pride and prejudice* or of *Little women*.

GEOFFREY TREASE is one of the most politically conscious and politically informed of modern writers for boys. He is aware of the grim patterns of fascist activities and familiar with the popular revolutionary movement necessary to counter the rising tide of political tyranny. Typical is his novel *Call to arms*, a modern adventure story with a South American setting. Although the background is South America, and the war of the story is obviously based on the Gran Chaco War of the 1920s, yet many of the incidents are representative of a hundred incidents which occurred in Europe between 1919 and 1939. The book has a validity because it applies certain political conceptions to one specific locality. It was written in 1935, but the recent history of the South American Republics suggests that the patterns are still repeating themselves. The Gran Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay was engineered by the petroleum interests and the 'merchants of death', so too the war in Geoffrey Trease's novel. His republics have fictitious names, but they too are embroiled in the green horror of war in the tropical jungle, a war in which like the real Bolivia and Paraguay they had no real interest. Trease does not make his war a pretty one. The wounded are left behind in the forest to die; one soldier of fortune is shot in the back by his own men; the soldiers are misled as to why they fight; gas and aerial bombardment complete the picture. One sop there is to the conventions of writing for boys. Youngsters take a major part in



saving the day for their tiny republic. However, they do so because they are disciplined revolutionaries; youth is not their only weapon.

Comrades of the Charter is a story of England and Wales in 1839, that significant year in the history of the British working classes. This book offers a comparison with *King Richard's land*, Strong's story of an earlier rising. Any rebellion is rich substance for good narrative; the conspiracies and long-awaited action combine to provide dramatic material. This dramatic material however is usually exploited in one way. Few children's books ever recount events from the standpoint of the rebel, and a boy might read a dozen school history books and have no clear perception of what it was that drove English men and women throughout the centuries to often futile insurrection. *Comrades of the Charter* takes an abortive rising, and explains why leaders devoted time to its planning, why they drew followers, and why they ultimately failed. It is an exciting story with its own appeal, as an adventure yarn alone, apart from any political message it might contain. Reading a Trease story when one is adult is mildly confusing because, vaguely remembering the stories of one's own childhood, one is surprised to find that the erstwhile 'bad 'uns' have become the heroes. In *Cue for treason* the squire is no peerless knight beyond reproach; the yeoman farmers who pull down his walls in the night are expressing their just grievance against the enclosure of the commons during Elizabeth's reign. In *Grey adventurer* the hero is a Puritan boy, and the knave a Cavalier; this latter book incidentally contains a short study of a liberal headmaster whose ideas prove no whit more acceptable to the reactionaries of his time than the views of progressive teachers in our own country.

HONORE WILLISIE MORROW'S *Splendid journey* is not a new

book nor was it even originally intended as a children's book when it first appeared in 1926. It is probably to be found in most libraries among the adult fiction in its original black and gold binding, although Heinemann reprinted it a year or so ago in a children's edition with illustrations and more attractive format generally. This taking over of an adult book by children is not unusual, for *Gulliver*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and *Don Quixote*, to mention but three, have a similar history. *Splendid journey* differs from these slightly, in that it has a boy hero thirteen years of age whose endurance and fortitude—those are the only words one can use—made a man of him in the end. John Sager's story is, I understand, founded on fact, much of the detail of the story coming from letters and diaries of people met by a party of children who crossed the Oregon Trail in the sixties. That is the substance of the story. The Sager family, parents and six children (the seventh was born on the way), joined a party making for Oregon. Mrs. Morrow's plain blunt style is admirably suited to the chronicle of the almost incredible hardships the Sagers faced on that journey, hardships which were not lessened by any help from the rather sulky John, until the strain of the journey kills first the mother, then the father. John, left alone and responsible, matures and proves equal to the task of leading his young brothers and sisters over the remaining section of the wilderness trail. Somehow, the family becomes separated from the main caravan, and the children alone go to Oregon over hostile wild country, led by John, who keeps them in order with an odd mixture of affection and bullying. The story has an epic quality rarely found in children's books. It is a struggle from beginning to end, tragic, at times pitiful, but altogether real and credible. And children recognize the genuine quality in it.

The thrust westward of the American frontier has inspired so many fine children's novels that they are an important class of modern children's literature. They are important for various reasons. If, as historians like Turner suggest, the extension of the frontier has been the great formative influence upon American life and thought, then it is essential that New Zealand children be familiar with that period, for otherwise no understanding of the United States is possible. But coming nearer home, when we find that here in New Zealand there is practically no literature for children which dramatizes or illustrates our own pioneering period in human terms, we realize that it is only from these stories of the American West that a New Zealand child can obtain a picture of those characteristics of pioneering life which are typical, of Oregon or Otago, of California or Canterbury. The weather, the landscape, and the fruits of the soil may all be different, but the complex story of men and women adjusting themselves to a new environment follows similar patterns in both countries. Thirdly, though all historical lessons and implications be discounted there remains this aspect of pioneering life, that it makes superb story-telling material. There is the adventure, the wealth of incident, the Crusoe-like picture of men against the world, which have served as raw material for good narrative ever since Genesis was written. Finally, the mature writers of this type of story stress courage twice over—both the courage to meet the isolated moment of danger which we call heroism, and that other sustained courage against less spectacular but more attenuated odds, which we call fortitude.

In books like Carol Ryrie Brink's *Caddie Woodlawn* and Phyllis Crawford's *Hello the boat!*, much of interest for a boy or girl is comparable in its source with the interest of Arthur Ransome's books. All these books portray situations in which

human resourcefulness is given full play, but there is one difference: in a Ransome story human resourcefulness spells the difference between a lively holiday and a dull one; in many of the pioneering stories, it spells the difference between life and death. This in itself lends an edge to many a pioneer story. *Hello the boat!* has an unusual background. In the year 1817 the Doaks family migrated down the Ohio River in a 'store-boat', peddling pots, pans, and clothes. Responding to the call 'Hello the boat!' from settlers on the shore they were able to make their necessary trip a profitable one. The author fully exploits her unusual material and presents a fine study in family relationships. The pioneering way of life made it necessary for the older boys and girls in a family to take some responsibility for the family fortunes. They were co-workers rather than dependents, vigorous, robust children usually, with character moulded largely by necessity. *Hello the boat!* is typical of many a similar story in its handling of family relationships. Two other stories which deal with Mississippi life in its more turbulent and highly coloured period are Sabin's *Mississippi river boy* and Meader's *Down the big river*.

In *Splendid journey* there is an intensity of experience quite rare in children's literature, but the intensity is directly the product of the events recorded. The magnificent material in the child responds and is equal to the demands made, but the question does arise: Would John Sager have matured had the demands not been made? In this respect, two stories, *Thimble summer*, by Elizabeth Enright, and *Alice-all-by-herself*, by ELIZABETH COATSWORTH, make an interesting contrast. In both these stories there is also an intensity and depth of experience, but it is the product not so much of the events recorded, which in both books are quite slight, as of the characters Garnett and Alice themselves. Each of these children has a rich personal

life, and each is imaginative, but with imagination which does not so much create a fantastic world, as lead its possessor into a deeper and surer perception of actuality. There is a chapter in *Alice-all-by-herself* in which Alice asks her mother what are her favourite words and her mother answers instantly, 'tranquillity and delight'. These words are the keynotes of the whole book. Alice lives in Maine on the sea-coast, in a big square white house, originally built in the middle of the eighteenth century on land bought from the Indians. The opening story is about the coming of Passamaquaddy Indian Raymond, who sleeps as his ancestors had done, rolled in a blanket in front of the kitchen fire, in the house where his ancestors had also known haven. Alice is delighted.

'Now,' said her father, 'you too have seen an Indian asleep by the kitchen fire. Remember it when you read about the old days. They're never quite dead. The same things happen over and over. And Raymond's blanket too, is part of an old, old story—it's a treaty blanket, you know, and the Government still gives them every year—so many blankets, so much flour and gunpowder in return for an old peace. Do remember, Alice!'

All through the story the relationship between the only child and her parents is beautifully drawn. For this reason I have sometimes in the children's library given the book to 'only ones' who have asked for a family story. I know they really want a story with lots of imaginary brothers and sisters in, and usually I give them such a book, but sometimes I feel Alice will fill the bill even better and she usually does. Most of the chapters of the book could be reprinted as separate stories, and in between chapters Elizabeth Coatsworth, who is poet too, has strewn verses, which contain the whole essence of each story.

Thimble summer is a more robust story perhaps than *Alice*, as even the binding shows. It has a glaring yellow cover, which somehow symbolizes the burning Wisconsin summer, the background of the whole story. Garnett, the heroine, felt that summer was 'like being inside a drum. The sky like a bright skin was stretched tight over the valley, and the earth, too, was tight and hard with heat.' As with a nor'-westerly Canterbury day, where the heat and dust make great events too exhausting to be interesting, and small happenings yield more delight, so Garnett's fun is created out of small things, afternoons in a tree house, quarrels with a brother, picking pumpkins, getting locked in a library, up to the final climax when her hog Timmy wins a blue ribbon at the local show. The illustrations are straightforward casual line drawings by the author. *Thimble summer* in 1940 won the John Newbery medal for the most outstanding contribution to American children's literature for that year.

Another story which has the same atmosphere as *Alice-all-by-herself*, although the setting is totally different, is ALISON UTTLEY'S *A traveller in time*. Mrs. Uttley is an extraordinary person in that whereas most authors consistently write for children of one particular age-group, she has produced picture books for pre-school children, fanciful stories for Standard Two and thereabouts, and novels for early adolescence, at all of which she is unusually successful. *A traveller in time* will never be very popular. Books are rather like food. Some good stories, like some good dishes, appeal to everyone—the Sue Barton books, like apple pie, are favourites with almost every girl. Yet there are other books, too, which like olives and oysters are enjoyed only by people who have acquired a taste for them and relish their strange flavours—among contemporary adult novels Sylvia Townsend Warner's *Lolly willowes* and Elizabeth Bowen's *House in Paris*

are books which some will read and re-read with an added delight and others dismiss after the first chapter or two. *A traveller in time* is an individual story of that kind. It begins:

I, Penelope Taberner Cameron, tell this story of happenings when I was a young girl. To this day every detail of my strange experience is clear as light. I see the beautiful countryside with its woods and gentle hills stretching out infinitely green, and the little brook shimmering with sunlight as it flows under the hazel groves. I hear the murmur of wood pigeons, sleepy and monotonous in the beech-wood, and the warm intimate call of the cuckoo in the orchard by the house. Ice-cold water springs from the mossy earth and I stoop with cupped hands, one clasping the other, to sip the draught, and the taste of that water is on my lips many years afterwards. I smell the hot scents of the herb-garden drenched in sunshine, and the perfume of honeysuckle after rain, but stronger than these is the rich fragrance of the old house, made up of wood-smoke, haystacks and old, old age, mingled together indissolubly. All these scents and sounds are part of the story I have to tell, with light and darkness, shadows and tragedy interwoven.

It will be noticed that Penelope tells the tale herself. Young children often object to a story told in the first person, an 'I' book as they call it. To an older girl, however, this way of writing creates a very intimate feeling between author and reader, as though the story is being told like a secret in confidence, or as if one were reading someone else's diary and living through the events of her life with her. Penelope's strange experience is her stumbling by accident during a holiday at Thackers, an old Derbyshire farmhouse, on a way back to the past. So *A traveller in time* (Penelope's name for herself) is laid half in the present, half in the past; half in the period before 1939, and half back in Queen Elizabeth's day when plot and counter-plot disturbed and often destroyed the peace of many a great family. The theme of a person from one century taking

part in the events of an earlier epoch is as I have mentioned before a favourite one with several modern novelists. It is unlikely that one could interest a girl in her early teens in James's *Sense of the past* but at least this can be said that the girl who has read *Traveller in time* will be prepared later on to accept the curious situation in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* where the heroine lives in many centuries.



Heroes Without Hero-Worship

THE field of biography written for children is a small one. There are scores and dozens of ninepenny and tenpenny 'great lives' readers, which suavely sugar Joan of Arc, Napoleon, General Gordon, or Queen Elizabeth for the benefit of the young, most of them probably written by scribes with encyclopædias on hand. These are not biographies and they do not concern us here.

The author of the genuine biography is familiar with the source materials relating to his subject, and forms a personal picture of his subject, does not merely borrow someone else's conception. Cornelia Meigs's biography of Louisa Alcott is a typical example of such painstaking preparation. Further, a biographer writing for children should evaluate a character as carefully and as honestly as if he were writing for adults. His stress and emphasis will be differently placed, because of the disparity in interests, but he should use no whitewash, no saccharine. Nor is good writing alone sufficient. To clothe the story of an adventurous original mind in an orthodox quiet cloth binding shows no appreciation of the book as an artistic whole. Regrettably one must admit that the truly

great of the past are being presented to young people as either prigs or bores, often by writers without an inkling of a character's real identity. Even the biographies mentioned below have many weaknesses. As a group of related books they have not the vitality of the picture-book group. The subjects, too, are a mixed bag; and many figures with interesting histories and genuine appeal have been completely neglected. Some of the people for whom authors and illustrators (not to mention book designers) are urgently required are Caxton, Vasco da Gama, Boadicea, and Pocahontas, to mention only some of the more obvious.

Nor would junior biographies of Frank Lloyd Wright, Van Gogh, or Lenin come amiss. Even in New Zealand one can play a pleasant game imagining an inspired series of junior biographies of outstanding figures in our own history. What a revolution might occur in the teaching of New Zealand history if we had studies of Seddon, Von Haast, Te Kooti, Wakefield, by H. C. D. Somerset, John Beaglehole, or Randal Burdon, illustrated by (is it asking too much?) Lindley Richardson, Rita Cook, or Russell Clark. That day is not yet here. In the meantime here are some of the better biographies recently produced overseas for children. They are all available in English editions.

Fridtjof Nansen's life, as LORNA LEWIS describes it, opens fanlike from his schoolboy days in Oslo when he was a champion ski jumper and swimmer, from the days of his first crossing of Greenland to the 1920s when his whole energy was being spent on the work of salvaging the human flotsam and jetsam left by the war of 1914-18. It sometimes happens in a dramatic festival that an adjudicator's critical faculties will become suspended during the performance of an intensely moving play, which may in consequence win an award in spite of defects of

production. The same kind of thing occasionally happens when one reads the biography of a character so vigorous and vital that style and treatment may pass unnoticed. This may have occurred when I read *Nansen*, but I doubt it. It seems to me a most competent piece of writing. Nansen himself is, of course, an ideal hero. All Polar explorers start with an advantage where New Zealand children are concerned, for they are much more likely to be read about than any equatorial adventurers. Nansen's success as an athlete and his Greenland expedition, his habit of burning his boats, all make him a hero in the best orthodox tradition. It is the switch from science to politics when his country's welfare demanded it, and his later work among refugees when the welfare of Europe called for it, that makes Nansen's story specially relevant today. The fact that much of his work has recently been undone does not lessen its value. Miss Lewis never once moralizes, or labours a point. Her narrative is simple and unembroidered. It may be noted in passing that she uses the honourable Robinson Crusoe trick, and will give quite a long delightful catalogue of stores taken on an expedition: stores of 'pemmican, chocolate, dried fish, condensed milk, tobacco, tools'. In addition she gives frequent descriptions of explorer's meals. (It has been contended that the popularity of the *Arabian nights* depends largely on the frequent mention of food!)

Another biography by Lorna Lewis in the same series, Nelson's 'Horizon books' edited by Dr. G. B. Harrison of London University, is her *Leonardo the inventor*. This book may need a little introduction to the group which would enjoy it most, namely the boys of nine and upwards who are absorbed by all things mechanical, for it is probable that Leonardo as a twentieth-century boy would have been a tireless reader of *Popular mechanics* and the *Engineering world*. Leonardo the

artist comes into a chapter or so and some of the illustrations are sketches of grotesque heads found in his extensive notebooks; but Miss Lewis is concerned with the explorer of science and mechanics rather than with the creator of 'La Gioconda'. A vivid commentary on Renaissance civilization occurs in the account of Leonardo's work at the court of Milan, where in addition to designing ingenious weapons of war, and doing sculpture and painting, he was expected to plan novel arrangements of food for banquets, mend court clocks, and build baths for Beatrice D'Este complete with any plumbing attached thereto. Lorna Lewis reviews children's books in *Time and tide* and as well as these two biographies, has written two or three family stories interesting to most girls.

There is a pleasant air of fairy tale and legend about CHARLOTTE KELLOGG'S *Girl who ruled a kingdom*, possibly created by the background of fourteenth-century Poland, which, to those of us reared on 1066 and all that, seems a somewhat mythical historical period. The story of Jadwiga, the Hungarian princess who became queen of Poland when only a girl in her teens, is genuine enough history, though her marriage to Jagiello the pagan king of Lithuania who promised that he (together with his kingdom) would turn Christian in return for her hand, reads like a medieval romance. Mrs. Kellogg has done exhaustive research on the life of Poland's great queen, much of it in Krakow from original sources. The book is illustrated by a Polish artist, Aniela Pruszyńska, who also made the pictures for Eric Kelly's trilogy of stories based on medieval Polish history, *The trumpeter of Krakow* and its sequels, all of which are excellent companion volumes to *The girl who ruled a kingdom*.

L. A. G. STRONG'S study of Socrates, *The man who asked questions*, begins: 'Socrates, one of the wisest and most lovable men who ever lived, owes his fame to his persistent practice of

asking questions. Before we begin this story, therefore, we had better look into this business of asking questions'. Then follows one of the most interesting sections in the book. Strong analyses the reasons why children's questions are sometimes not answered, and gives as a main reason the fact that many of the questions are disturbing to the person being questioned. Next he groups human beings into three main types—the A's, briefly, are sheep. 'The second type of person we call B. He is anxious to be correct, but his brains are better than A's and some of the mass answers to questions which content A, will not satisfy him. He is more conscious of difficulty, more aware of problems. . . . His limitation is that as a rule he is a specialized sort of person.' Then Strong describes the C's, taking Beethoven as an example, the C's with their courage, their high honesty, their personal codes of morality, and very often their loneliness. From this angle he describes Socrates and the response which the A's and the B's of his day made to his questions. For an intelligent youngster the book should be rather exhilarating, but on the whole *The man who asked questions* is not for the rank and file of children. Much of the text consists of Plato paraphrased.

Henry of Agincourt by the same author is less ably done, as Henry V himself does not emerge from the book alive. The king stays dead, possibly because Strong is so much interested in analysing the contradictions in Henry's character that he substitutes the science of dissection for the art of biography. In spite of this, the background of the story, England in turmoil through the revolts of Owen Glendower and Sir John Oldcastle, and France torn both by her civil dissensions and Henry's campaigns, makes quite exciting reading, and the debunked Agincourt which Strong depicts is more interesting than the glorified battle of the textbooks.

Young Walter Scott by ELIZABETH JANET GRAY is not a full-length portrait of the author of the Waverley novels, but a picture, charmingly even tenderly drawn, of a lame Edinburgh boy, a 'lamiter' who could join in all the 'bickers' going (then, as now, perhaps the delight of the youngsters of Auld Reekie) and 'worry out' Don Quixote with the aid of a Spanish dictionary; the boy who could climb up to Arthur's Seat on the great rock and thrill to read of the exploits of Scotland's early heroes in ballad and legend. The best story of all in the book is the famous one about Davy Douglas and his button. Davy was Scott's rival at the high school. Every time he stood up to give an answer he twiddled with the third button on his waistcoat, and thoughtfully delivered the right answers. Scott observed the habit and cut the button off. He won Davy's place in the class. *Young Walter Scott* appeals to girls rather than to boys for it has not the robustness necessary to make it a boy's favourite. Nevertheless it is a finely drawn sensitive portrait, an account of boyhood which for adult readers will rank with such differing minor classics as *Penrod*, *Dream days*, and Henry James's *Portrait of a small boy and others*.

When Thomas Niles, the publisher, suggested to Louisa May Alcott that she should write a book for girls, Miss Alcott's reply was that she knew nothing about girls, and she liked and understood boys much better! However, she produced *Little women* nearly seventy-five years ago, and it still holds first place among girl's books. Because of the popularity of its subject, CORNELIA MEIGS's biography *Invincible Louisa* was sure to find a public among the thousands of girls anxious to read about the originals of the well-loved March family, but it was the treatment and style of the book which won for it the 1934 Newbery medal for the most significant contribution to American children's literature. It is to be regretted that when the

biography crossed the Atlantic, the title was submitted to the usual doctoring, and *Invincible Louisa* finally emerged in English dress as *The story of Louisa Alcott*. Her books may be occasionally criticized for sentimentality, but Louisa Alcott had guts. (That apt but inelegant noun has no synonym.) The father, Bronson Alcott, was the brilliant but frequently penniless friend of Thoreau and Emerson, a man whose revolutionary ideas on education were afterwards credited to others. Only today is Bronson Alcott's stature becoming recognized. Louisa herself did not understand her father fully, much as she admired him, and for this reason perhaps drew no portrait of him in *Little women*, in which every other member of her family is sketched. She always intended to write a book with her father as central character, but it was never written. However, in *Invincible Louisa* Bronson Alcott comes to life. Readers of *The man who asked questions* will recognize him as a 'C'. Genius infrequently replenishes family coffers. Louisa knew a rather penniless childhood and girlhood, and much of her early writing was done to boil the pot. After a brief but grim experience in a Washington Military Hospital during the American Civil War, Louisa wrote a series of *Hospital sketches*, in which her humour, vitality, and original observation had ample scope, and it was shortly after the publication of these articles that Niles, the publisher, commissioned *Little women*. That book with its sequels is practically autobiographical. The games of *Pilgrim's progress*, the diaries, the magazines, and the characters were all based on memories of her own childhood. Laurie's original came as a surprise to me. Laurie, the boy next door, was really Ladislas Wisniewski, a young exiled Polish revolutionary whom Louisa met for a brief time in Paris in the sixties. He is the one exotic note in the book. Cornelia Meigs's biography is not only an outstanding biography for

girls; it may take its place as the definitive biography of Louisa Alcott.

FLORENCE BONE'S *A coach for Fanny Burney* is a fictionized life of Madame D'Arbly, which cannot be compared in quality with *Invincible Louisa*, but deserves mentioning here as a follow-up book to the latter, offering a contrast of conditions of feminine authorship in the eighteenth century with those of the nineteenth. Not outstanding, admittedly, the book offers a pleasantly drawn picture of eighteenth century social life, complete with glimpses of Dr. Johnson, Dr. Burney, and the formidable blue-stockings. Alice's demand for conversation is well satisfied. If the book had been illustrated with contemporary portraits, instead of its present amateur line drawings, it would have had more value.

Like L. A. G. Strong, CAROLA OMAN believes in adequate research on material for children's books. When she began a new edition of the Robin Hood series she did not retell from an earlier retelling, as too many of our Robins are perpetrated. She based her account on the earliest known ballads mentioning the outlaw, the 'Lytell Geste', and produced as a result an entirely fresh conception. Her procedure with Alfred the Great was similar, and in a brief preface she gives her sources. Actually *Alfred, King of the English* is not a direct biography; the king is seen through the eyes of a slave who becomes eventually the keeper of the king's hounds. This is a quite effective method, for both conditions at court and among the common people of England can thus be presented. Dinewulf, the slave, accompanied Alfred when, as the youngest Atheling, at the age of ten, he made his visit to Rome. Incidentally the book thus contains excellent material on conditions and methods of travel in the tenth century. If the book has a fault, it is the too-great prominence given to Alfred's boyhood and to the Rome visit specifi-

cally. His struggle with the Danes is adequately dealt with, but Alfred the statesman and scholar is dismissed in a chapter. The two main legends current about Alfred, his escapade as a minstrel in the Danish camp, and the burning of the cakes, are worked into the narrative; but Miss Oman is careful to explain that neither of these appears in Asser's *Deeds of Alfred* and were not current until a hundred years after the king's death. In type, paper, and binding the book has a simple dignity.

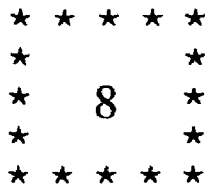
TWO OF ELEANOR DOORLY'S trilogy of science biographies have faults of style and construction, but their illustrations are perfect jobs of work. All three are illustrated with woodcuts by Robert Gibbings, woodcuts characterized by simplicity, strength, and imagination. They have the cleanness and freedom from sentimentality which one looks for in writing for children. Particularly effective is the portrait of Madame Curie in *The radium woman*, an edition for young people adapted by Eleanor Doorly from Eve Curie's life of her mother. This is so fine a portrait it almost makes the biography unnecessary. It may be contended that it would be better for children to wait until they are old enough to read Eve Curie's book, but I think *The radium woman* will lead them to it, and not away from it. Eleanor Doorly has adapted the story skilfully and sympathetically. Marie Curie emerges heroic in the grand manner. Girls cannot help but respond to the unforgettable picture of Marie during the four years she boiled the pitchblende in huge cauldrons in the quest of the elusive radium; but, as in Eve Curie's book, it is the woman rather than the scientist who emerges. Here is richness of character, giving children the sense of new horizons, something which if the word were not so badly adulterated, one might call inspiration.

Miss Doorly's life of Pasteur, called *The microbe man*, adapted from René Vallery-Radot's *La vie de Pasteur*, is less successful,

for it has moments of writing down, particularly noticeable in view of the fact that several sections of the book require an elementary knowledge of general science for complete understanding. Miss Doorly spent a summer in France exploring the parts of the country where Pasteur had worked. She was fortunate in being given time and assistance by members of both the Pasteur Institute at Garches and the Pasteur Institute at Paris. It is a commentary on French civilization that at Chama-lieres even the lorry drivers were able to point out the brewery where Pasteur had worked. Her interest in and understanding of scientific discovery, and the enthusiasm with which the facts are presented rather outweigh the faults of style.

The insect man, 'a tale of how the Yew Tree children went to France to hear the story of Jean Henri Fabre in the places where he lived and to see the homes of some of the insects whose life-story he has written', to quote its rather long subtitle, was the first of this trilogy of biographies. I cannot agree with Mr. Walter de la Mare in his introduction that 'This . . . was not written at or down at anybody but straightforwardly'. Briefly, it is the story of a visit of three children to the country of Fabre's life, amplified by extracts from his writings. For children with a born interest in insects and such the book has a definite appeal, but it will not make any converts to natural history.

Robert Gibbings, the illustrator of these books, is an author as well as illustrator. His *Coconut island*, a story of shipwreck and desert island, was published two or three years ago.



Social Studies

IN the social studies as taught in progressive schools, the barrier between history and geography is dropped; man is not studied in one lesson in relation to his place on the earth and in another lesson in relation to his place in time. For man living on the earth today lives at many different stages of civilization; man spread out geographically over the earth looks much the same as man spread out historically through time. Certain native tribes today live in much the same way as did the ancient Britons; the old divided studies of history and geography did not connect the two.

This then, is the first characteristic of social studies, that history and geography are amalgamated or at least related to each other. Further, in many social studies programmes, children do not necessarily take the whole field of man's endeavour, beginning at the beginning and ending at the end. Pupils instead take one aspect of human activity, transportation, pottery-making, or the quest for food and shelter; a line of development is followed through. As a skilled archaeologist, who is also an anthropologist, can often obtain a picture of a civilization by looking at the plan of a house, the shape of a spear, or a single

household utensil, so too a child studying pottery, for example, may learn more of the currents of history from his specialist approach than he would from a much broader study. The study of pottery raises questions of the storage of food; it requires some understanding both of primitive art and the simple mechanics involved in the development of the potter's wheel. If the study is carried on to our own time, it involves some appreciation of the technological changes of the last decade during which the production of plastics and composite metals has come to threaten the whole future of clay. This then, is a second characteristic of social studies, that the pupil may study only one aspect of man's activity in its relation to time and place, with a sharp focus on a limited field, a spotlight on a small area rather than a diffused light over the whole. Children who study the growth of human society or aspects of that society from the simplest forms to the more complex achieve a realization of the flux of things. The child who has studied agriculture from prehistoric to collectivist farming times has a deeper understanding of the meaning of change than another child who has seen history as a series of acts of parliament and jockeyings of political parties. Modern social science readers, whether they are about coal or steam power, about men or mountains, show usually the beginnings and the present state of affairs; nor does the last chapter imply 'the end'.

Children, to use an educational platitude, learn by doing: their studies in the social sciences are not merely verbal. They may make model boats in a unit of transportation, or a model village in a study of the growth of communities, or learn to govern themselves as they study the development of the English parliament. Many of the books mentioned in this chapter do not stop at giving the historical or geographical facts

connected with the topic but also outline related activities in crafts, dramatic work, or physical education. A book on South American life will refer in the bibliography to books on Spanish-American folk dances; another not only describes the making and playing of musical instruments, but discusses the place of music in social life at many periods.

Before considering various readers, it might be as well to consider the Rugg social science series, which are outstanding in their field. DR. HAROLD RUGG came to New Zealand in 1937 with the New Education Fellowship Conference. Several of his statements appear in *Modern trends in education* (the proceedings of the Conference), edited by A. E. Campbell. He has edited an elementary school series of social science readers, and a senior set. The elementary school series begins with *The first book of the earth*, a blend of astronomy, physical geography, and biology. Rugg describes the development of the earth from its beginnings in remote time, the reasons for its physical shape, the coming of life. The concluding chapter describes primitive man. *Nature peoples* follows on logically from this point, with an account of various modern primitive peoples whose social patterns illustrate varying stages of civilization—bushmen, Indians, Papuans, Eskimos, and Bedouins. *Communities of men*, the next book, discusses different types of communities in America, ranging from isolated mountain farms to large cities like Chicago and New York. By this time the child reading the series already has some vision of the diversity of social patterns on the earth, some sense of perspective about his own birthplace. Volume IV, *Peoples and countries*, portrays ways of living in China, India, Europe (including Russia), Peru, and Brazil. *Building of America* is a history of the settlement of the United States by regions. The geographic features of climate and natural resources are woven into the history. This book has

less application to New Zealand than most of the other titles. In *Man at work: his industries*, and *Man at work: his arts and crafts*, the outlook again is a world one. Rugg recognizes the child's interest in his own environment and exploits it, but the attitude of the whole series is an international one. The last book takes arts and crafts in the broadest possible connotation. Painting, the art we think of almost automatically when the word 'art' is mentioned, barely enters the discussion. Man's chief arts as Rugg sees them are illustrated in these chapter headings, 'From shelter to architecture; the story of man as craftsman-builder'; 'The theatre—man combines the arts and crafts'; 'The story of language'; 'How man invented number and measurement'; 'Measuring time'. In the architectural section, a comparison is very rightly drawn between photographs of slum tenements and homes in upper income residential areas, with the simple legend below the former, 'Do you think this is an attractive place to live in?' The text says, 'For millions of unemployed and poorly paid people, home in the great cities means a few dark and unhealthy rooms badly furnished and almost undecorated. These millions live in tenement buildings or in old out-of-repair brownstone apartment houses in crowded noisy districts.' In this unit on shelter the child not only studies man's first houses in prehistoric and in medieval times, but learns of that third of the American nation that is, in President Roosevelt's phrase, ill-housed, as well as ill-clad and ill-fed.

Rugg presents his photographs, asks questions, but makes no frontal attack on the established order. Despite this, towards the end of 1939 and through 1940, the Rugg social science books were criticized as subversive to law and order, un-American and socialistic in tendency. Admittedly, these texts were meant to illustrate and possibly implement a progressive

philosophy for social progress but their methods were oblique. Yet incredibly enough, the Rugg books were ousted from many public schools on the grounds that they were subversive and created prejudice against the American economic system. It is significant that the attack was most ferocious in New Jersey where the German-American Bund groups had been most active, and where city and state politics show fascist tendencies. At a mock trial staged in Englewood, N.J., when Rugg was asked to defend himself at a meeting of the local parent-teacher association, Rugg said that his books had been designed 'with the single aim of bringing the realities of life into the school-room and not of keeping them out as the readers of an earlier period had tried to do'. In one of the books intended for the later teens, *Problems of American culture*, Rugg gave pupils a hint or two that advertising was waste, and often untrue, whereupon the Advertising Federation of America attacked the author in the national press on the ground that he gave children a 'biased' view of American business.

This account of the attacks on the Rugg social science series has been given somewhat fully, because it contains the germ of a warning, that at the point at which the social studies in the schools are made effective, pressure groups may attack them. There is a possibility that studies may become less critical, less clear when dealing with the contemporary scene. If New Zealand children study transportation and yet never learn what happened during the period of railway development in their own country, if they study land settlement and never hear of the tragic soldier settlements following on the 1914-18 war, one may well question the value of studying man in quest for food and shelter. The average textbook for children becomes more enthusiastic for social justice in direct proportion to its distance from the time or place under consideration. The

number of children's books outside the Rugg series which touch contemporary problems is remarkably small—and where these problems are touched at all, the treatment is frequently so emasculated that the reader may receive no impression of their urgency. The question then arises are children's books to be neutral or frankly propagandist in their presentation of problems? L. B. Pekin says it is impossible to be neutral:

It is hopeless to attempt to decide where facts end and beliefs begin. Presentation of facts is inevitably influenced by the beliefs of teachers who present them. . . . In any case, the 'scientific' educator is not in a position to give his children all the facts. There is simply no time for that. He is bound to give them those facts which he considers more important—in other words, the ones upon which his own beliefs happen to be based. I do not suggest that he is consciously dishonest in doing this: we all of us know best the facts which support what we believe, and consider them to be more important than the facts which support a contrary belief. All I do maintain is that the assumption of absolute impartiality in the presentation of facts about society is a humanly impossible one.

Yet the question of neutrality or not goes deeper than whether it is a possibility. Ruth Enke and Ericka Mann have described the strange and horrible transformation which overtook German children's books, which were openly designed to instil a strong Nazi spirit into German youth. Young Hans and Fritz during the period of Hitler rule read such stuff as *Aviator's nest in the elder bushes*, *Life stories of German war aces*, *The book of German colonies for the young* and *Peter, the soldier boy*. For Käthe there was *Sister Claire at the front*. This is all positive propaganda of an extremely bad kind, and the children's librarian looking round her shelves sees only too little which could be used as an antidote to it, so little which justifies another way of

life. Scarcely anything has been written for children about the successful social experiments of the democratic world between 1918 and 1939, experiments in China, Germany, Austria, and Great Britain, which showed human nature on the right track.

Our requirements in books on social studies for children are these. We need children's books which explain clearly and vividly the reasons for the growth and decay of all forms of society. We need books which present in a straightforward way the basic problems of the contemporary world. Thirdly, children's literature should celebrate the really admirable achievements of the democratic way of life. And last of all, or first of all, the ideas and then facts must be presented in a way which catches the imagination.

It is their capacity for appealing to the child's imagination which accounts for the success of MAUD and MISKA PETERSHAM in the social studies field. These two have already been mentioned in an earlier chapter as creators of picture books, and it was as the author-illustrators of such imaginative stories as *Miki* and *Get-a-way* and *Hary János* that they achieved their initial reputation. Of later years their 'Story books of real things' have gained for them further laurels. These illustrated books, about coal, rubber, steel, and rayon, circulate as frequently in a modern children's library as do any of Dr. Doolittle's adventures. In the earlier imaginative stories, Miska the Hungarian was in the ascendant; in the later ones Maud with a background of New England vicarage and Vassar University comes into her own. Maud, one imagines, has accuracy and respect for facts and she and her husband make a good working combination. In making their books about the everyday world they first amass their facts and then organize them into an interesting and dramatic shape.

The story book of coal exemplifies their method very well. The

book opens with a picture of a primeval forest and this brief descriptive text. 'The ground was a swamp. The air was always hot and damp. Everything grew very fast in the steaming air and mushy ground.' They describe how the trees sink into the swamp, how the different layers of vegetable matter, once living forest, over the centuries are slowly pressed into thin, dark seams of coal. They explain the difference between peat, lignite, anthracite, and bituminous coal—and for me at least, theirs was the first clear explanation encountered in or out of school. One picture shows a Greek 300 years before Christ burning coal, another shows Edward I, who declared that if coal smoke were seen coming from a building, that building would be destroyed. (At one time, coal could not be burned in London while Parliament was sitting, because some of the members from the country thought the smoke would make them sick.) Pictures of coal mines follow, including a print from an old mining textbook in which the miners look curiously like Snow-White's seven dwarfs. Another illustration shows a mine with modern equipment where the pit-pony is shown displaced by the electric motor. Now all this is material given in a slightly different way in a dozen-odd school textbooks, but few textbook authors have the Petersham flair for illustration or their ability to select picturesque incident which symbolizes or typifies some important fact and fixes it in a child's mind. The Petershams relate the history of coal to the dark almost unknown pages in the world's history, and the child who is initially interested in this way will go on to read about the difference between a lignite and anthracite coal.

The series falls into five main groups: introductory books on houses, food, clothes, and transportation; then what are in effect elaborations of these topics, the wheels—ships, trains, and aircraft books; a food group—wheat, corn, rice, and sugar; a

textile group—wool, cotton, silk, and rayon; and finally the industrial set—coal, gold, oil, iron, and steel.

In a library one finds individual reactions to the Petersham books oddly assorted. The children all like them; their elders and betters vary in their degrees of approval and disapproval. I remember the father who said with a puzzled frown: 'My little girl is in bed and wants a book about coal—I can't imagine why—a special book by somebody Petersham.' There was the inspector who recognized them for what they were, a superb blending of fact and imagination, who praised the way they had broken away from the dreariness of the schoolbook tradition. There was the educational mandarin who expressed astonishment that even Standard Five and Six boys should like Petersham books, when, in his opinion, seven was the age for reading Petershams. Remembering how much I enjoyed them myself with seven years far away and behind, I winced. (Why should it be *infra dig* for Standard Five and Six boys to enjoy pictures so much—when their parents pore over *Life* or *Picture Post* and make no apology for it?) Finally, there was the headmaster with the small budget who said: 'They aren't much for your money—too many pictures and not enough print.'

These books cost five shillings in New Zealand and whether you think they are much for your money or not depends on how you usually spend your money. The price of books is influenced by many things. One can buy Plato's *Republic* for 3s. 9d., and Ruby M. Ayres for 7s. 6d., and it is not all a matter of the value the world places on Plato and Ruby M. Ayres respectively. It is because of the costs of typesetting, royalties, copyright, etc. that the publishers make a higher charge for the work of Miss Ayres. Similarly, the Petershams cost more because colour-printing is an expensive process. The Petershams work with a lithograph crayon on stone, and the

texture of their pictures, which children revel in, is the result of a slow and laborious process. Work costs money.

Another man and his wife who have brought new life to the social studies are HOLLING and LUCILLE HOLLING. Their *Paddle-to-the-sea* and *Tree on the trail* are studies of the Great Lakes region and the South-western section of the United States respectively. 'Paddle-to-the-sea' is a tiny birchbark canoe carved by an Indian boy living to the north of Lake Superior. The Indian boy has learned at school that the Great Lakes are set like a series of bowls on a gentle slope, where the water drops in a series of falls from one down to the other and finally flows to the sea. He sends his carved log on its long journey with hopes that it too will reach the sea. The carved canoe floats past birch forests over a broken beaver dam, among the logs the saw-millers have sent down the river, through the Sault Ste. Marie, round Lakes Huron and Michigan. With the genius for survival manifest by all heroes of children's fiction, toy or human, 'Paddle-to-the-sea' survives forest fire, and storms on the lakes and a plunge over Niagara before he is caught in a fisherman's net off the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. This journey of 'Paddle-to-the-sea' dramatizes the whole varied region of the Great Lakes country. In a series of illustrations which remind one of pictures seen through stereoscope lenses the illusion of three dimensions is skilfully maintained. The Hollings bring to life not only the changing landscape and its extremes of weather, but the workers and the industries they follow. The Hollings seem born teachers, for their pictures, the mnemonic devices of their marginal sketches which are usually explanatory in tone, show an ingenuity and humour. The toy canoe is the device on which a child's attention will concentrate—it is a point of focus. A similar device is used in their next book *Tree on the trail*, where a cottonwood tree

on the Santa Fe trail is the focusing point for a series of adventures which occur in this instance over a long stretch of time, as opposed to *Paddle-to-the-sea* where the adventures occur in space. How effective any teaching can be without some such point of focus I am not very sure. Marshall McClintock's *Story of the Mississippi* makes a good contrast, for its subject matter is similar and its pictures are equally attractive. But the various scenes described in prose and illustration are not tied up or knitted together; it is as though one were looking through an album of travel photographs belonging to someone one did not know. The same photographs if one knows the person who took them have more interest because one identifies the friend with the places seen.

The Holling books have a measure of excitement about them. Southwest and Great Lakes region alike come before the reader with the freshness and novelty of a land-mass seen by a mountaineer after a long climb, or by a traveller seeing his own country for the first time after years of absence. Sometimes I think if a writer cannot bring a region before his reader in some such way he had better not write at all.

WILLIAM and HELEN PRYOR, using photograph instead of lithograph, cover similar ground to the Petershams in their group of books on industry and transport—cotton, rubber, steel, glass, train, aeroplane, and steamship books. Their approach is rather different from the Petershams', for they concentrate on the modern industrial process and do not trouble so much to discuss roots and beginnings. They visit a glass factory, and text and photograph combine to give the reader a clear idea of what is involved in modern glass-making. The book, wisely or unwisely, concludes with the two children in the story practising glass-blowing at home. This is not an indoor sport which will be widely encouraged.

The paper book is very similar. Many photographs emphasize the tremendous use which is made of paper in the modern world. Pictures of the logging industry and of a paper factory illustrate the pre-history of the morning paper and the honey carton. Again the book concludes with the children in the story making paper at home, from soft white cotton cloth. This should prove less lethal than glass-blowing. The Pryor transport books, particularly those on the dirigible and aeroplane, are among the few books available for the younger boy who finds the average book by Low or Hawks on the subject rather difficult.

The 'Picture fact' books edited by Alice Keliher are illustrated with photographs and many pictorial charts and diagrams designed by an American corporation which specializes in making statistics live. As the titles—*Air workers, Movie makers, Nurses at work, Farm workers, Librarians at work, Office workers*—indicate, these well-produced books aim to give a picture of employment prospects and conditions in various industries and professions. In America these books are used extensively by vocational guidance officers and careers teachers in the schools, a use they do not have here (except in the case of *Office workers*, and *Nurses at work*) for the conditions are so very different in the two countries. (Whether or not they describe the shape of things to come is a moot point.) The value of the series for New Zealand children is that, in describing and illustrating conditions of employment, each book cannot help but describe the set-up in each individual industry. The books give a clear and authoritative account of key industries and trades. Moreover the 'Picture fact associates', as the authors call themselves, are very broad in their approach. Each field of employment is shown in its proper historical perspective.

The following extract from *Office workers* is typical:

Office workers today are doing the same kinds of jobs that office workers have done for thousands of years. They may have different systems of writing and keeping records. They may have typewriters, telephones and mechanical devices to speed up their work. They may write more letters, deal with more people, keep track of more money, attend to more details and do more complicated jobs but their function is still the same—to help make the wheels turn in business, in government, in education, in all the social institutions which mankind started ages ago.

Through the ages, office workers have kept records for their employers. This is still one of their main duties, just as it was in ancient Egypt; in those early days kings, weavers, carpenters and merchants did not know how to write. So they had scribes to record what was happening to their property and goods. When he acted as secretary the scribe carried a little wooden case—in it were reed pens, papyrus rolls (paper was unknown) and ink. Out would come this writing equipment when he made a note of what his employer earned, bought, sold or exchanged. Sometimes he carved these records on stone slabs. Acting as book keeper he kept track of figures by making notches on counting sticks called 'tallies'. As filing clerk he stored away the records. A number of these carved and written records have been preserved. They show us how business was carried on in ancient Egypt. . . .

The introduction traces the part played by the clerical worker from earliest times to the present, an illuminating sidelight on history.

Textile workers is studded with photographs of the processes in many types of weaving—by broad looms, Jacquard looms, and the ordinary factory loom used for plain dyed cloths. The place of the designer, the chemist, and the engineer in the textile industry is well brought out. Textiles do not live by weavers alone. Contemporary problems of the industry, such as

the shift from north to south of the mills in the United States, are illustrated by dramatic diagrams.

A great deal is written and said about how much children gain from reading adult books. There is another side to the story. The average adult can learn from and enjoy much that is in books originally written for their children. Just as I like to see *Moby Dick* and *David Copperfield* in a children's library, I would like to see the 'Picture fact' books and many other junior series in the adult lending library. Children's books have much to teach the specialist in adult education.

Harper's 'City and country' series is intended for older children than the average Petersham or Pryor reader. They are used most in Forms One to Three. The dozen titles in the series cover lighting, mining, textiles, milk, printing, health, and water supply. Although not lavishly illustrated on the scale of the Petersham books, the series is attractively decorated with sketches which also inform. Typical is Jeannette Eaton's *Story of light*, a carefully prepared little book about attempts at artificial lighting in many countries and many periods. Like the Petershams, Miss Eaton can select significant incidents to illustrate important facts; she mentions the picturesque lighting methods of former times, not for the sake of their picturesque qualities alone, but in order to emphasize the fact that material resources and technical knowledge, varying according to time and place, have led man to solve his lighting problems in a hundred different ways. Elizabeth Watson's *Story of milk* begins with the domestication of animals in prehistoric times, continues with the change from the home factory to the dairy factory, and concludes with the use of milk by-products in modern industry. The period of time covered is immense and the social changes described are tremendous, but they are at once understandable to a child and memorable because they are related to something with which he is familiar.

Most of the books mentioned in this chapter have been American in origin and some explanation of this needs to be given. Few books of the kind discussed here are published in England at present and none at all in New Zealand. In America, where the progressive schools have introduced social studies programmes, publishers produced books to meet the demand, and in consequence the teacher, parent, or librarian has a wide range of books from which to choose. Many books described in this chapter should be used in New Zealand only until we have our own equivalents, but that day is still far off. It is particularly necessary in the meantime to import books from overseas which will give writers an idea of trends in book production there. For instance 'Our changing world', edited by Rollo Reynolds, is a series of books which grew out of the social studies programme at Horace Mann School, New York City. The first few books deal with the Hudson River and its valley, the geographic fact which has largely shaped the destiny of New York state and city. These have no great interest for the New Zealand child, who does not want to study the Hudson and environs in any detail. Nevertheless the keen teacher will take these books as practical examples of what can be done in centring a social studies programme on the child's immediate environment and working from it. 'Our changing world' illustrates the method well. The later books in the series have a potential general use anywhere at all. *Our electric world* shows electricity in use in the hospital, on the farm, as an invaluable auxiliary to industry. Certainly the chapter on electricity in the home takes for granted a higher standard of material comfort than most of New Zealand or one-third of the United States knows. But contrary to general opinion, there is no inherent danger in children knowing that standards of living vary not only from white to coloured races, but even within the English-

speaking world. *Flash-flash-flash* is about lighthouses, and *Down the ships' ways* covers ship-building, one of the rare children's books to do so. Recently many of the series have been republished in England by Thomas Nelson as 'Basic English texts'.

However many books on social studies we borrow from overseas we still need our own—and the School Publications Branch of the Education Department is the obvious sponsor. It is to be hoped that the Department does not try to meet the need by paying two men for two years and asking them to write all the necessary books. The result would be nothing but hack work, for a man cannot write on all things and write well. He can write only where his interests lie. Rather let us hope that young people all over New Zealand will begin to write; when what they write is good let the Department publish it. And publish furthermore without too much cautious pruning. We might in time produce a New Zealand children's literature.



Books on Art and Crafts

FORTUNATE New Zealanders who know painters or sculptors often learn the nature of the general problems which face all artists from hearing statements of individual problems from the lips of their friends. When one has seen an artist in action against his native background, it becomes easy to understand the relation of any art to its time and place, to see how the artist is inevitably affected by the landscape of the country in which he lives, the customs and conventions of the society he knows, the materials at his disposal. We are not always privileged, however, to see the artist in action. Usually the only connecting link between the work of art which we see in its finished form, and the social background and individual artist which produced it, is the biography or biographical novel. It can be argued of course that any work of art—ballet, landscape, or string quartette—is in itself a complete communication, whether or not we know the who, the how, and why of its making; but it is still true that when we do know the who, the why, and the how, our appreciation reaches a higher level. Our judgment is no longer purely aesthetic, but is made from a broader social basis. This is the value of a novel such as Irving Stone's *Lust for life*,

that it relates 'Sunflowers' and 'The Bridge at Arles' to the life and the times of the man who painted them, and thus helps to establish awareness of the general relationship of artist and society in the popular mind and imagination.

All the foregoing has an application to children's literature. Take a random selection of stories—Monica Shannon's *Dobry* about a Bulgarian boy with a burning desire to paint, Kitty Barne's *She shall have music*, Idella Purnell's *Pedro the potter*, and Elizabeth Foreman Lewis's *Young Fu of the Upper Yangtse*, the apprentice to a coppersmith. All these books have interest solely as examples of good narrative but that does not concern us directly here. The point I wish to make is that no matter what the situation from which an individual plot develops—the restlessness of an apprentice fretting for complete responsibility, or the difficulties encountered in mastering an instrument or a material—all the above books have a unique value because they bring into imaginative focus, for those who do not create, that special agony in the garden of those who do. And more, they may help a young artist to achieve equilibrium by placing his personal isolation or conflict into some perspective. Art teachers should be familiar not only with the technical literature relating to their field, but also with those children's books which concern themselves with the emotional difficulties of the young artist in society. The settings of the stories mentioned are diverse and widely scattered. There are geographical variations to their common theme that creating anything is a battle on three fronts with oneself, with one's material, and sometimes with one's fellow men. The following extract from *Dobry* is an example of how well a modern writer for children can touch on the core of a problem. As mentioned, the setting is Bulgaria, but the episode has a wider application.

Dobry drew a picture of the rooster and the rooster's proud

walk. At sun-up he was out on the eaves of the house making a picture of the rooster a-crow, feathers and comb raised in salute to the coming sun. Every evening, he sprawled on his stomach, drawing big, rough, very crude sketches of Sarl and Pernik on the stamped clay floor in front of the jamal, where he could reach for a piece of charcoal when he needed one. He had only to close his eyes to see the oxen gazing out from their stalls, to see the shadows on them, every muscle on their necks, flecks of light in their eyes—and he put all that into his drawings.

His mother looked down at the drawing on the floor and felt bewildered by it all. Roda had never seen anyone draw before. The village church of course had icons, and Maestro Kolu made pictures with stucco on jamals, but nobody in the village spent his time drawing. Although Roda did think the floor did look better with oxen heads all over it, yet she said to herself ‘What has come over Dobry? He thinks of nothing but making pictures. I can’t imagine!’ It disturbed her because Dobry had seemed a more cherished piece of herself and such a thing as making pictures would never occur to Roda. This boy for the first time in his life became a stranger to his mother.

When we turn from fiction to non-fiction it is very noticeable that the pick of the books have a bias towards the medieval period, a bias which is not altogether accidental. The art of the Middle Ages makes good writing and reading. In his *Culture of cities* Lewis Mumford says:

Common men thought and felt in images, far more than in the verbal abstractions of the scholars: aesthetic discipline might lack a name but its fruits were everywhere visible. Did not the citizens of Florence vote as to the type of column that was to be used on the cathedral? Image makers carved statues, painted tryptiches, decorated the walls of the cathedral, the guild hall, the town hall, the burgher’s house: colour and design were everywhere the normal accompaniment of the practical daily tasks. . . . This daily education of the senses is

the elementary groundwork of all higher forms of education: when it exists in daily life, a community may spare itself the burden of arranging courses in art appreciation.

Medieval art was a vital art emerging from a vital social background, and the best treatment of it for children is *Goldsmith of Florence, a book of great craftsmen*, by KATHARINE GIBSON, a professional story teller at the Cleveland Museum of Art. This was one of the first American museums to develop work with children, using its collection as a touchstone to bring alive the past with its traditions of good making. The first four chapters of the book describe the anonymous craftsmen of the middle ages, the weavers, wood-carvers, scribes, and armourers. Our school social histories refer vaguely to tapestried walls and monkish scribes; knight in armour is a hackneyed phrase. How many books bring the armourers and weavers themselves alive? Katharine Gibson manages this in various ways. She can symbolize a whole craft in a brief description of some imaginary craftsman, an itinerant weaver, say, in his long black cloak to protect him from wind and rain on long journeys, with his keen eyes, a back bent from long hours over the loom, and slender fingers kept purposely smooth and soft so that his wool might not snarl and catch.

The processes and techniques of the medieval craftsmen are described in selected and vivid detail. Chain mail for instance might contain up to 100,000 links, every chain and link of which was made separately of wire hammered round a circular stick and cut. A single suit took months to make. To any boy who reads the account of the process in *Goldsmith of Florence* knight in armour is more than a phrase; he sees an industry as well as the chivalric code. From the unnamed, the book passes to the named, Ghiberti, Brunelleschi, Donatello, Cellini, and Luca della Robbia. The author notes the comment of a little

girl who gave her opinion on the Ghiberti chapter before the book was published. 'If I were you I wouldn't have Ghiberti work forty-eight years on two doors.' Lorenzo Ghiberti, who spent nearly half a century on the doors of the Florence Baptistery, symbolizes the attitude of the Middle Ages to crafts. *Goldsmith* is a book about genius, but the general effect after reading it is that of a story of men who worked at their chosen arts from boyhood till old age, men who came often of a long line of craftsmen, men of industry and integrity, working in a sympathetic and appreciative social milieu, men who realized the limitations and disciplines of their chosen medium, who were persistent and untiring, drawing no clear distinction between their work and their leisure. These people have few prototypes today. It is not easy to make them and their ideals convincing. Katharine Gibson has made them so, I think, notwithstanding her young critic's protest.

Similar in scope, but different in form from Katharine Gibson's books, are LOUISE LAMPREY'S *In the days of the guild* and *Masters of the guild*. These are short stories about more imaginary craftsmen of the Middle Ages, not only the armourers, and weavers and scribes, but even the shoemakers and the pastry-cooks who took their work almost as anxiously despite its impermanence. Every story is complete in itself, and of good plot, but characters from one tale frequently reappear in another tale set in another country some five to twenty years later. Many of the craftsmen of the Middle Ages were a migrant people. When one skill or craft developed almost to perfection in a particular town, as weaving at Arras, shrewd tradesmen would leave the city, carrying their secrets elsewhere in hope of making a fortune, as other tradesmen as wise came thither to learn. From reading these stories one savours something of the spirit of a medieval Europe, not an England, or a France or an Italy.

MADAME HUGLI-CAMP'S *New stories of old things* is a collection of tales drawn from a wider field of history. Like the *Goldsmith* it was inspired by modern museum work with children, and should be useful to liaison workers between schools and museums. Much of the material, particularly that on ancient Switzerland, Japan, Assyria, and Crete, has rarely been explored before in children's books. Madame Hugli-Camp has struck out and found much new ground.

Giotto tended the sheep is by SYBIL DEUCHER and DOROTHY WHEELER. From a book making point of view alone, this folio-size volume is interesting for its delicate salmon pages instead of orthodox white, and for its blue, green, and tan illustrations. This story of Giotto the shepherd boy, who spent his days on the mountain slopes of the Apennines learning to appreciate the lie and fold of the land, the shape and movement of the sheep he watched, who yet became one of the early great Italian painters, may be apocryphal. But the legend has been current for hundreds of years. Its value as Sybil Deucher and Dorothy Wheeler re-tell it does not lie in its authenticity as a tale, but in its authenticity as a picture of medieval studio life. As a young boy Giotto was taken to work in the studio of the master Cimabue, where he mixed paints, cleaned brushes, prepared walls for frescoes, and, one presumes, kept his eyes open till the master was ready to give the young apprentice serious commissions. It is impressive to read in this, as in many of the lives told in the *Goldsmith*, how young the artists and craftsmen of the Middle Ages were when they took on their life work. All their learning was bound up with their own particular craft, and they were responsible followers of that craft frequently in their early teens. Giotto's story may not have happened in all its detail to Giotto, but it is typical enough of his age to be true in a relative sense. The master and his apprentices working

together making the churches of their time beautiful with frescoes is a superb example of co-operative endeavour; although that phrase may not have been in current circulation.

The same two collaborators have also written three gay biographies of musicians: *Mozart the wonder boy*, *Sebastian Bach, boy from Thuringia*, and *Haydn the merry little peasant boy*. As a series these books are a charming and at times outspoken commentary on eighteenth-century Europe. They are the product of sound scholarship and a genuine understanding of children's tastes. For instance, most children are interested in food, and though music necessarily is the central theme of the series, food yet manages to raise an appetizing head on page after page. There are sketches of Bach in later life helping his wife spread honey on bread for their twenty children; of the young Haydn delighted to receive some buns from a Vienna baker who liked his voice, for the choir boys of St. Stephens did not always have enough food to live on, much less sing on. The boyhood period rather than maturity is stressed in each biography, always I think a sound policy in any biography for children. This treatment of course is particularly effective with Mozart, whose youthful appearances on the concert stage with his sister Nannerl put the Misses Temple and Durbin completely in the shade. Each story, too, opens against a very happy family background. This is where Miss Deucher and Miss Wheeler have been most successful, in drawing the personal relationships of each composer—Mozart's love for his sister, his friendship with Haydn, the unity of the Bach family, which in spite of its wide ramifications met to hold an annual family music festival. As the narratives reach a point in a composer's life where an important work was written or inspired, a break is made in the story to give an extract from that work. Children who know music will want to play these, and others can skip

such passages without losing the thread of the story. If the books are read in class or round a home fireside, one can have delightful sessions by reading aloud and playing gramophone records as they are relevant to the narrative. The books are intended for children from the Second to Fourth Standards, but older youngsters do read them. Whatever the age of the readers none of them in later life will ever be scared by the names Haydn, Mozart, or Bach on a radio programme. They have made the acquaintance of each composer as a human being.

Considerations of space make it impossible to deal with the many other books about art and artists. It is possible merely to catalogue them briefly. Lorna Lewis's *Leonardo da Vinci* has been reviewed in the chapter on biography. Deucher and Wheeler's *Millet tended the sheep* is very similar in form to their book on Giotto. Gladys Malvern's *Dancing star, story of Anna Pavlova* and Marie Jeanne's *Yankee ballerina*, both for older girls, make excellent introductions to the whole literature on the ballet. They are both popular even with girls who do not figure in the 'competitions'. Laura Benet's *Jenny Lind*, Madeline Goss's *Beethoven*, and Helen Tynyanova's *Antonio Stradivari*, are on the other hand most interesting to children with musical training. Winifred Kirkland's *Girls who became artists* is disproportionately weighted on the side of America—eight out of eleven born in the United States. Her artists include two book-illustrators, Wanda Gag and Pamela Bianco; a photographer, young brilliant Margaret Bourke-White, whose pictures are a feature of the American magazine *Life*; and Malvina Hoffman, the sculptor and anthropologist who was commissioned by the Field museum to execute a hundred busts of living types of men. Mary Newlin Roberts's *Story of the youth of artists* is a more stereotyped collection of biographical sketches; it includes no Americans.

When we turn from books about artists to actual collections of pictures, there is much less to choose from. A modern art teacher must depend largely on adult art books, not always satisfactory, as children handle large folio-size books of the Phaidon Press type very awkwardly. An art book's life in the hands of children is unhappily not a long one. What is really required, I think, are children's reprints of adult art books, from which pictures of only academic interest could be deleted. The result would be a smaller book, more easily handled, and because of its less encyclopædic range more interesting to children. The best picture collection designed specifically for children is Geoffrey Holme's *Children's art book*. Holme was in a strategic position to make this book, being the editor of *The Studio*, the English art magazine, which offers a stern refutation to anyone doubtful or scornful about the state of the fine arts in Great Britain. Holme has a catholic taste, and that wide knowledge of past and contemporary art movements which is the best foundation an anthologist can have for making a selection of pictures or of poems. Further, Holme has access to the colour blocks of the Studio Company, and his book was published at a price within the reach of the average parent. His introduction runs: 'Here we have collected together for your amusement, the best pictures we could find by artists of the present time and the past, of the things you like: dogs, cats, horses, elephants, mice, babies, children, flowers, trees, houses, railway trains and people.' The book is a completely unsnobbish collection of paintings, sketches, and block prints. Magazine illustrations hobnob with acknowledged masterpieces, and the opening picture, a charcoal drawing of a vast, regal pig, gives a clue to the unpretentiousness of the entire outfit. Animal pictures predominate in the book, but none of them are those romantic animals beloved by the Victorian artist, which

one sees occasionally marooned on the walls of boarding-houses and country pubs. No deer by Landseer here. Instead, there is Durer's quivering hare, a sleek tortoise-shell cat by Edmund Dulac, and some mice by Hokusai the nineteenth-century colour printer, which appeal even to the most Disney-ridden children. Incidentally the book is a gold mine of Japanese colour prints, a field rarely if ever exploited for children; rather a surprising fact when one remembers the passion of most small girls for those Japanese tea-sets of yesterday, and the paper flowers which brought a measure of delight to a wet Saturday afternoon. *Children's art book* concludes with a nice selection of trains, cars, and aeroplanes. No attempt is made at a complete survey of art either by period or by place; the emphasis is rather on the subjects of the pictures. In his running commentary the editor mentions the technical difficulties presented by the mediums in which the several artists work, but he offers no ready-made opinions on the quality of woodcut or sketch. The text of the book would not be readily appreciated by anyone much below Standard Four although many of the illustrations will be pored over and pawed over by absolute babes and sucklings. For this reason Geoffrey Holme's book is an ideal one for a family or a sole charge school. A. Berry's *Art for children*, another Studio publication, has never been as popular as the Holme book, mainly because the plates are not reproduced in colour. Katharine Gibson's *Pictures to grow up with* is a fine catholic collection, all one would expect from the author of the *Goldsmith*.

Certain limitations of children's art books as a group will by now be apparent. Their range is a restricted one. For instance, it is surprising how little on native art is available for younger readers. The recapitulation theory, which finds a parallel between the approach and technique of primitive artist and child

artist, is widely held and as a corollary one would expect children to be interested in an art which is closely related to their own in spirit. Yet few children are ever shown pictures of carvings by African negroes, or the designs and patterns of American Indians. The ignorance of Maori art in New Zealand provides fuel for a whole diatribe. Ethnologists have made elaborate studies of Maori arts and crafts, but no serious attempt has been made to recount the product of their research in a form which would prove attractive and interesting either to a child or a non-academic adult. Further the art of our own time is dealt with very sketchily. A few writers daringly mention Cezanne and his contemporaries, who were all nineteenth-century painters with a twentieth-century vogue. About twentieth-century artists proper, there is practically nothing; Miro, Rivera, Grant Wood, John Nash, and their fellow artists on all continents, are not even names to the twentieth-century children who might delight in their work. The fact is that most available art books for boys and girls deal with European art from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries. They give the child who reads them as incomplete a picture of the world's artistic development as a school textbook gives of history.

An illuminating experience in the Dunedin children's library recently showed the staff there the greatest lack of all. There are two Matisse drawings in the lobby there, and many gay jackets of new and popular books pinned up. Inside on the walls is a large Van Gogh. What attracted most attention of all was a gorgeous blue and orange splash with the legend above it 'Ship Painting'. It had been left between the pages of a child's book and we had pinned it up in the hope its creator might claim it. We hardly expected that there would be a steady audience of critics under fourteen, commenting upon and dissecting the picture, with studied seriousness. Their on the

whole favourable comments contrasted with the indifference they showed to Matisse's odalisque. Thus at the end of this section, I am not sure whether it would not be wisest to recommend one art book alone, Tomlinson's *Picture making by children*, one of the few printed collections of children's own drawings and paintings from many countries. It has a long foreword intended for adults and the comments on the pictures are written from an adult point of view. This does not matter very much because children are adepts at skipping or ignoring whatever does not interest them. Tomlinson's book is unique because it offers children art at their own level, shows them artistic problems solved by other boys and girls with the same amount of skill and experience they themselves possess. They see the merits and demerits with all the perception of one amateur carpenter examining the work of another amateur carpenter. For this reason I think that the first art publishing job to be done in this country is the making of a collection of pictures by New Zealand children. It is not really surprising that the children of Macandrew Intermediate School would muster more enthusiasm for the work of children at Kowhai than they would for Ghiberti's doors.

CRAFTS

As H. C. D. Somerset has pointed out in *Littledene* a great deal of the handwork done in New Zealand both by children and adults goes into unworthy channels—the paper baskets for home-made sweets, the decorated aprons and oven-cloths which stock bazaars from North Cape to the Bluff. Crafts such as these, the decoration of shoe-trees and the making of birds out of pine-cones, have been well described as the 'gentle art of making rubbish out of rubbish'. Thus the first point in choosing a book on craft work for a boy or girl is to

notice whether the directions are worth following. Are the articles to be made worth making? Some of the crafts which are approved by the less 'arty-crafty' are basket-work, doll and puppet making, embroidery and weaving, model and toy making, pottery, modelling, and woodwork.

The firm publishing the best craft handbooks in England today is the DRYAD HANDICRAFT PRESS, Leicester. This Press is a publishing house which is part of a larger business concerned with the manufacture of craft equipment of all types. The Dryad illustrated catalogue is in fact an encyclopædia of hand-craft equipment, showing every tool necessary to carry out weaving, bookbinding, leather-craft, etc.; it lists craft-films and short film-strips called craft-cycles, showing master craftsmen at work. Most useful in home and school are the hundred-odd pamphlets written by members of the Dryad staff or by craft teachers in recognized schools. Generously illustrated, sometimes in colour, these handbooks are always precise in their directions, give full specifications for the necessary materials, and often suggest additional references. Frequently a Dryad pamphlet is the only published information on a craft. Priced at under a shilling, these pamphlets are easily available in New Zealand. Glove making, small carvings, toy making, finger-painting, and embroidery represent a random selection of topics. Dryad publications are intended for use by teachers with children, but brighter children can follow them easily. Parents and children can use these pamphlets together very happily.

For sewing and embroidery, the MARY THOMAS books are useful. The *Mary Thomas's dictionary of embroidery stitches* lists embroidery stitches in alphabetical order. For every stitch Mrs. Thomas gives diagrams which a moron could follow, and she organizes her book with that sound common sense which is

not at all common. Adequate cross-references are given where stitches are known by two or more names. The *Mary Thomas's embroidery book* is another clear, well-illustrated book covering appliqué, broderie anglaise, cut-work, drawn-thread work, and much else from the higher reaches of embroidery. *Mary Thomas's knitting book* covers the simplest to the most elaborate knittings; diagrams again are clear and simple. Each of these books has an index. Although there are books on embroidery, for example, Kathleen Mann's, that may be better, especially in the quality of the drawings, yet the Mary Thomas books are very popular and are freely borrowed. So popular, indeed, that one 'borrower' in Dunedin made the loan permanent.

So much for the distaff side. For boys, books on model aeroplanes are a popular choice, but one should be careful in buying them to notice the publication date. Boys when modelling aeroplanes like to model the latest in aeronautics and will look with jaundiced eye on diagrams for models of planes that the Wright brothers might have flown. If it can be imported, the Popular Mechanics Press publication *Make it yourself* with 823 illustrations of 900 things to make and do is an ideal gift. Another American title is Edwin Hamilton's *Boy builder*, where careful directions and accurate illustrations are used to show how articles can be made of wood. It includes a chapter on tools and how to use them, and another on camp equipment. Two English books for amateur carpenters are A. F. Collins's *Working with tools for fun and profit*, which describes carpentering tools and how to use them, and Stanley Rogers's *Let's make something*.

A common type of craft book is the so-called 'hobby' book, usually called '50 or 100 or 500 things a boy/girl/little folks can make'. These vary in quality according to their publishers and authors. They can be valuable and closely packed compendiums of useful information, selected with some knowledge

of children's interests, economically worded, well-indexed, well-illustrated with pictures which do illustrate and amplify the text. Conversely they are sometimes verbose and padded hotchpotches of miscellaneous facts, without indexes, and possessing illustrations which act as space-fillers only.

As examples of the good and bad hobby book, one can make a comparison between Edwin Hamilton's *Handicraft for girls* and Mabel Gibbard's *Hobbies for girls*. The former is a more expensive book, but the cheaper book is no bargain.

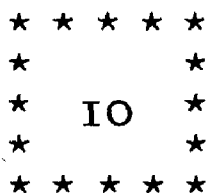
The Gibbard book contains thirty-seven chapters including the following: The seashore as a hobby—The microscope—Rambling—Architecture—How to cycle tour—The telescope—Rowing, sailing and swimming (one chapter)—Bookbinding—Papier Maché—Wildflowers etc. etc. So much is covered in so small a space that nothing of any value is said apart from generalizations with which everyone is familiar. Hamilton on the other hand covers a third of the subjects touched on by Gibbard and treats them much more fully: stencilling and crayon-printing, paper pottery, batik, photography, metal-work, and leather-craft. It is instructive to notice the way in which the two authors handle the same subject—stencilling. Gibbard takes it for granted that students will use ready-made designs whereas Hamilton wisely deprecates the bought stencil because of expense and because much of the pleasure of the work is lost if one cannot create one's own designs. He gives as examples bold vigorous designs whereas Gibbard's patterns suggest a sale of work. Hamilton points out which materials are best suited to the process. 'Linen and cotton materials of heavy or medium texture are best to work with, rather than light-weight silks, such as chiffon and georgette. Unbleached muslin is particularly well-suited to the process.' Compare Mrs. Gibbard on 'fabric'.

'Here is a wonderful occupation for you girls because you actually see the improvement made on plain material by your own handwork! I have actually seen a plain, white voile dress made to look like a Paris model by the addition of a stencil border!' etc. etc. *ad nauseam*. The whole of *Hobbies for girls* is of a similar tone and there are dozens of books in existence like it. The book possesses no bibliography, and no index. *Handicrafts for girls* has both index and bibliography.

Archibald Williams's *Boys' guide* is a tightly packed compendium of information on sports, games, and hobbies. Here are the rules and suggestions for playing cricket, baseball, boxing, riding, rowing, sailing, diving; masses of material on using tools, running meetings, signalling, and such stray topics as the deaf and dumb alphabet. After each section is a list of books for further reading, with details of publisher and price. Williams's *Boys' guide* is thus also useful as a guide to the literature on many subjects. The index is a complete one and the diagrams are superb.

A good 'family book' is *In and out of doors* written by three children, Susan, Charlotte, and Christopher Williams-Ellis, with some help from their parents Clough and Amabel. *In and out of doors* might be described as a junior 'weekend book'. It is a collection of Williams-Ellis family ideas and traditions on indoor and outdoor amusements, together with poems and scraps of prose which have won family approval. These Williams-Ellis ideas and traditions are novel and lively, for the Williams-Ellis family is no ordinary one. Mrs. Williams is an able novelist, and Mr. Williams is an architect of imagination, who incidentally was head of the Tank Corps intelligence in World War I. Their children, who are good friends with Richard Hughes, the part-author of *High wind in Jamaica*, have thus more than a reasonable allowance of brains. Their ideas

on scrapbooks are revolutionary but typical of the rest of the book. Williams-Ellises believe in keeping scrapbooks not of pretty pictures, but of mixed slogans made from muddled advertisements, e.g. 'Eat more fruit—it's nicer with mustard'. Another book, a 'magic book', they packed with 'magic advertisements'—they were all patent medicines and lucky charm ads. By a clever device the cover of the book contains two folded and ingenious games (also W-E inventions).



Nature Study and Science

THAT science should be taught because it teaches children to be observant and curious is a dubious proposition. The case for science as an essential part of the education of the average man and woman does not rest on gratuitous assumptions about the transfer values of particular disciplines, nor on the individual satisfaction which a small class of individuals may derive from verbal disquisitions on the latest, least digested discoveries at the periphery of theoretical research. The cultural claims of science rest on the social fact that the use and misuse of science intimately affect the everyday life of every citizen in a modern community The claims of science in the education of the citizen extend far beyond a passing familiarity with the way in which society at present uses the knowledge available for the advancement of human well-being. What is far more important is the recognition of the potential human welfare inherent in scientific knowledge which existing social machinery fails to exploit for the commonwealth.

The teaching of history presents the record of human life as a babel of emotional phrase-making and a panorama of commercial undertakings, to the success or failure of which technical progress makes no explicit contribution. If he discusses why the Great Navigations took place when they did, the last thing the historian generally thinks of asking is what

kind of knowledge is needed to steer cargoes over long-distance westerly courses A course of science adapted to the requirements of citizenship should be orientated towards the elucidation of the major constructive achievements of natural knowledge in the evolution of civilization. Among the cardinal themes which thus replace the arbitrary division of science into separate 'ologies', those which claim special attention are the construction of the calendar, the technique of navigation and map-making, the extension of deep-shaft mining and the exhaustion of fuel supplies, the introduction of inanimate and mobile power, the discovery of chemical fertilizers and the principles of scientific breeding, the control of epidemic diseases and the national dietetic minimum. School science should not be a selection from the competing claims of specialist disciplines. It should be the story of man's conquest of time-reckoning and space-measurements, of the search for materials and substitutes, the liberation of national sources of power and the struggle against hunger and disease.

From Lancelot Hogben's 'Naturalistic studies in the education of the citizen', in Sir John Boyd Orr, *What science stands for* (London 1937).

Lancelot Hogben, the author of *Science for the citizen* and *Mathematics for the million*, presents in the above extract a view of science teaching which is not generally held, or, if held, is not put into practice by the majority of teachers in our schools. It is quoted because it will suggest to parents points to look for in selecting science books for boys and girls. Probably, however, parents discovered one thing long before teachers saw the light: children are more excited by *Triumphs of engineering* and *The story of the telephone* than by the old-style mechanics of 'perfectly smooth balls rolling along perfectly flat frictionless slopes'. One of the best science books in use today is not called a science book, but appears in a series of social studies readers edited by Harold Rugg. This is *Man at work: his arts and crafts*, a book in

which the author shows the full significance of the invention of number and measurement in the history of man's development, particularly the measurement of time and the invention of the calendar. Rugg does for the child a little of what Mumford's *Technics and civilization* does for the adult: it brings history and science into a new synthesis. Rugg, of course, knows not only his history and his science, but also his pedagogy; *Man at work: his arts and crafts* is well-illustrated, more than well-decorated. The pictures, sometimes beautiful and sometimes not, always drive home points made in the text. They are functional and use every device to make facts memorable. For instance, the elasticity and unreliability of the old measuring methods are well illustrated by the portrait of a corpulent king, which bears the legend 'Do you think that measuring the distance round a king's waist is a good way of determining the length of a yard?'

Parents who have themselves been reared on science textbooks dreary enough in appearance to be suspected of concealing the secrets of the black art may find the *How and why science books* almost indecently gay to look upon. They are not dull-coloured and the type is clear and beautiful. Many pages are bordered with vividly coloured bands and the dozens of pictures both expound and decorate. Substantially built, these books might be given to a dog or left in the rain and still survive.

How and why science books are a graduated set of readers for all classes from the primers to the intermediate school. They could be used as a series throughout an entire school, or even better they make a useful set for a small but growing family, passed down from child to child as are overcoats in some families. The series begins with *We see*, a reading readiness book, thirty-two pages of pictures with single words or phrases underneath, 'Susan, Bob, rabbit, little rabbits, rain, the sun shines' etc. Superficially the book may appear only a picture book but

the pictures are all related to the physical world and make jumping-off places for the reader. Parents will know that modern practice in the infant school supports the view that in the first books a child handles text should be reduced to a minimum and pictures be frequent. *We see* contains only nouns and adjectives. *Sunshine and rain*, for children with more reading experience, has short sentences under each full-page picture: 'Susan likes rain', 'Bob likes fog', etc. A whole series of pictures illustrates various kinds of weather in all seasons—the action of wind on kites, boots, leaves; the life of a caterpillar, a tadpole, a young plant. As the text is reduced, the book in practice encourages observation; it does not attempt to replace study of animal and plant forms by the printed word. *Through the year*, the third book, again uses material from the previous book on which to build. In *Through the year* the children of the stories take the caterpillar described in the earlier book, place it in a jar, and study its life history over many months. Their teacher takes them for walks and they meet a greater variety of animals than either of the two earlier books described.

Winter comes and goes again brings in the caterpillar but only as one of many insects which the children study. In continuation of plant studies, various types of seeds are introduced. Other new material in this volume includes the thermometer, with the help of which children keep a record of the week's weather, the magnet, simple geology in rock studies, elementary astronomy, and simple health rules. The sentence structure of the books has gradually become more elaborate, the vocabulary used more extensive. Every book reflects a yearly cycle of change and the reader of the series is impressed by a sense of flux and flow. In *The seasons pass* relatively little new material is introduced, except bird migration, further health rules, and chapters on life in the high mountain country of the United

States. Sound is studied. Some account of the action of the sun follows naturally upon the elementary astronomy of the earlier volume. *The seasons pass* recapitulates much of the earlier work before the child passes on to the more systematized work of the later books.

The concluding books of the series, *How and why club*, *How and why discoveries*, and *How and why experiments*, present quite difficult new material with unusual clarity. With the groundwork covered in the preceding volumes magnetism and electricity, sound, elementary mechanics, and weather forecasting present relatively little difficulty to the child reader who has been adequately prepared. All the studies in the series are related to the practical world—the conservation of natural resources, community and individual health. In Hogben's words they show that the 'use and misuse of science internally affect the everyday life of every citizen in a modern community'. Only one serious criticism can be made of the series. Examples are almost entirely drawn from United States life with slight excursions into life on the rest of the American continent. It would have given a certain breadth of vision to the series if the rest of the world had been shown in some kind of perspective. Again the past is not drawn upon for instances of use or misuse of the soil. One suspects that just as history might be enriched by an injection of science, so scientific textbooks should take some cognizance of the past.

Science for today, by OTIS CALDWELL and F. D. CURTIS, was written as a high school textbook, but I have seen it borrowed by many science enthusiasts among primary school boys. Working in a large city children's department one gains the impression that many boys could be doing work in school far ahead of what their school syllabus lays down, for they continually and voluntarily borrow books which by all the laws of

the pedagogues should not be touched till three years later. *Science for today*, then, is such a book. It is organized into fifteen large units each of which deals with some aspect of energy, i.e. The air and some of its uses; Water and man's use of it; Knowing and using matter, energy and work; Simple mechanics; Understanding and using heat energy; How weather and climate affect us; Into space with the astronomers (including the calendar); The changing earth and the wealth it contains (geology and the study of erosion, conservation of natural resources); Magnetism and electrical energy and their uses; The use of energy in communication; Energy and man's use of it; The use of energy in transportation; etc.

All the studies are applied to man's needs. Although the book includes formal experiments with heat, the study is directed afterwards to modern methods of heating the home, the oil-burning furnace, the automatic coal stoker. Further, the authors are not content merely to state the present uses of energy; they also state the chief problems facing scientists today, e.g. to discover hitherto unknown sources of energy, to invent uses of energy by which to make the world a more pleasant and convenient place, and to enable us to get more value out of the energy we use.

A good feature of the book is its 'science attitude tests'. Near the opening are sixteen formally stated scientific attitudes of this type.

A scientist does not believe that there is necessarily any connection between two events merely because they occur at the same time (as in a coincidence).

A scientist does not begin to experiment blindly and carelessly. He carefully plans to do his work in what seems, after careful thought, to be the best way.

The book, through a long series of tests, gives a good training in the application of these attitudes to everyday life. Below is a sample 'test':

After the following problem you will find five statements. See whether you can pick out the one which a carefully trained scientist would consider best. Then see whether you can find which of the scientific attitudes (pp. 12 and 13) is illustrated by the best answer.

Some years ago a famous traveller, whom the great scientists considered a careful and accurate observer, reported that he had found in South America a bird which had a head somewhat like a lizard's head and a tail somewhat like that of a parrot and which cracked and ate nuts. Nobody else had ever reported having seen or heard such a creature.

- (a) I will not believe the account until I have seen the bird.
- (b) The account might possibly be true but is not likely to be.
- (c) It can't possibly be true.
- (d) It might be true and probably is if a careful and accurate observer reported it.
- (e) There can be no doubt whatever that it is true, because careful and accurate observers do not make mistakes.

Some teachers will already be familiar with the Junior Science series 'The story of the world' published by Follett and in part sponsored by the elementary school of the University of Chicago. Titles include *How the world is changing* (geology); *The garden of the world* (botany); *The world's moods* (weather), etc. In format the books are substantial and dignified, but, like excessive dignity, not particularly attractive. In style of writing the books are admirable, for experience in the Chicago elementary school taught the authors to write more dramatically and picturesquely. Elizabeth Hayes's *What makes up the world* begins with a chapter 'The fire mystery'.

The reason fire remained a mystery for so long is that men thought it was a substance. They thought it was a sort of

luminous hot stuff that poured out of things as they burned. They came near to being right but they were wrong. Fire is not a material substance; it is something happening.

It would be impracticable to review all the many general science books published during the last ten years, but the 'How and why science books' and Caldwell's *Science for today* are typical of the better sort. It is true that boys generally appear to be more interested in the applications of science, and books like Bridge's *Great canals* and Archibald Low's *Recent inventions* are more widely read than Janet Pollak's *This physical world*. Among writers for children between nine and twelve T.J.S. Rowland has been notably successful. His *Living things for lively youngsters*, and *Moving things for lively youngsters*, and their sequels, are illustrated with amusing black-and-white drawings which might have been spontaneously produced to answer a child's questions. Archibald Low, a prominent British scientist who has deliberately given much of his time to popularizing advances in his field, has written many books for the upper standards, including *Recent inventions*, *Conquering space and time*, *Great scientific achievements*. Vernon Sommerfield's *Underground railways*, Joseph McSpadden's *How they sent the news*, Ellison Hawk's *Electricity for boys*, Clara Lambert's *Talking wires, the story of the telephone*, and Bock's *What makes the wheels go round*, are all books which point in Hogben's phrase to the 'recognition of the potential human welfare inherent in scientific knowledge'.

SCIENCE IN FICTION

As the teacher of art should be familiar with fiction about artists, so the teacher of science should be familiar with the small but valuable group of stories which deal with scientists and scientific work. Such books give the boy or girl an aware-

ness of scientific attitudes. MARJORIE HILL ALLEE'S *Great tradition*, about girls doing graduate work in zoology at the University of Chicago, is a mature book which can create an interest in and sympathy for research. The reader absorbs from the conversations and incidents in the lives of the young zoologists some of their curiosity and enthusiasm. Mrs. Allee has written two other books, *Jane's island* and *Anne's surprising summer*, also about girl scientists. Other authors have taken the scientific expedition as setting for the adventure story. Thames Ross Williamson's *Opening Davy Jones's Locker* describes an expedition of the William Beebe type to the Caribbean sea; Raymond Ditmars, world authority on reptiles, gives in *Forest of adventure* the story of a hunt for specimens in South America. M. I. Ross, in *Back of time*, *South of zero*, and *White wind*, has shown the clash of temperament which can occur among the necessarily limited group of a scientific expedition. In all these books the narrative is the authors' first concern. None of them are didactic in intention, but all nevertheless do achieve this end: they bring the scientist alive for the average boy or girl, and destroy the legend of the scientist as demi-god ever on the brink of some revelation. They illustrate the point that science advances by the efforts of many unknown workers in obscure corners—Faradays and Rutherfords do not work alone.

ANIMAL STORIES

Every children's library has to meet a tremendous demand for animal stories. These stories fall into three groups. The animal story in which the animal bears no relation to its real life prototype has been discussed elsewhere; as well as that too extensive group, we have the *Black Beauty* or *My friend Flicka* type in which the interest is divided between human beings and animal characters. Next comes the type of writing in which

Alice Gall excels, where the life story of the animal is told in fiction form; finally we have the life story of the animal in which the animal is not personalized in any way.

There is a certain amount of controversy about the fictionalized lives of animals. Eric Fitch Daghish says bluntly that when his children saw an animal they wanted to know how it lived, where it had its home, what food it liked, how it treated its babies, and why it had its own particular shape and colour. They did not want to know what he or anyone else imagined animals thought. On the other hand children's interest in animals is not limited to the identification of the animals they see. There is a good case for the fictionalized animal biography which Ermengarde Eberle stated very well in a recent article in the *Horn book*. Mrs. Eberle points out that many animal stories are limited by the fact that they are always told from the observer's point of view, outside looking in rather than inside looking out. She writes:

It seemed to me that there was another way of writing nature stories for young children that would avoid this—that it could be done by writing about the small creatures in the same full and complete way in which writers of novels or short stories write of human beings—in other words, the fiction form. This . . . brought up the question of letting the animals talk in order to build up their characters in the same way that I like to build up characters of people in other stories. The use of conversation seemed good because children like conversation in their stories. The stories are so much more personal and immediate to them if the creature's wordless actions and impulses are translated into a form in which the child thinks of these actions and impulses. . . . There is nothing I dislike more than the pseudo-nature study that allows animals to speak because the writer feels that makes animals 'cute'. I wanted under no circumstances to be mistaken for one of these Animals, large and small; strange-looking or beautiful have in their own

right all the charm and interest they need; and certainly no one should try to destroy the real charm by trying to enhance them. The only way animal conversation is permissible is in fantasy, or in an accurate nature study where the conversation is used within the limits of the creature's actual impulses and activities. Used in this way, it can have real value in building up the particular distinctive character that each kind of living creature has

In my book of stories *Hop skip and fly* . . . I chose some of the creatures that are not so very often written about in children's books because the lives of these have something to tell us that the more obviously charming creatures do not have. It seems to me that we limit children's devotion to rabbits and birds too much by our over-emphasis on these animals. Too, grown people teach children to fear insects and to dislike many other animals which really have just as much interest and importance in the broader life picture as the gentle and familiar creatures certainly life is not all pleasantness and charm and it is important or more important for children to know about some of the less acceptedly beautiful things. There is for instance value in knowing that almost all animals eat some other animal. This may not be pleasant but it has the importance of truth. People incidentally eat rabbits and birds too. But in most stories they limit themselves to telling pleasant things about them.

Alice Gall and Fleming Crew have similar qualities to Mrs. Eberle's as writers of nature stories. They too are writers who avoid sentimentality and writing down, who present animals as living creatures without making them caricatures of human beings. They present the facts of animal life with scientific accuracy and at the same time achieve literary form. *Wagtail*, the story of a frog, is a well-constructed narrative and incidentally the natural history of a pool. Some of the best passages in the book concern an eel as it passes through the pool on its way back to the sea. This eel tells its story to the young tadpoles with a dramatic tenseness which cannot help giving young

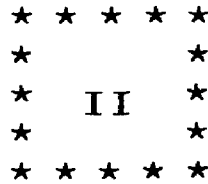
readers an imaginative insight and understanding of the force of animal instinct. The authors convey all the urgency and force of the eel's overwhelming desire to return to the ocean depths. In *Wagtail*, as in their *Little black ant* and *Flat-tail*, the beaver, the life cycle of the animal gives shape to the story. As with a fine piece of sculpture which the spectator feels was literally found in the stone where it awaited the artist who would discover rather than make it, so with fine nature stories the critic is tempted to believe that the tale was there merely waiting to be uncovered.

Other animal stories by authors who have the scientific attitude plus some literary gifts can be but briefly mentioned. These include Allen Chaffee's *Tawney goes hunting*, a well-illustrated story of a wild mountain puma who escapes capture only by feline cunning and great courage; Felix Salten's *Bambi*, and Marjorie Medary's *Top-gallant, a herring gull*. *Fierce-face, the story of a tiger*, comes from the pen of Dhan Gopal Mukerji, a young Hindu of high caste who is now a naturalized American citizen. His stories of bird and animal life are told in some of the finest prose to be found in contemporary children's literature. *Gay neck, the story of an Indian carrier pigeon*, called 'the pearl among birds', won the Newbery medal in 1928. For younger children Wilfred Bronson, author-illustrator of the *Wonder world of ants*, *Fingerfins, the tale of a Sargasso sea fish*, and other stories, combines narrative ability with a gift of exposition. His diagrams are humorous and scientifically correct.

It is to be hoped that some New Zealand naturalists will see the possibilities of this form of writing, and try to produce something comparable about our own wild life. The tui for instance has fared too well in New Zealand poetry; the kiwi has lent its form to butter, a boot-polish, and a literary journal; the moa is a ghost occasionally haunting museums or the

Transactions of the Royal Society. All might well feature in an indigenous children's literature.

Any New Zealand youngster can learn about the habits of the beaver much more easily than he can those of the tuatara, more about the habits of the golden plover than the kiwi. Our New Zealand children, further, have few of the good field books published in England and America for identifying plant and animal life of the countryside. We have no good 'seashore books' for children. Even when we import overseas books written about this country and Australia, they are more likely than not to be inaccurate. Kurt Wiese's *Animal book*, much praised overseas, includes a story about a kangaroo leaping through the Australian 'jungle' and barely missing tripping over the kiwis.



Poetry

CHILDREN meet poetry first in the nursery rhyme. Mother Goose as we know her today is a curious repository of counting-out jingles, short verse stories, taunts and chants, political satire, proverbs and pedlars' cries, nonsense and humour, a literary rag-bag of all kinds of survivals—folk lore in its most elementary form. Yet although she is established in the nursery Mother Goose is seriously challenged elsewhere. The Freudians have psycho-analysed her; the Marxians too have pounced, for a serious American textbook on children's literature suggests that students may care to prepare papers on 'Class distinctions in Mother Goose'. There is indeed a disturbing number of kings for our democratic tastes. Historians have established the fact that 'Mary, Mary quite contrary' is none but the Queen of Scots, and that 'Rock-a-by baby on a tree top' is charged with critical comment on another unpopular Stuart. The student of local government will point out that there is a certain irrelevance about Jack and Jill in these days of municipal water-supply. Mother Goose indeed is a sitting shot for contemporary scholarship; yet after the scholars have torn the clothes from her back and revealed the skeletons

in the Goose cupboard, the old lady herself will still hold sway with the youngest students of poetry.

Many of her rhymes were possibly conceived in anger but they all now read in fun. Whatever their origins, Little Miss Muffet, Jack Sprat, Bo-peep, Georgie Porgie, and old King Cole are men and women of personality—each is a separate entity, an individual, and to banish them would be to impoverish children's literature. It is no accident that the outstanding illustrators of children's books have turned to Mother Goose for a theme. As an actor longs to play Hamlet and the mayor to greet just one royal visitor during his term of office, so illustrators desire to illustrate Mother Goose. Randolph Caldecott with his 'Hey diddle diddle picture books' has been followed in the same field by Kate Greenaway, Leslie Brooke, and Arthur Rackham. None of the four is living now, but each added something of his own genius to Mother Goose; each saw in her something which had not been seen before and illuminated it. The best modern editions are probably those illustrated garishly and wildly by Feodor Rojankovsky and Roger Duvoisin.

Children like poetry. Grown men who have had the taste for it killed by over-athletic schoolmasters or over-sentimental schoolmistresses may doubt the wisdom of the statement. They should look at the begrimed little books in a children's library that prove that children, when left free to choose and select poetry for their reading and learning, really enjoy it. Every child's bookshelf should hold at least one anthology; an anthology rather than a book by one individual poet because poetry for children has been the product of an occasional muse. Few poets have written entirely for children or have written sufficient poetry which children will enjoy to fill a standard 'slim' volume. We can select a few poems from all the major poets to interest the average child although the bulk of the

work of a Beddoes, a Byron, or a Blake may appeal only to the exceptional youngster. The justification for the poetry anthology is that it groups old things together in a new way or that it discovers new things. There are, however, many stereotyped anthologies for children which are little more than anthologies of anthologies, fusty collections of veteran verse in which extracts from Macaulay and Longfellow appear with mechanical regularity. At its lowest, making an anthology can be literary hack work of the worst description; at its best, as when Walter de la Mare is editing a collection, making an anthology means that all a man's perception, his scholarship, his feeling for literature are brought into play. Here the anthologist, by placing poems in a fresh juxtaposition and giving them a new emphasis, creates as the poet creates but with individual poems instead of individual words.

Many anthologists restrict themselves in place to the poetry of England and in time to the outpourings of the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ignoring alike the Elizabethans and the young men of our own time who wrote between two wars. For contrast to this type of bread-and-butter collection one can turn to an anthology *Sung under the silver umbrella*, published by the Association for Arts in Childhood. In a sensitive introduction Padraic Colum points out that it is a sizable book in which children can move around and make a world of their own. It has depth and it has range, for the sources vary from translations of the Japanese to the Bible. The authors are not always standard ones for children—Humbert Wolfe, Lady Gregory, Vachel Lindsay, and G. K. Chesterton are not found in every bib-and-tucker amalgamation of poems. *Sung under the silver umbrella* may introduce many New Zealanders to the work of Dorothy Baruch, an American poet for children who has turned her head away from nature, and looked to trains,

lawn-mowers, and bicycles as sources of inspiration. Here is no poetry of enchantment, for Dorothy Baruch has never stepped into the rich and strange world of a de la Mare. She is the poet of the average child who whizzes round the corner on a scooter, who, having his hair cut, ponders on the superior race of barbers. It is interesting to find her beside those who fly higher for one can see both her gifts and her limitations. *Sung under the silver umbrella* makes a useful book to give to a child immediately after Mother Goose. It is one of the best anthologies for younger children.

Fifty new poems for children is an anthology selected from books published by Basil Blackwell in the 1920s. It contains nothing stale from too frequent repetition. All the poems are fresh, many of them previously published only in adult collections and not available to children unless some co-operative grown-up cared to pass them on. Eleanor Farjeon, Madeline Nightingale, Edith Sitwell, and J. R. R. Tolkien, author of *The hobbit*, are some of the poets, but most of the names are unfamiliar and are all the more welcome for that. Two child poets, Vivienne Dayrell and E. Wyndham Tennant, contribute eight poems between them, including this delicious chant:

*O the towel and the bath,
And the bath and the soap
And the soap was the fat,
And the fat was the pig,
And the pig was the bran
And the bran makes sausages,
And man eats the sausages
And God gets man.*

Most of the poems are fanciful rather than robust. They are concerned with children's imaginings about the everyday world rather than any realistic picture of it. There are no story poems and little nonsense.

Similar in scope and happily similar in price (which is low) are Michael Williams's *Modern verse for little children* and *Modern verse for young people*. Here again we find Edith Sitwell, Humbert Wolfe, Robert Graves, *et al*, and a new rhymester, Emile Jacot, who is the author of new verses with a nursery rhyme flavour.

Three standard collections of 'staple poems' (by which I mean the 'Queen Mab', 'Seven times one', 'Inchcape Rock', 'Lost Doll' period or level of poetry) are Quiller-Couch's *Book of children's verse*, and E. V. Lucas's *Book of verses for children* and *Another book of verses for children*. Lucas's books contain many old English rhymes and songs which are often difficult to find anywhere else. Both collections find the nineteenth century the most poetically interesting, and include many of the narrative and dramatic poems which teachers are generally agreed appeal particularly to boys. So we find 'Bishop Hatto', 'The Glove and the Lions', 'The Pied Piper', and the 'War Song of Dinas Vawr' in these collections. An adult reading them through has a slight nostalgia particularly when he comes across some well-loved and well-remembered verse from his own childhood. The quality of the narrative in many of the well-known 'story-poems' is superior to much of the prose narrative available to the children of yesterday and perhaps even of today. I am not sure that much of the emphasis placed by teachers on the narrative side as opposed to the lyrical aspect of poetry comes about not because of a shortage of good stories but because of the teachers' unfamiliarity with prose fiction. This however is a personal surmise. The Lucas and Quiller-Couch collections are full of good story-poems and because of this have a wide popularity with teachers. One fault in these collections is that they disregard such unpoetic but useful devices as indexes. The only way to find a wanted poem in either is to

paw one's way through the book with the assistance, if one is a barbarian, of a well-licked thumb. As sources of the well-tried old favourites both are useful, but unhappy the child who is given nothing else.

American editors are always entirely scrupulous about outfitting their anthologies with indexes by author, title, and first line. They often go further and provide subject indexes so that one can locate with a minimum of trouble all the poems about dolls, or boats, or canaries as the case might be. Typical of such anthologies is *The golden flute*, edited by Alice Hubbard and Adeline Babbitt. Their approach was a novel one, not primarily literary at all: the 450 poems included were selected after a 'scientific' study of children's interests. If research revealed the fact that children's 'interests' embraced bees and grandmothers, a search would be made for a poem about bees and grandmothers. The whole anthology was compiled on these lines, all very commendable to modern educationists possibly, though teachers of literature may find the implications disturbing. Unfortunately the authors carried their scientific approach too far and made binding and title-pages as gloomy as those of a textbook on psychology. Children avoid *The golden flute*, much as kindergarten directors and school teachers like it.

Another product of the American genius for organization is the specialist anthology—the anthology with a theme. Typical of these are Eulalie Grover's *My caravan; a book of poems for boys and girls in search of adventure*; Brewton's *Under the tent of the sky, a collection of animal poetry*, and Blanche Thompson's *With harp and lute, a collection of poetry for Catholic children*.

WALTER DE LA MARE is the most discriminating anthologist in England, making his collections, one is sure, because of some inner necessity to bring good things together. *Tom Tiddler's ground* and *Come hither* have not their like in all the rest of children's

literature. His choice is a poet's choice; nothing banal or obvious finds its way into his duffel-bag. He includes many anonymous old English rhymes and verses, for his own genius is peculiarly English: not in the English tradition of Chaucer, Defoe, and Cobbett but in the tradition bound up with Merlin, the lore in old herbals, with Blake and Coleridge. De la Mare will resurrect a forgotten rhyme like this old Devon song which goes

*Here's to you old apple tree,
Be sure you bud, be sure you blow,
And bring forth apples good enow
Hats full, caps full!
Three bushel bags full
Pockets full and all*

or an old Yorkshire rhyme such as 'The three cats' and bring to a contemporary anthology some of the burr and flavour of folk art. His notes to the poems do not steal the reader's pleasure by coming in first with discoveries. They are such conversational asides as two friends might make to one another if reading together. One has the feeling in *Tom Tiddler's ground* of sharing one's pleasures. The reader rather wants to respond like an unknown Dunedin child who wrote once in a library copy of 'Peacock pie' below the last rhyme printed there, 'Thank you for the beautiful verses'.

It is to be regretted that of de la Mare's own poems only two appear to have any extensive currency in New Zealand schools—'Tartary' and 'Silver'—both of them recited and taught so often they become as drearily familiar as Whistler's portrait of his mother. For all the children who emerge from school satiated with 'Slowly silently now the moon' how few know the poems 'Peacock pie' or 'Chickens' or the sinister 'Little creature' which begins

*Twinkum, twankum, twirlum, twitch
My great grandam she was a witch . . .*

or the 'Bee's song'

*Thousandz of thornz there be
On the rozez where gozez
The Zebra of Zee.*

De la Mare's world is a pagan world, occasionally crossed by an evil shadow. The good souls who lock their windows and keep their hedges neatly trimmed may not find this world always wholesome, but even they should admit that it is a dramatic world where experience ranging from sweet to sour is never exactly duplicated, where moods shift, and the voices, although difficult to hear, have always something wise and puzzling to say.

ELEANOR FARJEON is one of the most prolific writers for children; indeed she has written so much it is inevitable that the quality should be uneven. This unevenness is apparent in her collection *Sing for your supper*, where poems which can take their place with anything Blake and de la Mare have written stand alongside second-rate verses one might expect to find in the cheaper annuals or the children's page of a farmer's weekly. She can be guilty of weak rhythms and jangling rhymes, but at her best she is fresh, inventive, sensitive, and humorous. She knows her English countryside, knows not only garden flowers, but wild flowers and all herbs—cassia, tarragon, and balsam—knows their physical nature and the legends of them. She knows too, the traditional poetry of the countryside, the counting-songs, the rhymes and singing-games many of which are incorporated in the two *Martin Pippin* books. She sees the countryside with a child's eye—all the more astonishing because she was urban in her own upbringing, a London child with a London child's pleasures.

Eleanor Farjeon always heard the sound of English as clearly as she saw the pictures the language brought her. One of her

poems 'Cat' describes an encounter between a dog and a cat. The poem is the encounter, it spits out its meaning and one hears paw and claw. Another one which ends

*And that's why Hannibal, Hannibal, Hannibal
Hannibal crossed the Alps*

is like a chant of childhood, sometimes derisive, sometimes repeated for its satisfying rhythm rather than any satisfying sense. Yet this same verse also catches the sense of inevitability, of conqueror pushing forward. There is a robustness about much that Eleanor Farjeon has written but there is also a gentleness and a sympathy as in this portrait of 'Weston' (a perfect gardener, deaf and dumb).

*Weston cannot speak or hear,
Yet he has a tongue and ear
In his fingers and each thumb.
Weston's hands aren't deaf and dumb . . .*

*When we meet him on the round
He smiles and makes a muffled sound,
But his flower beds, all and each,
Are his music and his speech.*

She has a gift too of writing of children as if she were one of them and making rhymes as Dorothy Baruch does about their everyday experiences, as in 'Peter in his bath':

*And I will get out when the water goes plug
And I won't be sucked down the bathroom plug.*

This gift is also Stevenson's and A. A. Milne's.

STEVENSON'S *A child's garden of verses* is deservedly a classic. He was one of the earliest writers to write at a child's own level, inside looking out, not outside looking in. R. L. S. remembered clearly a child's system of values, the rankling sense of injustice at being sent to bed before sundown, the desire for the day when commands could be given with the adult's

positive knowledge they would be obeyed. In the 'The land of counterpane' he created permanently a picture of the sick child's world with all its stoical acceptance and its happy compensations. In 'Foreign lands' he wrote of a child in a tree and the line 'If I could find a higher tree' symbolizes the frustrated feeling of all children, the passionate desire to see and to know despite the shackles of adult control and the physical disabilities of the incompletely grown. 'From a railway carriage' represents the child's or any traveller's completely egoistic vision of the world beyond the railway tracks,

*And here is a mill, and there is a river
Each a glimpse and gone for ever.*

The world exists only as the traveller sees it. The poem is interesting technically because it directly describes only the seen world, the traveller's attitude of mind is not directly stated. Not that any such fine points interest children; they enjoy only the motion hurtling forward, and the sense of delight in finding their own traveller's joy crystallized.

A. A. MILNE has Stevenson's gift of approaching the child's world on a level, with this difference, that with a child in his house it was easier probably to recapture childhood. In fact one might say the position was reversed and childhood captured the writer. The choruses and chants of Milne's poetry:

*I'm fishing
He doesn't know I'm fishing,
That's what I'm doing
Fishing,*

or 'James, James, Morrison, Morrison': these are the repetitious chants of childhood. When one overhears children's conversations one notices the constant repetition of ideas, as one speaker re-states or echoes the earlier remarks before proceeding forwards. The same phenomenon can be observed at a

tea-party when women of limited intelligence are conversing: 'I'm going into town on Tuesday.' 'Oh, you're going into town etc., etc.' This is probably a hangover from childhood habits and Milne uses similar devices constantly. They are not studied artifices but a direct reflection of his observations of his son and his son's contemporaries.

The odd asides and the sudden shifts in ideas which one finds in Milne reflect a child's fleeting interests. There is nothing remarkable in Milne's popularity with children. There is something curious about Milne's earlier tremendous vogue with adults. It is probable that that vogue had something to do with the period at which *When we were very young* and *Now we are six* were published. They appeared in the 1920s when many women were condemned by a war to spinsterhood and childless married couples were more common than in these days of population propaganda. Many of these adults discovered childhood at one remove when they read Milne. They found childhood had charm and curiously enough gave Milne and Shepard the credit for discovering what parents, or most of them, had known all along.

Not all nineteenth-century poets have worn as well as Stevenson. While *A child's garden of verses* (1885) is a classic, William Allingham's *Rhymes of little folk* (1887) is a period piece. Two of Allingham's poems at least are still read widely—"The fairies" ("Up the airy mountain, down the rushy glen") and "The fairy shoemaker". These poems reflect the spirit of a tradition of Irish folk lore, for Allingham's fairies have roots in a peasant tradition. They are not arbitrarily planted at the bottom of a suburban garden.

At this point it seems worth while to discuss so-called fairy poetry. Some fairy poetry—de la Mare's, Allingham's, perhaps Christina Rossetti's—is written almost in belief; it may be only

a temporary belief, a willing suspension of the usual faculties, but the poetry is written in sincerity because of the author's saturation in a pagan lore, or in a world of his own creation. Much modern fairy poetry is written about the fairies Puck of Pook's Hill poured scorn upon as 'little buzzflies with butterfly wings and gauze petticoats'. These are Rose Fyleman's fairies. There are fairies at the bottom of her suburban garden but they are puppets dropped there as stock characters might be introduced into a pantomime. There is a revolting whimsy about some fairy poems which has brought them into disrepute. It will be regrettable if 'Goblin market', 'The forsaken mermaid', and the best of Allingham and de la Mare are tipped overboard with the mechanized pan-pipes and the dancing-recital Queen Mabs.

Children's poetry indeed suffers under a series of curses. A modern curse was this surfeit of fairies. A nineteenth-century curse was the curse of morality, the rhyme was a punishment, and the punishment made the rhyme. The transgressing characters of Ann and Jane Taylor's 'Meddlesome Matty', 'Negligent Mary', 'Sleepy Harry', and 'The vulgar little lady' seem today no more than a human index to juvenile sin in Victorian times. Only 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star' has any currency today. Poetry such as this is interesting today as the inspiration of Belloc's mock-cautionary tales which, though they often magnified the ultimate disasters, utterly transmogrified the morality.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI happily was no moralist. *Sing song*, her collection of poems for children under ten, is usually compared with Blake's poems, but I am not sure that the similarity goes very deep. Much of Blake's poetry is simple at first sight only: there is a deep underlying allegory. His simplicity is the simplicity of the mystic, which is no simplicity at all. The children in Blake's poems are at once children and symbols.

There is however no esoteric significance about Christina Rossetti's lyrics, her rhyming is as spontaneous and artless as it appears on first acquaintance. Her poems were written for young children, and meant to appeal instantly.

*Who has seen the wind?
Neither I nor you:
But when the leaves are trembling
The wind is passing through.*

*Who has seen the wind?
Neither you nor I:
But when the trees bow their heads
The wind is passing by.*

The most glorious contribution of nineteenth-century England to children's literature was its nonsense. Genuine nonsense poets are few and far between, and indeed one might argue that nonsense is the very peak of poetry, a peak few ascend. First of the few is EDWARD LEAR, author of the *Book of nonsense* and *Nonsense songs*. Lear, in his time, was a brilliant illustrator of zoological works, although ultimately his reputation as a writer of nonsense eclipsed his fame as a 'serious' artist. The poems which children like most are 'The owl and the pussy-cat', 'The jumbles', 'The dong with the luminous nose', 'The pobble who has no toes', and 'Mr. and Mrs. Discobbolos'. A law demanding that all parents read them to children might have more salutary effects than a law which says an apple a day or a glass of milk. Lear is both funny and not funny. His world, like de la Mare's, is sometimes sinister, with hints of horrors undescribed. His characters have a careless abandon and calm disregard for all proffered good advice, which might be one of the reasons why children admire the jumbles who cried 'We don't care a button, we don't care a fig', and went to sea despite what their friends had said. The pobble cries 'Fish diddle

dee dee', a remark every child at some time must have muttered under his breath as the advice, the helpful tips, the warnings, reminders, and rebukes from the adult plane cloud in on his private world. Lear's world is a superb place of refuge with its odd geography, its lack of history, and above all its fantastic physiology.

Carroll's rhymes too, 'Jabberwocky', 'The walrus and the carpenter', also have their sinister side. Though they make one laugh, the laughter is sometimes on the other side of the face. Carroll's rhymes need a more mature appreciation than Lear because there is a satire in Carroll not always present in Lear; in fact Lear in his rhymings at least is more completely childlike.

Two American writers deeply influenced by Lear and Carroll are Laura Richards and Eugene Field. LAURA RICHARDS, who died a year or two ago in her nineties, was the daughter of Julia Ward Howe, author of the 'Battle hymn of the Republic'. As a child she was suckled on Lear, and raised her own seven children on Lear, Carroll, and Stevenson. This long experience of the classics of children's literature during childhood coupled with her own gift of rhyme has made her a children's poet in the best tradition. Perhaps her seventy-fifth book, published when she was nearly ninety, had not quite the same spontaneous freshness of those she published in middle life, although her rhyme of 'Tom Tickleby' is a gay achievement for a woman of eighty-eight.

*Little Tom Tickleby
Answer me quickleby!
Why is your nose so long?
'I use it,' said he,
'For a flute, as you see,
And it greatly improves my song.'*

EUGENE FIELD like Laura Richards was one of the group of New Englanders who added so much to children's literature in

the nineteenth century. Field was a proverbial 'father of eight' and most of his poems for children were written initially for home consumption. Some of his work was sentimental and trifling but much of the rest of it has become part of the fabric of children's literature, notably 'Wynken, Blynken and Nod'. At other times his derivation from Lear and Carroll is more obvious. His bird singing in the amfalula tree, his flimflam which flopped from a fillamaloo is jabberwockian or jumblian by descent.

Two of the best anthologies of nonsense verse are not written for children at all, but they will be good sound books for a family: *Faber book of comic verse*, edited by Michael Roberts, and *Straw in the hair*, an anthology of nonsensical and surrealist verse edited by D. Kilham Roberts.

And since we have returned to anthologies again, probably the best kind of all is the one a family makes itself—loose sheets in a folder. Poems can be pulled out and thrown away when children have grown out of them, so that the family anthology remains a living collection of poems that are being enjoyed. No anthology is ever so well-selected as that one makes for oneself.

Plays

In an essay on children's plays A. A. Milne suggests that children are less interested in the lines of a play than in the spectacle and what the professional actor calls 'business'. Discussing memories of plays seen in childhood with friends I have found that our memories were not of the great speeches. My own memories of *The Tempest* were not of 'these revels now are ended' but of a light switching on in a cave to illuminate a magnificent feast spread there (probably quite a simple theatrical device); and of my disappointment that Miranda was not the blithe young girl I had every right to expect but an elderly woman whose age was more than apparent from my gallery seat. Another girl's theatrical memories were largely concerned with *Aladdin* when the Widow Twankey chased someone round a table and twelve chorus girls on ropes swung out over the stage. Milne says in his essay that he once wrote a pantomime for a theatre which owned a property elephant left over from some previous performance. The theatre manager suggested that Milne should work the elephant into his own play and he did so. A boy character said 'Look, there's an elephant,' and the property elephant could be seen in the rear

of the stage. The audience of children was wildly enthusiastic and the play was a success.

Rose Fyleman's *Peter Coffin* illustrates this point that business rather than lines 'makes' the child's play. *Peter Coffin* is a crude but effective pirate play which can absorb any number of extras. Coffin's cronies are Brandy Billy, Daniel Dagger, and Squinting Sandy among others. One can imagine the relish with which these less than Miltonic lines would be spoken:

*I am a pirate, grim and bold,
I'm out for a fight and I'm out for gold
I am a terror by land and sea
A murder or two is nothing to me.
Peter Coffin is my name
You'd better not meddle with my little game.*

But how much knowledge of childhood lies behind these stage directions:

They (the savages) can either club the pirates as they lie asleep or there can be a fight. If there is a fight, the actors are warned not to upset the scenery.

For very similar reasons *Peter Pan* was one of the most popular plays ever written; not because of any brilliance in the lines but because of its 'business'—Peter Pan instructing the Darlings in the gentle art of flying in the first act; the pirates, always satisfying to gaze upon from the distant safety of stalls and circle; the mermaids' lagoon and the crocodile in the second act. Even if the audience heard never a word such a play could not help but succeed.

Peter Pan, of course, is written for adults to act for children. This is where New Zealand children miss most. They have a certain experience in acting but they rarely see good plays acted for them by adults. There is a responsibility resting on the children's librarian to draw such children's plays as *Toad of Toad Hall* and *Treasure Island* to the attention of adult drama

groups with the suggestion that the amateur actor can find even more enthusiastic audiences among children than among his own contemporaries.

Overseas children are given so much more dramatic entertainment. The London child before 1939 saw not only pantomime but regular Christmas revivals of *The blue bird*, *Where the rainbow ends*, *Peter Pan*, together with occasional special performances of Thackeray's *The rose and the ring* and *The midsummer night's dream*. Many of the social settlements made it a regular feature to produce plays by and for the district in which the settlement was working, and the great Birmingham and Liverpool repertory theatres did a great deal by including in their programmes many plays that appealed to both adults and young people.

Italy has no children's theatre in the usual sense, but it is the home country of the puppet and the outdoor marionette show has a great following there. For a time France had its Théâtre du Petit Monde in Paris, a theatre subsidized by the State where plays were given once a week by juvenile professionals preparing for a stage career. Much of the repertoire was adopted from the classics of French children's literature, the fairy tales of Perrault and the fables of La Fontaine. In Czechoslovakia until the occupation, the Czech national theatre in Prague sponsored plays and operas based on Bohemian folk lore. In Norway a children's play is produced every year at the National Theatre in Oslo. A favourite play is *The princess and the fiddler* by Barbara Ring, a popular modern Norwegian writer for children whose story *Peik* is available in an English translation. Sweden, too, has its 'barnteatren' (children's theatre), where Strindberg's *Lucy Pehr*, and *Princess Thornrose* by Zachary Topelius, the famous collector of Scandinavian folk lore, are favourite productions. In Russia, a notable child-

ren's drama has developed since 1920. Some outstanding productions have been *Tom Sawyer*, *Mowgli*, based on *The jungle book*, and *The nightingale*, an adaptation of Hans Andersen's fairy tale. Such plays based on the best in European children's literature show how eclectic Russia has been in her sources. It is significant that Markov in his *Soviet theatre* contends that the drama of everyday life does not satisfy an audience of children who want 'theatricality' and fantasy.

One of the mistakes made with drama in New Zealand schools is that it is too securely harnessed to the educational cart. Every children's librarian today is pestered for plays about health, kindness to animals, character building, and dozens of such dramatic tracts are being written. It would seem that junior drama is one of the last strongholds of the Victorian point of view that all literature must have a strong obvious moral. Now a 'play' in which the horrors of not cleaning teeth are driven home may result in a more persistent use of the tooth-brush but it may likewise deaden interest in the drama. Look some time at the moral dialogues in Victorian children's books where 'lessons' are taught under the guise of a conversation between two friends. The device is quite apparent and one wonders that the author should have imagined that the sugar in any way disguised the pill. In France for a time Punch and Judy underwent a strange metamorphosis. Punch no longer banged Judy on the head but helped her across roads and explained the virtues of fresh air. *C'est magnifique mais ce n'est pas la guerre.*

A play like S. Hsiung's *Mencius was a bad boy*, because its method is oblique and indirect, will illustrate Chinese manners and customs very much better than some snippet of dialogue written for the sole purpose of 'dramatizing' China. Of *Mencius was a bad boy* and other plays like it one might contend that

they are more effective because they were written to be good plays first and propaganda or vehicles of information only secondarily. When an art form is good as such, a more vivid impression is made by it upon the reader or listener than would be the case were it second-rate. Thus any incidental information the former may carry is driven home more effectively than the 'message' of the second-rate novel or play even though that message is underlined. The second-rate leaves a blurred impression upon the reader; everything about it is quickly forgotten. An historical play written with the object of making children remember an incident may achieve its purpose less surely than the play written about a period because the author saw its possibilities as dramatic material; for example, Beulah Marie Dix's play *Captain of the gate* deals with the remnants of a Royalist army in Connaught in Cromwell's time. It is a tense exciting drama, every line of the dialogue helping to work the play up to its climax. Nothing is 'woven in' deliberately to explain the hatred Ireland had for Cromwell although it is conveyed indirectly to the audience. Because *Captain of the gate* is a good drama it strikes home and gives life to a whole period although actually it gives few definite 'facts' about the times.

My own view is that teachers who want to 'dramatize' everything do a great disservice to the drama and no particular service to education. In a children's library, a staff is asked more frequently for a play about something, Queen Elizabeth or China or Arbor Day, than for plays which are well-constructed, of literary merit, or merely charming or funny. This is to be regretted. Children's plays should follow in a modified way the laws which drama of any kind must follow. There are too many children's plays in which stock characters speak alternate lines to one another, plays in which there is no shape, or style,

or development of character, plays which are completely lacking in dramatic fire. Montrose Moses says somewhere that 'perfunctory dialogue is not drama'. Good children's plays are rare; many of them—Frances Hodgson Burnett's *Little princess* for instance—do not fall into line with an adult's notion of what children ought to like. *Little princess* is sentimental and melodramatic, a junior *East Lynne* perhaps; yet it is a good child's play, for despite many faults it has shape and form, a beginning, a middle, and a truly satisfying ending. It has a climax and individual characters clearly delineated one from another.

(Some plays for children are listed on pp. 217-8.)

Magazines

As a class, children's magazines have a long history; as individuals they come and go with astonishing rapidity. One editor will build up a magazine and create for it, temporarily at least, a large circulation, but as he grows older or is replaced by another, the public dwindles, and one more periodical passes to the overcrowded graveyard of dead weeklies and monthlies. The Victorian period saw a tremendous output of young people's periodicals, most of which were highly moral in tone, and reflected the ideals of the religious societies which sponsored them. Typical of these were *Youth's instructor* and *Good words for the young*, a children's version of the adult *Good words*, the staple reading for a Victorian Sunday afternoon following the staple roast-beef dinner. The most famous of all nineteenth-century children's magazines, one in many ways not really typical of its time, was *Aunt Judy's magazine*—even the title has a modern ring which sets it apart from its contemporaries. *Aunt Judy's* editor was Mrs. Margaret Gatty, its regular contributors her story-telling daughter Mrs. Juliana Ewing, and such giants of children's literature as Randolph Caldecott and Lewis Carroll. It says much for Mrs. Gatty's

literary judgment and her understanding of boys and girls, that many of the stories which first appeared in *Aunt Judy* still crop up regularly today in modern anthologies for children. Another famous magazine, *Little folks*, was first published in 1871, and died quietly in the 1930s, ever mourned, as the in memoriam notices say. That was one of the record runs of English children's magazines. *Chatterbox*, born five years earlier, has also perished.

The first numbers of the *Boy's own paper* appeared on the bookstalls in 1897. It was destined to introduce some of the famous names in juvenile fiction to the boys of Britain. Volume one, a rarity now coveted by book collectors, carried the first published work of the then unknown Talbot Baines Reed, and the opening chapters of W. H. G. Kingston's *From powder monkey to admiral*. Even the exploits of a Harwood and a Cunningham have not blinded small boys to the glories of an earlier day in naval history, and Kingston is still read, although powder-monkeys have gone the way of ironclads and the flogging-triangle. Two other celebrated contributors were R. M. Ballantyne and Jules Verne. For many of its writers, the *B.O.P.* with its extensive circulation created their fame, much as a radio dramatization would do for an author today. Although the magazine was sponsored by the Religious Tract Society, the *B.O.P.* was from the beginning less pious than its origins might suggest. No frontal attack was made upon 'the immorality' which then, as now, was considered rife in society. Instead as Harvey Darton says:

Its ideal was to combat evil by treating goodness as ordinary unemphasized decency and honesty, which knew and avoided vice spontaneously, and rejected it also with vigour, but without loud chords of moral triumph . . . Its well-rounded policy amounted to a strong compost of varied manliness and naturalness. Manliness in fact became in the long run rather wearisome.

Not every adventure novelist can invent a Jim Hawkins (much less a Long John Silver) or an Allan Quatermain [The typical *B.O.P.* hero] too often had no imagination or temperament of his own and was only a type, conducting himself fearlessly, resourcefully, and modestly in moments of great practical danger, which were the true point of the stories. In England, of course he was emphatically British, in the United States as emphatically American. . . the plain boy who dislikes singularity and eventually becomes a bore.

Today the *B.O.P.* is a shadow of its former self, attracting few authors of merit or talent. Most of the serials come from the pens of Messrs. Johns, Westerman, and Hadath, popular writers of 'bloods' and four-shilling 'dreadfuls'. The features or non-fiction articles are usually attractively titled, and written about subjects of interest to the average boy. These are typical: 'By rail through the Rockies', 'Overhauling a lock', 'Bats use radar', and 'A gamble against death'. There is nothing wrong with those articles considered individually, but as a group reflecting the range of the *B.O.P.* they make a poor showing when contrasted with the features in the politically and socially minded American magazine *Scholastic*. These again are typical of the latter—'On the other side of the tracks', 'Big business in the United States', and 'How the Aussies earn their living'. During the long wait for war in the 1930s while the real guns of the real world were amassed ready for conflict, the hard-hitting heroes in the pages of the *B.O.P.* used their fists in Ruritania and vague North-western provinces. The boys who followed their exploits were given no indication that the years which lay ahead contained realities sterner than those the fictional youngsters had to face.

American boy and *Boy's life* have similar limitations. Both these are remarkable for high circulations, holding premier positions among United States children's periodicals, with

an average monthly issue of 800,000 each. They carry a heavy load of advertising, and can, like the *Satevepost*, pay first-class authors to write stories modified sometimes in plot and characterization to fit in with a well-defined fiction policy. Howard Pease and Robb White, two authors who have taken the Ballantyne formula and brought it up to date, are representative of the *American boy* group of writers.

The Girls' own paper began its career at about the same time as the *B.O.P.* but it never achieved the latter's circulation, or had a comparable influence upon writers for girls. It had a period of amalgamation with the *Women's magazine*, but has again broken away to recover individual existence—no small feat in the periodical world where amalgamation usually spells extinction. A marriage of two magazines, like a wedding among bees, is a sentence of death for one partner. Today the *G.O.P.* is undistinguished, but I have met women of sixty and seventy who recall reading the early bound volumes in their girlhood with an awakening feminist enthusiasm. The now outmoded articles did come as a breath of fresh wind from the outside world to otherwise limited lives. As with the *B.O.P.* early promise once more was not fulfilled. Typical of the fiction in *G.O.P.* pages today is a story I selected at random from a 1941 volume, with the title, 'Adventures of a ruby pendant'. Heroine Audrey, whose father, a musician, is in straitened circumstances (the direct result of wartime conditions) goes from London as an evacuee to a fashionable girls' school. There, like most heroines in English school stories, she is poor, lonely, and shy. However, she is cheered to receive a pendant; the gift of her young sister who found the jewel in the street, and did not realize it was stolen goods. Grand climax comes when Lord C— at school break-up notices pendant, makes inquiries, gives Audrey £50 reward. Not only that, the

noble lord arranges that Audrey's father shall obtain engagements from the B.B.C. Audrey, no longer poor, stops being shy and lonely. Curtain. Compare that story with another taken from a comparable issue of the *American girl*. The period again is wartime. 'One of us' is about an English evacuee set down in the midst of an American family and the plot hinges upon the difficulties of adjustment on both sides. The Matthews children overwhelm Elizabeth, the stranger, with every attention, are over-polite and over-considerate, until their guest becomes unhappy and self-conscious. She is not used to the frankness of Americans, the self-confidence of children who take part in family conclaves and help their parents make important decisions. The situation is a difficult one, a problem in personal relationships, which is ultimately solved not by the providential interference of a noble lord, but by the thought and actions of the child protagonists. Each story is representative of its magazine.

American girl at first sight appears trivial, over-preoccupied with clothes, films, and boy meets girl. On closer examination one discovers, however, that the magazine has been planned with a realistic eye to the secret hankerings of the early teens, and that a considerable amount of sound sense is sandwiched between the glamour. Its editor knows her adolescents. The stories are short, brightly written, and almost invariably are concerned with real-life situations.

Among the fiction magazines for the eight to twelves *Story parade* is outstanding. First published at the end of 1935, this magazine was inspired by the words of a speaker at the 1930 White House Conference on Child Health and Protection. 'Periodicals can fill a definite function in children's reading and serve as an outlet for children's own creative work. The establishment of a well-illustrated and well-edited informational

and literary magazine for children has been repeatedly urged by librarians. They say no really satisfactory one now exists.' A manuscript reader for several publishers of juvenile books and a teacher realized the truth of that pronouncement, and together envisaged a magazine as important and stimulating as the old *Aunt Judy* or *St. Nicholas* had been. Discussions with parents, teachers, and librarians crystallized their ideas, and the result was *Story parade*, a non-commercial magazine supported by a membership organization. The membership organization meant that the magazine could, like a free library, maintain literary standards which might otherwise have proved impracticable. It would not depend on its advertising and could print experimental and unusual work which commercial magazines might not touch. From the earliest issues, the new magazine attracted the cream of modern writers for children, among them Elizabeth Coatsworth, Walter de la Mare, Charlie May Simon, and Charles Finger—whose work became familiar to a wide reading public which might otherwise never have known its delight. Notwithstanding this, the presence of many less celebrated contributors in *Story parade's* columns proved that the editors have always been willing to encourage new and younger writers, and have not relied completely on the established hierarchy. The sponsoring organization, the Association for Arts in Childhood, has since the establishment of *Story parade* made other contributions to children's literature; notable among these are a series of short story collections and a poetry anthology of rare merit.

Child life (for the same age-group) is a publication of the Rand McNally company, a Chicago firm well known for two widely different trade lines, maps, and inexpensive editions of children's classics which retail through the chain stores. Mary Gould Davis, director of story-telling at the New York

Public Library and an authority on folk lore, runs the book review section. She has probably had some influence on the editorial policy of the magazine, for the stories are always well written, and many best sellers make their initial appearance as *Child life* serials.

For the under-nines, there is *Children's activities*, edited by Dr. Garry Cleveland Myers, a well-known figure in the American educational world. The magazine was planned for use by parents who spend some part of each day playing with their children, and want that period of play to contribute in some measure to their children's mental development. For this purpose *Children's activities* contains a wealth of stories to read aloud, songs, poems, and a special section of pictures to colour and cut out. Actually, children can enjoy the magazine on their own, for the clear sanserif type in which it is printed makes *Children's activities* ideal reading material for boys and girls who are just mastering the art. In addition to the drawings for children, drawings by children are featured from time to time. (Most of the better-class children's magazines run departments for young contributors and seem as interested in encouraging children to write as in providing them with wherewithal to read.)

American childhood is intended for the use of infant room teachers, but in the Dunedin boys' and girls' library it is often borrowed by children and by parents in the winter-time, when wet Saturday afternoons tax the ingenuity of the most inventive. *Jack and Jill* does not reach the *Story parade* literary standard, but it is an attractive and better-than-average magazine well described by *Time's* reviewer commenting on the first issue in December 1938.

Jack and Jill while a modern magazine for modern moppets will not thrust aside the traditional teddy-bear atmosphere and

play-room gear of the child's world to reveal the razzle-dazzle streamlined machine age of rocketing Buck Rogers. Designed to tweak the curiosity of young readers or listeners will be stories giving sound if rudimentary pictures of the physical world and modern industry.

So much for the story magazines. Of the non-fiction magazines, many of the titles most popular with modern boys are those which are read with equal avidity by their fathers. Indeed *Popular mechanics* and *Popular science* probably owe much of their popularity with boys to the fact that they are written for an adult audience. *Meccano magazine* contains more than directions for fitting up elaborate Meccano models. It has many general articles on aircraft, railway transport, docks, cranes, and similar topics. Unfortunately in its present austerity format the type used requires a magnifying glass for comfortable reading. *The national geographic magazine*, that unlikely offshoot of the learned National Geographic Society of Washington, makes excellent reading for children, although the view of the world presented in its articles is somewhat rosy, if not highly coloured. I remember a *Geographic* picture of Lyttelton, which transformed that dingy little port into a Capri or a Honolulu. *Forest and bird*, the little quarterly issued by the Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand, deserves a wider public. Any parent may purchase a year's subscription, for the cost of one visit to the pictures with tram-fare and a penny for ice-cream included (total for the non-arithmetically inclined—one shilling). *The N.Z. stamp collector* has good articles on philately in New Zealand: new issues, first day covers, and the stamp markets generally. *Pictorial education* is already well known in New Zealand. This magazine is actually a large folio of pictures in photo-gravure, intended for teachers to mount on cardboard. Many libraries use it for material for picture files. *American junior Red*

Cross news is not as limited in scope as the title might suggest. It is published for circulation among the Red Cross chapters in American schools, and in consequence one or two pages inevitably discuss activities for raising money, but the bulk of the magazine consists of fiction from the pens of such authors as Nora Burglow, Alice Dalglish, and Elizabeth Yates, together with authoritative well-illustrated articles on a wide range of subjects. A typical issue, March 1946, carried an article on the dogs of the U.S. Coast Guard, a story about an American Indian boy, and the second part of an article on the work of parachutists in combating forest fires. As would be expected, the magazine is international in outlook, and completely free from jingoism. It is extraordinarily cheap furthermore. *Canadian Red Cross Junior* is very similar to the American one.

4-H horizons will have little appeal to the urban New Zealand youngster, but as our country areas are not entirely depopulated, the magazine deserves reviewing in some detail. The title was originally *World horizons*, but changed when the 4-H clubs of the United States became the new publishers. 4-H clubs are part of a nationwide extension programme of the United States Department of Agriculture 'to help rural young people to live a more satisfactory rural life: to train boys and girls between ten and twenty in independent action, to educate by means of agriculture and develop a spirit of responsibility and co-operation, by working out agricultural and home economics projects, by keeping business records and by making exhibitions.' 4-H club members really do 'learn by doing'. Their magazine *Horizons* is a record of their past activities and an incentive to further effort. Schools like Feilding Agricultural High School and the Rangiora High School would find that much of the material in this periodical has a New Zealand application.

School arts is edited from Stanford University, California. Another magazine published for teachers, it has been taken over wholeheartedly by children. For geographical reasons it is more stimulating than the now defunct *Art and craft education*, for the arts of Latin America, the American Indian, and the many European expatriates have had a vitalizing effect on art education in the United States, all of which is reflected in this vigorous periodical. Articles in each issue are usually grouped round a central topic, e.g. 'North American folk arts' (April 1946), or 'Child art' (May 1946), and consultation of a back file is thus made simple. The magazine is fully indexed in the *Readers' guide to periodical literature* available from most libraries, and a four- or five-year run of this magazine is therefore in itself a valuable reference library on art teaching. *Junior arts and activities*, a commercial venture, is somewhat different in scope. It specializes in stories for re-telling, pictures and cut-outs which tie up with units of work in the progressive school, and is not as its title might suggest restricted to art and craft teaching.

Scholastic is probably the most socially conscious magazine available in any English-speaking country for the boy or girl of high school age. Although reading for secondary schools does not come within the scope of this book, this magazine is reviewed here because it can be used with the upper forms of the intermediate schools which grow yearly more prominent in the New Zealand educational framework. *Scholastic* is important because it combines a high seriousness towards social and political problems with a sympathetic understanding of the day-to-day concerns and dreams of the teen-age youngster. Side by side can be found articles on Anthony Eden and Deanna Durbin, on the problem of the dust-bowl and the art of dating, on rebellious India, and the latest news on swing. *Scholastic*

articles on serious subjects are candid and profound. Problems are not ignored because discussion of them might be embarrassing to certain groups, or because solutions are far distant. *Scholastic* is realistic. It is never so much unleavened bread because the editors realize that the problem 'Am I old enough to use lipstick?' has the same urgency for many girls as the fate of a hungry Europe—probably more. Recent *Scholastic* special numbers on India (14 January 1946) and Australia (5 November 1945) were both liberal and lively in tone. They should be useful in connection with social studies programmes in schools.

Readers will have noticed that the bulk of the magazines reviewed are American in origin. This is not prejudice on the writer's part: there was no choice. As the opening paragraphs of this chapter have shown, England at an earlier period produced a fine crop of children's periodicals. Within the last twenty years *My magazine* and Stephen King-Hall's *Mine* proved that England still can produce magazines, but does not seem able to support them. Even before the war, English magazines for younger readers were nothing when compared to the American output. The public which buys good-standard periodicals in England is for economic reasons limited to the middle class. A periodical to maintain a high standard of literary content and physical appearance must command a circulation of many thousands if it is to be a commercial success. Where the wealth of a country is distributed somewhat unevenly, it is difficult for a periodical literature for either adults or children to flourish. The decline of children's magazines in England is paralleled by a decline in numbers of those serious political and literary weeklies which do not draw mass advertising. Although America cannot be cited as a country where wealth is equitably distributed, it is true that in proportion to her population she has a larger middle class with money to spend on semi-luxuries

after food and shelter are paid for. Again, the United States has a population of 139,000,000 compared with England's 47,000,000. There is a larger market on a basis of population alone. These would seem to be the reasons for America's premier position.

Children's Encyclopædias

The subscription set has been one of the means whereby thousands of dollars have been wasted by well-intentioned but uncritical parents and teachers. Many of the sets are thrown together without careful selection and with slight regard to facts; and cheaply compiled and cheaply printed, they are often overpriced. Due credit should be given to a few well-edited sets, published and sold in good faith. For various reasons the subscription sets are often to be found in a home which would otherwise be without any reading matter. Even the best of subscription sets cannot take the place of individual books, varied in subject and formation selected to suit the moods and changing interests of the child.

From the report of the Committee on Reading: White House Conference on Child Health and Protection.

No one has the slightest doubt as to the function of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. It is a book of reference for consultation on specific topics, and although there may be in existence certain prodigies who use it as a bedside book, beginning with the articles on AABENRA and working through to ZYGOTE, they are few and far between. To the average man the *Britannica* is a reference book, nothing more or less. Nevertheless when we come to

the subject of children's encyclopædias, we find a curious confusion of ideas about their aims and purposes. Neither the editors, nor very often the purchasers, seem clear as to whether an encyclopædia for children is a giant story book in a luxury binding, or a book for consultation like its adult equivalent. This confusion is illustrated in the main text of many encyclopædias by the inclusion of retold stories of the classics, and demonstrated when book agents and teachers discuss the arrangement of such books. A piece of publicity for a second-rate set of books (which nevertheless drew encomiums from headmasters and officials throughout New Zealand) naïvely expressed the aims of the compilers thus:

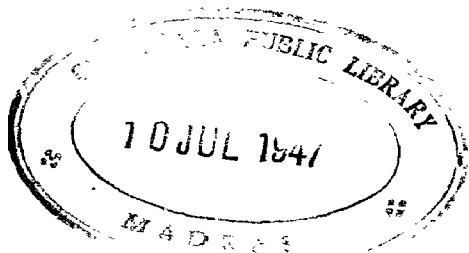
First of all we want the books to be good reading. Our highest hope is that they may be read just for the sake of reading. . . . *But* we have a *second* aim, also important. We want the reader at a moment's notice to be able to put his finger on any fact for which he may be searching. If *for any reason* he may need to find out all we have to say about a given topic we want him to lose no time in looking for the page where we have said it. In a word we hope the books will *be as good* for reference.

That statement, which makes hilarious reading for a children's librarian, is intended to impress the parent or teacher who is likely to purchase the set.

A children's encyclopædia is a book for children to consult. The project method of teaching in the primary school, if it is to be effective, requires that children collect and correlate facts for themselves on a wide range of subjects—tea, tidal waves, or tramcars as the case may be. No longer spoon-fed with information by their teachers, children in progressively run schools do engage in research work of an elementary kind. Children thus need reference books today as never before, encyclopædias which will give them a selection of modern knowledge, well arranged and easy of access. A junior encyclo-

pædia should differ from an adult one only in that its scope is less extensive, its vocabulary less elaborate, more use is made of illustrations in expounding a subject, and a greater emphasis is placed on the topics which arouse the keenest interest of children. The good encyclopædia for children is as well organized as its adult counterpart, for there is no point in massing miscellaneous information in one volume or set, unless it is organized to make consultation as simple as possible. In the home or in the school one luscious set complete in buckram, morocco, or half calf can never take the place of a library of modern children's books; no set is a glorified reader. It must be supplemented by reading drawn from the public library or the child's personal collection.

How shall parents or teachers judge a children's encyclopædia? It is as well to go to the local children's library and compare the various sets which can be examined there, and to ask the children's librarian her opinion. If such personal consultation with an expert is not possible, the encyclopædia should be tested for up-to-dateness on specific subjects, e.g. on the President of the United States, on China, and on plastics. It is possible to discover publication dates by checking on famous people recently dead, or on current events. Few encyclopædias put their dates of publication on the title-page, and a set sold in New Zealand as the 'latest thing', may be a hoary veteran which came from the presses in 1925, and has not been revised since. New Zealand makes a good test case for an encyclopædia; if the illustrations of New Zealand life show Auckland in 1910, it is unlikely that the illustrations of Chile and Nicaragua are any more up to date. The encyclopædia can be tested for attitudes by noting what it says on prisons, Russia, sex education. Is it sentimental in treatment? Does it evade difficult topics altogether by ignoring the twentieth century



and concentrating on the historical aspect? Is it frankly misleading? Is it coy and playful in style, or simple, clear, and direct? The illustrations, too, should be examined. Pictures in a reference book should amplify the text, and make clear to a boy or girl facts which can be effectively conveyed in no other way. Some of the illustrated maps in Mee's *Children's encyclopædia* and the diagrams in Charles Ray's *World of wonder* are examples of effective illustration, expository and not merely decorative. Pictures too often are used as space fillers and nothing else. Just as early printers used wood blocks over and over again for decorative purposes, whether or not the picture was relevant, so many modern subscription book publishers use the same plates over and over again with equal irrelevance. In one reference book I know 'height' is illustrated by a smudgy picture of the Statue of Liberty. This old picture occupied a sizeable portion of the page and assisted in swelling the particular volume to the gargantuan size which convinces those members of the public who buy by the yard that they receive good value for their money.

Arrangement is a matter of some argument. By far the best arrangement is the alphabetical one, with a complete system of cross-references. This is the plan followed in the *English Book of knowledge*. The other 'method' is that by which collections of stories on a topic such as transportation continue at irregular intervals throughout ten or twelve volumes. In the *Children's encyclopædia* for example the material is divided into fifteen groups: Earth and its neighbours; men and women; stones; animal life; history; familiar things; wonder (plain answers to the questions of the children of the world); art; ourselves; plant life; countries; picture atlas; poetry; power ideas; things to do. The material of the encyclopædia is grouped under these heads, but curiously enough the whole of these divisions

will be repeated five times in one volume. Thus even in one volume all the material on 'things to do' will be widely separated. The tiresome necessity for tracing fiction through the back pages of American magazines exists because the reader must be enticed through the advertisements; but it is difficult to see the reason for a similar arrangement in a book for children. On the whole, however, the material in the *Children's encyclopædia* is so well chosen that it compensates for bad arrangement. After using various encyclopædias in the Dunedin Library for boys and girls, and discussing pros and cons with school teachers, I have come to the conclusion that Mee's *Children's encyclopædia* and the *Book of knowledge* (variously known as *Cassell's book of knowledge*, *New book of knowledge*, *Waverley book of knowledge*) are the wisest purchases for New Zealand schools and homes. The *Book of knowledge* is concise, authoritative, well produced, and well arranged. Its illustrations mean something more than padding to give meaningless bulk. It has less material on English history than Mee's book, but its arrangement makes it easier to use. For those parents who can afford it, I should advise buying a children's encyclopædia; but it should be bought carefully. An ornate prospectus should not be allowed to dazzle the would-be purchaser. It may consist of letters from retired headmasters who have been presented with copies in return for a foolscap page of well-expressed praise. The prospective buyer should not be content with seeing a sample volume, which in all probability will consist of the cream of the illustrations from the entire set, plus the more carefully written articles. He should insist on seeing the entire set—no woman buys a dress by the sleeve, taking the rest on trust. Finally, he must not imagine when he has bought his children their encyclopædia that his responsibility to buy them more books has ceased.

Bibliography

This book makes no attempt at providing an exhaustive catalogue of children's books. For full lists readers are referred to the following publications, which are available for reference in the children's departments of city libraries. Country readers can obtain most of them through the inter-library loan system.

CATALOGUES

Children's catalog, a dictionary catalog of 4200 books with analytical entries for 910 books and a classified list indicating subject headings, compiled by Siri Andrews, D. E. Cook, and A. Cowing. 6th ed. New York, H. W. Wilson Co. 1941.

—1942-44 supplement.

—1945 supplement.

Note: A new edition of the Children's catalog is due to be published towards the end of 1946.

Four to fourteen, a list of books for boys and girls . . . selected by Kathleen Lines . . . sponsored by the British Council for distribution by the National Book Council. (Book list no. 23)

[n.d.]

An inexpensive list representing the pick of English children's books.

Junior books, a recommended list for boys and girls compiled by Dorothy M. Neal for the school and children's libraries

standing committee of New Zealand Library Association. Wellington, 1940.

An annotated list arranged as follows:

- (a) a list of fiction for Standard 2 through Form III;
- (b) a list of picture books for primers up to Standard 2;
- (c) a classified list of non-fiction arranged according to a modified Dewey plan. Both American and English books are included and all titles have been tested in the children's department of Dunedin Public Library. Lacks an index.

Mahony, Bertha E. and Whitney, Elinor, compilers. *Realms of gold in children's books*. New York, Doubleday 1929.

-*Five years of children's books, a supplement to Realms of gold*. New York, Doubleday 1936.

In arrangement these two books are quite informal. They are profusely illustrated with pictures from standard and contemporary children's books. The stress is upon imaginative literature although the factual side is not neglected. These lists grew out of the pioneer work of the Bookshop for boys and girls, opened in 1916 by the Women's Educational and Industrial Union, Boston. The *Horn book* magazine was originally issued by the same group.

Model school library shelf-list. Public Library of New South Wales. Sydney 1939.

This is a classified list of a collection of books chosen by the officers of the Public Library of New South Wales and displayed in Sydney as a model library for Australian schools. American and English books for both primary and secondary schools are included but grading is limited to the indications S.—senior and P.—primary.

Right book for the right child; a graded buying list of children's books. 3d. ed. New York, John Day 1942.

The selection of titles was the responsibility of an American Library Association committee. The books were graded by the Research Department of Winnetka public schools.

Books for boys and girls, ed. by L. H. Smith; prepared at Boys' and Girls' House, Toronto Public Libraries. 2d. ed. Toronto, Ryerson Press 1940.

PERIODICALS

New Zealand newspapers devote little if any space to the reviews of children's books, but two periodicals, *National education*, the official organ of the New Zealand Educational Institute, and the *New Zealand Education Gazette*, both devote space to reviews and book-lists. English periodicals also give little space to the subject, although the *New statesman and nation* and *Times literary supplement* usually review the Christmas flood of 'juveniles' early in December of each year.

Children's librarians in this country are usually guided in their current buying by the following:

The A.L.A. booklist. \$2.50 per annum. Bi-monthly, published by the American Library Association, 520 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago.

The *Booklist* contains brief annotations of both adult and juvenile books. Note is also made of new editions of old titles, and ephemeral material e.g. pamphlets and booklets etc.

Horn book. \$2.50 per annum, English currency 9/6, published six times a year at 264 Boylston St., Boston.

Devoted entirely to books and reading for young people. Contains many articles on contemporary trends in children's book production, authors, illustrators, and publishers. New books are reviewed at some length, and are frequently considered in relation to other books of their class. Special attention is paid to style and format. The *Horn book* brings the material in *Realms of gold* and *Five years of Children's books* up to date. It is the most important critical guide to children's literature in English.

Junior bookshelf. 6/- per annum, quarterly, published at 17 Sherbourne Rd., Birmingham.

This magazine is the only one of its kind devoted entirely to reviews and criticism of children's books. It was founded in 1937 by a member of the bookselling firm of Combridge, which largely pioneered the wholesale importation into England of American children's books. Until the issue of the *Junior bookshelf* criticism of children's books in England was 'ninety per cent disgraceful'.

To combat and change all this the *Junior bookshelf* was founded. New books are critically reviewed and in case of the longer reviews are signed

with the critic's name. Articles by authors on their methods of writing, bibliographies of books relating to plays and marionettes, lists of good editions of standard books, and provocative articles about the intermediate and juvenile sections of the library, all indicate that this pioneer little journal is doing a great deal to bring English book production up to that of America. This magazine is frankly based on the set-up and layout of the American *Horn book*.

Wilson library bulletin. \$1 per annum, monthly, published by the H. W. Wilson Co., 950-72 University Ave., New York.

A general library periodical in which children's books are listed in each issue, with critical annotations. A selection of these ultimately becomes the yearly supplement to the *Children's catalog*.

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE—BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

With two exceptions the books listed below are published in the United States and deal generally with American books and American conditions. Several are written in that pontifical style beloved of the academic American, with simple and obvious facts stated and re-stated in pretentious polysyllables. I have found it difficult to interest librarians-in-training in some of these authoritative texts. For the use of the general reader therefore I have annotated the list to indicate the more popular texts.

Barnes, Walter. *Children's poets*. New York, World Book Co. 1924.

Dalglish, Alice. *First experiences with literature; introduction by P. S. Hill*. New ed. New York, Scribners 1937.

Of interest to kindergarten directors and infant mistresses. Miss Dalglish has written many children's books herself and has had extensive experience with children during the kindergarten and early school years.

Darton, Frederick Harvey. *Children's books in England; five centuries of social life*. Cambridge University Press 1932.

A scholarly survey of the history of children's literature, at once thorough and brilliant.

Duff, Annis. "Bequest of wings"; a family's pleasures with books. New York, Viking 1944.

A simple and unpretentious record of one family's reading, a useful book for parent-teacher associations to read and discuss.

Eaton, Anne Thaxter. Reading with children. New York, Viking 1940.

By the librarian at Lincoln School of Teachers College, Columbia University. Rather too many books are mentioned, with the result that none are discussed at any length, and the book becomes a catalogue.

Freeman, G. LaVerne, and Freeman, Ruth Sunderlin. The child and his picture book, a discussion of the preferences of the nursery child. Chicago, Northwestern University Press 1933.

A laboratory study.

Hazard, Paul. Books, children and men; translated by Marguerite Mitchell. Boston, Horn Book 1944.

A Frenchman's viewpoint.

Kunitz, Stanley Jasspon, and Haycraft, Howard. (Eds.) Junior book of authors; an introduction to the lives of writers and illustrators for younger readers, from Lewis Carroll and Louisa Alcott . . . with an introduction by E. L. Power. New York, H. W. Wilson 1934.

The writers discussed are almost all Americans and the book is in need of revision. Nevertheless useful as one of the few sources of biographical information about writers for children.

Mahony, Bertha E., and Whitney, Elinor. (comps.) Contemporary illustrators of children's books. Boston, Bookshop for Boys and Girls 1930.

A pioneer work now out of print. A new edition is at present being planned.

Moore, Anne Carroll. My roads to childhood; views and reviews of children's books. New York, Doubleday 1939.

A revision of three earlier books by the former director of children's work at New York Public Library. Miss Moore is one of the forces behind the renaissance of children's literature in America.

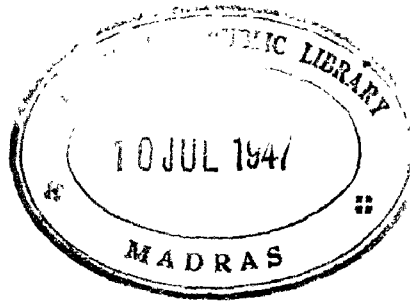
Moore, Annie Egerton. *Literature old and new for children; materials for a college course.* Boston, Houghton 1934.

The stress is upon traditional and standard literature.

Power, Effie Louise. *Work with children in public libraries.* Chicago, American Library Association 1943.

Although primarily concerned with library administration, the book contains several useful chapters on book selection and reading guidance.

Terman, Lewis Madison, and Lima, Margaret. *Children's reading; a guide for parents and teachers.* 2d. ed. New York, Appleton 1931.



Appendix I

MYTH, LEGEND AND FOLK LORE ROUND THE WORLD

GENERAL COLLECTIONS

- Baker, Margaret. Tales of all the world. A collection of myths and folk tales re-told. (Suitable for reading aloud to primer children.) Oxford.
- Baldwin, James. Wonder book of horses. Appleton.
- Brooke, Leslie. Golden goose book. (Contents: Golden goose; Three bears; Three little pigs; Tom Thumb.) Illustrated. Warne.
- Coburn, Grace. Heroes and wizards, 21 stories collected and abridged. Illustrated by J. Parsons. (Nelsonian series.) Nelson.
- Craik, Mrs. Dinah (Mulock). Fairy book: illustrated by L. Rhead. Harper. (Also Nelson and Macmillan.)
- Dane, Clemence. One hundred enchanted tales. Michael Joseph.
- De la Mare, Walter. Told again; old tales told again. Blackwell.
- Hole, Christina. Wonder tales of the British Empire. Sherratt and Hughes.
- Olcott, Frances Jenkins. Book of elves and fairies. Harrap.
- Power, Rhoda. How it happened; myths and folk tales re-told. Illustrated by A. M. Parker. Cambridge University Press.
- Rackham, Arthur. Arthur Rackham fairy book. Harrap.

EUROPE
ENGLAND

- Byrne, Muriel St. Clare. *Havelock the Dane and other stories from the early English.* (Children's library.) Cape.
- Jacobs, Joseph. *English fairy tales.* Miles.
- Rhys, Ernest. *Fairy gold, a book of old English fairy tales.* Illustrated by H. Cole. (Illustrated classics for young people.) Dent.
- Riggs, Stafford. *Story of Beowulf; re-told from the ancient epic.* Illustrated by Henry C. Pitz. Appleton.
- Steel, Flora Annie. *English fairy tales.* Illustrated by A. Rackham. Macmillan.
- Williams-Ellis, Amabel. *Fairies and enchanters.* Nelson.
- Wilmot-Buxton, Ethel Mary. *Tales of early England.* (Contents: Cattle raid of Cooley — Cynewulf — Alfred and Guthrum — Caedmon — Havelock the Dane — Guy of Warwick — Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight.) (All time tales.) Harrap.

King Arthur

- Clay, Beatrice. *Stories of King Arthur and the Round Table.* (Illustrated classics for young people.) Dent.
- Gilbert, Henry. *King Arthur's knights.* Illustrated by Walter Crane. (Nelsonian series.) Nelson.
- Malory, Sir Thomas. *The boy's King Arthur.* Edited by Sidney Lanier and illustrated by N. C. Wyeth. Scribner.
- Malory, Sir Thomas. *New tales from Malory.* Told by G. B. Harrison, illustrated by C. W. Hodges. (Nelsonian series.) Nelson.

Robin Hood

- Gilbert, Henry. *Robin Hood and the men of the greenwood.* Illustrated by Walter Crane. (Nelsonian series.) Nelson.
- Pyle, Howard. *Merry adventures of Robin Hood.* Scribner.
- Oman, Carola. *Robin Hood, the prince of outlaws, a tale of the 14th century from the 'Lytell Geste'.* (Based on the earliest known ballads about Robin Hood.) Dent.

IRELAND

Much of Irish legend and folk lore will not be read directly by children but it offers superb material for story-telling or reading aloud.

Graves, Alfred Perceval. Irish fairy book. (Stories from Dr. Douglas Hyde, Curtin Larminie, and Lady Gregory. All sources given.) Black.

Gregory, Lady. Cuchulain of Muirthemne; the story of the Red men of Ulster. Arranged and put into English by Lady Gregory, with a preface by W. B. Yeats. Murray.

Hull, Eleanor. Cuchulain the hound of Ulster. Harrap.

McKenzie, Donald A. Finn and his warrior band. Blackie.

Rolleston, Thomas William Hazen. High deeds of Finn and other romances of ancient Ireland. (This has an introduction by Stopford Brooke. Contains such bardic romances as the 'Children of Lir', a re-telling of the Finn cycle and the History of King Cormac. All sources are given and there is a pronouncing index of proper names.) Harrap.

Stephens, James. Irish fairy tales. Macmillan.

Yeats, William Butler. Irish folk and fairy tales. Modern library.

SCOTLAND

Drever, Helen. Lure of the Kelpie. Fairy and folk tales of the Highlands. Illustrated by M. R. Lamb. (Tales collected by the editor in the northern Highlands together with others from Campbell's *Popular tales of the West Highlands*. Miss Drever says all her tales have parallels in Grimm.) Moray Press.

Grierson, Mrs. Elizabeth Wilson. Scottish fairy book. (Stories adapted from Campbell's *Popular tales* and Chambers' *Popular rhymes of Scotland*. Includes some tales also found in Jacobs's *English fairy tales* and *Celtic fairy tales*.) Black.

McKenzie, Donald A. Wonder tales from Scottish myth and legend. Illustrated by John Duncan. (Includes several Gaelic myths and has an important introduction.) Blackie.

WALES

Wilkie, E. M. *Legendary stories of Wales. Told through the ages. (Re-telling of Lady Charlotte Guest's translation of the Mabinogion, with some folk tales from John Rhys's Celtic folklore.)* Harrap.

FRANCE

Baldwin, James. *Story of Roland.* Scribner.

Church, Alfred John. *Stories of Charlemagne and the twelve peers of France.* Seeley.

Douglas, Barbara. *Favourite French fairy tales re-told from the French of Perrault, Madame d'Aulnoy, and Madame Leprince de Beaumont. Illustrated by Rie Cramer.* Harrap.

La Fontaine, Jean de. *The original fables of La Fontaine, translated and illustrated by F. C. Tilney. (Tales for children from many lands.)* Dent.

Marshall, Henrietta Elizabeth. *Stories of Roland. Illustrated by L. Luard. (Told to the children stories.)* Nelson.

Perrault, Charles. *Fairy tales. (Tales for children from many lands.)* Dent.

Quiller-Couch, Sir Arthur Thomas. *Sleeping beauty and other tales from the old French. Illustrated by Edmund Dulac.* Hodder and Stoughton.

GERMANY

Grimm, Jacob and Grimm, Wilhelm. *Fairy tales, translated by Mrs. Edgar Lucas, illustrated by A. Rackham.* Heinemann.

—*Household tales, edited by N. E. Edwards, illustrated by R. A. Bell. (Illustrated classics for young people.)* Dent.

—*Snow White and the seven dwarfs, translated and illustrated by Wanda Gag.* Faber.

—*Tales from Grimm, translated and edited by Wanda Gag. (A modern translation of unique quality.)* Faber.

Sachs, Hans. *Through the cobbler's window. Stories from Hans Sachs re-told by E. V. Oules. Illustrated by Ruth Cobb.* Pitman.

Thirkell, Angela. Grateful sparrow and other stories from the German. Illustrated by Ludwig Richter. Hamish Hamilton.

GREECE

- Hawthorne, Nathaniel. Wonder book and Tanglewood tales. Illustrated by M. Mann. (Illustrated classics for young people.) Dent.
- Homer. The Iliad for boys and girls told . . . in simple language by A. J. Church. Macmillan.
- The wanderings of Ulysses, told by G. D. Harrison, illustrated by E. F. Edwards. Nelson.
- Hyde, Lilian Staunton. Favourite Greek myths. (Told through the ages.) Harrap.
- Kingsley, Charles. The heroes; or Greek fairy tales told for my children. Illustrated by H. M. Brock. Macmillan.
- Peabody, Josephine Preston. Old Greek folk stories. (All time tales.) Harrap.

ITALY

- Botsford, F. H. Picture tales from the Italian. Stokes.
- Davis, Mary Gould. The truce of the wolf and other tales of old Italy. Illustrated by Jan van Evereen. Harcourt.

POLAND

- Borski, Mrs. Lucia Merecka, and Miller, Kate B. Gypsy and the bear and other fairy tales, translated from the Polish. Longmans.
- Jolly tailor and other fairy tales from the Polish. Longmans.

RUSSIA

- Artzybasheff, Boris. Seven Simeons. Cassell.
- Polevoi, Peter Nikolaevitch. Russian fairy tales, translated from the Russian of Polevoi by R. Nisbet Bain. Harrap.
- Ransome, Arthur. Old Peter's Russian tales. Nelson.
- Wheeler, Post. Russian wonder tales, with a foreword on the Russian Skazki. Illustrated by I. Bilibine. Black.

SCANDINAVIA

- Asbjørnsen, Peter Christen, and Moe, Jorgen. Tales from the Norse, translated by Sir George Dasent. (Has a conclusion in which Dasent discusses the characteristics of Norse folk lore and the effect of the landscape on the people.) (Nelsonian series.) Nelson.
- Baldwin, James. Story of Siegfried. (Compiled from the various sources of the legend—the Volsunga Saga, the Nibelungen Lied, and William Morris's translation. Very fine retelling.) Scribner.
- Fillmore, Parker Hoysted. Mighty Mikko: a book of Finnish folk tales and fairy tales. (From the collections of Salmelainen.) Harcourt.
- Grundtvig, Svend Hersleb. Danish fairy tales. Harrap.
- Keary, Annie, and Keary, Eliza. Heroes of Asgard, tales from the Scandinavian mythology. Illustrated by C. E. Brock. Macmillan.
- Steele, Alison. Stories of the Vikings. (Stories from the sagas adapted from the translation by William Morris and Eric Magnusson in the Saga library.) Harrap.
- Wallis, Arthur, F. Tales of the Norseman. Illustrated by Paul Rotha. (Stories from the Norse Mythology.) (Children's library.) Cape.
- Wilmot-Buxton, Ethel Mary. Told by the Northmen. (A collection of Norse myths together with stories from the sagas.) (Told through the ages.) Harrap.

SPAIN

- de Coloma, Louis. Perez the mouse, adapted from the Spanish by Lady Moreton. John Lane.
- Escomez, J. Munoz. Fairy tales from Spain. (Tales for children from many lands.) Dent.
- Henderson, Bernard, and Calvert, Charles. Wonder tales from ancient Spain, illustrated by Constance Rowlands. Philip Allan.
- Sherwood, Merriam. The tale of the warrior lord, El Cantar de Mio Cid, translated by M. Sherwood. Illustrated by Henry C. Pitz. Longmans.

AFRICA

- Elliott, Geraldine. Long grass whispers. Illustrated by Sheila Hawkins. (Animal tales from Central Africa. 'Unfortunately the vocabulary is a little elaborate and the tales smack more strongly of the English school-room than of Uncle Remus's pungent wisdom.' *New York Times*.) Routledge.
- Longden, H. W. D. Old Bayana's tales. (South African tales.) Nelson.
- Nyabongo, Prince Akiki. Bisoro stories. Illustrated by G. Pippet. (A collection of African folk tales about animal characters. The illustrator taught in West Africa.) Blackwell.
- Worthington, Frank. Kalulu the hare . . . stories collected by J. M. Thompson and F. Worthington in Northern Rhodesia. Collins.
- Little wise one. Illustrated by the author. (Has a good introduction in which the author outlines his theory that Aesop's fables like Uncle Remus stories also derive from Africa. Worthington was formerly Secretary for Native Affairs in Northern Rhodesia. Where parallel tales exist in Aesop or Uncle Remus these are mentioned in the notes.) Collins.

ASIA

- Arabian nights' entertainments.
- edited by E. Dixon, illustrated by J. Batten. (Illustrated classics for young people.) Dent.
- edited by F. Olcott, illustrated by M. Orr. Harrap.
- edited by K. D. Wiggin, illustrated by M. Parrish. Scribner.
- Babbitt, Ellen C. Jataka tales re-told. (Fables chiefly from the sacred books of the Buddhists.) Appleton.
- Carpenter, Frances. Tales of a Chinese grandmother. Illustrated by M. Hasselris. Harrap.
- Dutton, Maude Barrows. The tortoise and the geese and other fables of Bidpai. Appleton.

- Griffis, William Elliott. *Fairy tales of old Japan*. Harrap.
- James, Grace. *Green Willow and other Japanese fairy tales*.
Illustrated by W. Goble. Macmillan.
- McKenzie, Donald. *Indian fairy stories*. Illustrated by M. Armfield. (Has preface on Indian folk-lore.) Black.
- Metzger, Berta. *Tales told in India*. Illustrated by M. Buchanan. (Based with acknowledgements on the Cambridge edition of the Jatakas.) Oxford.
- Monypenny, K. *The kite that flew to the moon*. (Adaptations from Chinese fairy stories.) Pitman.
- Olcott, Frances Jenkins. *Tales of the Persian genii*. Illustrated by Willy Pogany. Harrap.
- Pitman, Norman Hinsdale. *Chinese fairy tales*. Harrap.
- Sharar, Dewan. *Hindu fairy tales*. Illustrated by E. Aris. (Stories from the Panchatantra, Ramayana, and Mahabharata.) Harrap.

AMERICA

- Field, Rachel Lyman. *American folk and fairy tales*. Scribner.
- Harris, Joel Chandler. *Hey-ho Brer Rabbit*, re-told by E. Blyton. Newnes.
- Hogner, Dorothy Childs. *Navaho winter nights*. (Selection of Red Indian folk tales with illustrations giving details of Navaho life and customs.) Nelson.
- Kennedy, Howard Angus. *New world fairy book*. (Indian fairy tales.) Dutton.

OCEANIA

- Colum, Padraic. *Legends of Hawaii*. Yale University Press.
- Howes, Edith. *Maoriland fairy tales*. Ward Lock.

AND A MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY — AESOP

Aesop's fables.

—illustrated by P. A. Terry. Oxford.

—translated by V. Jones and illustrated by A. Rackham.
(A full edition with 200 fables.) Heinemann.

Appendix 2

SOME LONGER PLAYS FOR CHILDREN

The following list of longer plays contains several which adults can act for children. Others are not beyond the capacity of large schools with a wide age-range of pupils.

Barne, Kitty. *The amber gate*, a pageant play. Curwen.

Barrie, James. *Peter Pan*. Hodder.

Bax, Clifford. *Old King Cole*. Daniel.

Blackwood, A., and Pearn, V. *Through the crack*. French.

Burnett, Frances Hodgson. *Little princess*, in Moses, M., *A treasury of plays for children*. Little, Brown.

De la Mare, Walter. *Crossings*, a fairy play with music and songs by Armstrong Gibbs. Knopf.

Grahame, Kenneth. *Toad of Toad Hall*, adapted from *Wind in the willows* by A. A. Milne. Methuen.

Maeterlinck, Maurice. *The blue bird*. Methuen.

Milne, A. A., *Make-believe*, in *Second plays*. Chatto.

Noyes, A. *Robin Hood*. Blackwood.

Stevenson, R. L. *Treasure island*, adapted by V. E. Goodman, in Moses, M., *Another treasury of plays for children*. Appleton.

Thackeray, W. M. *Rose and the ring*, in Sidgwick, Ethel, *Four plays for children*. Small.

REFERENCES

Mackay, C. *Children's theatres and plays*. Appleton.

Markov, P. A. *The Soviet theatre*, pp. 146-9. Gollancz.

Moses, Montrose. A treasury of plays for children. Little, Brown.

—Another treasury of plays for children. Little, Brown.

(Each of these contains an important introduction and a bibliography.)

LISTS OF PLAYS

Vallance, Rosamund. Producing plays in the open air, with a list of suitable plays, in *Junior bookshelf* 4 : 121-30, May 1940.

—A select list of plays for children, in *Junior bookshelf* 1 : 9-19, February 1937.

—Verse plays for children, in *Junior bookshelf* 3 : 73-86, December 1938.

—Youngest drama, in *Junior bookshelf* 5 : 43-7 January 1941.

(The *Junior bookshelf* magazine is available on file in most children's libraries.)

Village drama society; junior plays committee. A list of plays for young players and others. Nelson.



Index

- Adult books, read by children, 86-7,
102, 193
- Albania, 50
- Alcott, Louisa May, 1, 2, 109, 114-6
- Alington, A. F., 99
- Allee, Marjorie Hill, 160
- Allingham, William, 175, 176
- Andersen, Hans Christian, 37, 45-6,
52-3, 80
- Animals, 35-6, 160-4
- Anthologies, 166-71, 179
- Ardizzone, Edward, 33-4
- Artists, 3-4, 27-8, 34-42, 110, 112, 135,
145-6
- Asbjornsen, Peter Christen, 45, 48
- Atwater, Robert, 79-80
- Babbitt, Adeline, 170
- Backward children, 25-6
- Bacon, Peggy, 36
- Bagnold, Enid, 84
- Baker, Margaret, and Mary, 15;
Mary, 36
- Ballantyne, R. M., 1, 2, 75, 86, 187
- Bannerman, Helen, 29, 61
- Barne, Kitty, 92-4, 136
- Barrie, J. M., 61
- Baruch, Dorothy, 167-8, 173
- Belloc, Hilaire, 61, 176
- Bemelmans, Ludwig, 3, 28, 44
- Benet, Laura, 142
- Benton, Thomas, 22
- Berry, A., 144
- Beskow, Elsa, 20
- Biblical stories, 42
- Biography, Ch 7, 140-2
- Bishop, Claire Huchet, 30
- Blackwell, Basil, 98, 100, 168
- Blake, William, 167, 171, 172, 176
- Bock, George E., 159
- Bone, Florence, 116
- Bone, Stephen, 20
- Bowen, Elizabeth, 106
- Boyd, James, 86
- Boylston, Helen Dore, 94
- Brewton, John E., 170
- Bridges, Thomas Charles, 159
- Brink, Carol Rylie, 103
- Brisley, Joyce Lankester, 75, 80-2, 85
- Brock, Emma, 37-8
- Bronson, Wilfred, 163
- Brooke, Leslie, 27-8, 166
- Browne, Frances, 54-5, 59
- Bryan, Dorothy, and Marguerite, 15
- Buck, Pearl, 71
- Burdekin, Harold, 18
- Burglow, Nora, 194
- Burnett, Frances Hodgson, 185
- Burton, Virginia Lee, 23-4
- Caldecott Medal, 39
- Caldecott, Randolph, 27, 166, 186
- Caldwell, Otis, 156, 159
- Campbell, A. E., 121
- Carnegie Medal, 84, 92, 94
- Carroll, Lewis, 9, 31, 56-7, 64, 65, 66,
178, 179, 186
- Carroll, Ruth, and Latrobe, 79
- Castor, Père, 36
- Chaffee, Allen, 163
- Chesterton, G. K., 167
- Childers, Erskine, 86
- Children of other lands, 68-75, 87-88
- China, 5, 69-71, 87, 183
- Choate, Florence, 91
- Chrisman, Arthur, 71
- Coatsworth, Elizabeth, 104-5, 191
- Collins, A. F., 148
- Colum, Padraic, 167
- Cooper, Fenimore, 86
- Cousland, Gilbert, 18
- Cowan, James, 45
- Crawford, Phyllis, 103-4
- Credle, Ellis, 21-2

- Crew, Fleming, 162-3
 Croce, Benedetto, 49
 Curtis, F. D., 156
 Czechoslovakia, 182
- Daglish, Eric Fitch, 161
 Dalgliesh, Alice, 22, 194
 Darton, Harvey, 53, 56, 187
 Daugherty, James, 4, 5
 d'Aulaire, Ingri, and Edgar Parin, 3, 15,
 37, 39-40, 44
 Davis, Mary Gould, 191-2
 Dayrell, Vivienne, 168
 de Brunhoff, Jean, 8, 14, 34
 Defoe, Daniel, 81
 de la Mare, Walter, 8, 16, 37, 46, 58, 95,
 118, 167, 170-2, 175, 176, 191
 de Leeuw, Adèle, 74
 Denney, Diana, 25
 de Selincourt, Hugh, 92
 Deucher, Sybil, 140-2
 Dickens, Charles, 99
 Disney, Walt, 28, 33
 Ditmars, Raymond, 160
 Divine, A. D., 99
 Dix, Beulah Marie, 184
 Doorly, Eleanor, 117-8
 Dryad Handicraft Press, 147
 Duvoisin, Roger, 166
- Eaton, Jeannette, 132
 Eberle, Ermengarde, 161-2
 Edelstat, Vera, 23
 Elliott, Kathleen, 74
 Englefield, Cicely, 36
 Enke, Ruth, 124
 Enright, Elizabeth, 104
 Ewing, Mrs. Juliana, 53, 186
- Farjeon, Eleanor, 17, 46, 53, 168, 172-3
 Fellows, Muriel, 74
 Field, Eugene, 178-9
 Finger, Charles, 191
 Finland, 48, 49
 Fischer, Marjorie, 74
 Flack, Marjorie, 16-7
 Folk tales, Ch 3, 52-3, 60, 90; paral-
 lelism in, 48-9; and politics, 49-50
 France, 72, 182
 Fyleman, Rose, 36, 176, 181
- Gag, Wanda, 32-3, 36, 142
 Gall, Alice, 161, 162-3
 Games, 91-2, 150
 Garnett, Eve, 84
 Garnett, Dr Richard, 60
 Gatty, Mrs Margaret, 186
- Gay, Zhenya, 36
 Geisel, Dr. Theodore Scuss, 30-2
 Gibbard, Mabel, 149
 Gibbings, Robert, 117, 118
 Gibson, Katherine, 138-9, 144
 Gleit, Maria, 5
 Goldsmith, Oliver, 95
 Goss, Madeline, 142
 Grahame, Kenneth, 61
 Gramatky, H., 24
 Graves, Robert, 169
 Gray, Elizabeth Janet, 114
 Greenaway, Kate, 166
 Gregory, Lady, 167
 Grimm, Jakob Ludwig Karl, and Wil-
 helm Karl, 33, 45-9, 52, 53, 83
 Grover, Eulalie, 170
- Hader, Berta Hoerner, and Elmer, 15,
 40-1, 79
 Hale, Katherine, 36
 Hamilton, Edwin, 148, 149-50
 Hansen, Harry, 46
 Haskell, Arnold, 91
 Hawk, Ellison, 159
 Hayes, Elizabeth, 158
 Hekking, Joanna, 71
 Henty, G. A., 75
 Heward, Constance, 17
 Hill, Violet, 71-2
 Historical stories, 88, 95-7, 101
 Hogben, Lancelot, 153, 156, 159
 Holland, 70, 74
 Holling, Holling, and Lucille, 128-9
 Hollister, Mary Brewster, 71
 Holme, Geoffrey, 143-4
 Home life stories, 88
 Horn, Madeline, 79
 Housman, Lawrence, 46
 Hsiung, S., 183
 Hubbard, Alice, 170
 Hughes, Richard, 9, 64-6, 150
 Hugli-Camp, Madame, 140
 Hungary, 3, 41-2, 87-8
- Illustrators, 14-5, 17, 166
 Indexes, 148, 149, 169-70
 Indians, 74
 Indo-China, 5
 Internationalism, 72-4, 194
 Iowa, 76, 78
 Ireland, 50, 54, 64
 Italy, 182
- Jacot, Emile, 169
 James, Grace, 84
 James, Henry, 108, 114

- Japan, 71
 Java, 74
 Jeanne, Marie, 91, 142
 Joan, Natalie, 17

 Kästner, Erich, 86
 Keliher, Alice, 130
 Kellogg, Charlotte, 112
 Kelly, Eric, 112
 Kiddell-Munroe, Joan, 36
 King-Hall, Stephen, 196
 Kingsley, Charles, 55-6, 57, 59
 Kingston, W. H. G., 86, 187
 Kipling, Rudyard, 53, 60-1
 Kirkland, Winifred, 142

 Lambert, Clara, 159
 Lamplugh, Anne, 19
 Lamprey, Louise, 139
 Lang, Andrew, 49
 Lathrop, Dorothy, 36-7
 Lattimore, Eleanor, 70-1
 Lawson, Robert, 28
 Leacock, Stephen, 31
 Leaf, Munro, 28-9
 Lear, Edward, 16, 177-8, 179
 Lenski, Lois, 24-5
 Leonardo da Vinci, 111-2
 Lewis, Cecil Day, 98
 Lewis, Elizabeth Foreman, 73, 87, 136
 Lewis, Lorna, 110-2, 142
 Lewitt, Alina, 30; and Jan, and Him, George, 24, 30
 Librarians, 6, 19, 27, 51, 75, 181, 200
 Lide, Mrs Alice, 74
 Lindman, Maj, 19
 Lindsay, Philip, 99
 Lindsay, Vachel, 167
 Lofting, Hugh, 7, 61-2, 65, 73
 Lönnrot, Dr. Elias, 48
 Low, Archibald, 159
 Low, Ivy, 74
 Lucas, E. V., 169
 Lynch, Patricia, 63-4

 McClintock, Marshall, 129
 Macdonald, George, 37, 57
 McSpadden, Joseph, 159
 Malvern, Gladys, 142
 Mann, Ericka, 124
 Mann, Kathleen, 148
 Maps, in books, 90
 Markov, P. A., 183
 Marryat, Frederick, 86
 Maxwell, Helen, 71-2
 Mcader, Stephen, 5, 104

 Means, Florence, 5
 Medary, Marjorie, 163
 Mee, Arthur, 201
 Meigs, Cornelia, 109, 114-5
 Miller, Warren, 5
 Milne, A. A., 8, 173, 174-5, 180
 Moe, Jorgen, 48
 Molesworth, Mrs Mary Louisa, 58-9
 Moon, Grace, and Carl, 74
 Moore, Anne Carroll, 39
 Morris, William, 86
 Morrow, Honoré Willis, 79, 101-2
 Moses, Montrose, 185
 Mukerji, Dhan Gopal, 62, 163
 Mumford, Lewis, 137
 Myers, Dr Garry Cleveland, 192

 Nansen, Fridtjof, 110-1
 Negroes, 5
 Neill, A. S., 95
 Nesbit, Edith, 8, 53, 59-60, 64
 Newberry, Clare Turbay, 35
 Newbery Medal, 1, 4, 106, 114, 163
 Nichol, Ruth, 19
 Nightingale, Madeline, 168
 Niles, Thomas, 114, 115
 Norway, 39, 48, 49, 182
 Nursery rhymes, 165-6

 O'Brien, Conor, 92
 O'Casey, Sean, 64
 Oman, Carola, 116-7

 Parent-child relationships, 11, 82-4, 105
 Parents, 1-2, 13-4, 87, 153, 154, 200, 202
 Pearse, Susan, 17
 Pease, Howard, 189
 Pekin, L. B., 124
 Pemberton, Max, 86
 Perkins, Lucy Fitch, 72-3
 Petersham, Maud, and Miska, 15, 37, 41-2, 125-8, 132; Miska, 3, 8
 Phillips, Ethel Calvert, 75, 84-5
 Photographic picture-books, 18
 Pioneering stories, 103-4
 Pogany, Willy, 41
 Poland, 3, 112
 Pollak, Janet, 159
 Poppleton, Marjorie, 19
 Potter, Beatrix, 14, 16, 20, 33, 42-4
 Printing, of children's books, 2, 4, 18, 19, 20, 21, 154
 Pruszyńska, Aniela, 112
 Pryor, William, and Helen, 129-30
 Purnell, Idella, 136
 Pyle, Howard, 53

- Quiller-Couch, Sir Arthur, 169
 Rackham, Arthur, 58, 166
 Railways, 24-5
 Ransome, Arthur, 9, 73, 86, 88-90,
 103-4
 Ray, Charles, 201
 Raymond, Margaret, 11
 Realistic stories, 23-6, 51, 59, Ch 5,
 Ch 6
 Reed, Talbot Baines, 1, 187
 Reynolds, Rollo, 133
 Richards, Laura, 178
 Ring, Barbara, 182
 Roberts, D. Kilham, 179
 Roberts, Mary Newlin, 142
 Roberts, Michael, 179
 Rogers, Stanley, 148
 Rojankovsky, Feodor, 3, 36, 166
 Rosanov, Sergei, 74
 Ross, M. I., 11, 160
 Rossetti, Christina, 175, 176-7
 Rowe, Dorothy, 71
 Rowland, T. J. S., 159
 Rugg, Harold, 121-4, 153-4
 Ruskin, John, 53-4, 99
 Russell, George, (Æ), 51
 Russia, 3, 73-4, 182-3

 Sabin, Edwin Legrand, 104
 Salten, Felix, 163
 Sandburg, Carl, 53
 School stories, 1, 88
 Seredy, Kate, 73, 87-8
 Shannon, Monica, 136
 Shepard, Ernest Howard, 175
 Simon, Charlie May, 191
 Sitwell, Edith, 168, 169
 Socrates, 112-3
 Somerset, H. C. D., 110, 146
 Sommerfield, Vernon, 159
 Sowers, Phyllis, 71
 Sperry, Armstrong, 1, 7
 Spring, Howard, 62-3, 92
 Spyri, Joanna, 74
 Steichen, William, 18
 Stepmothers, 11, 83
 Stevenson, Robert Louis, 55, 90, 173-4,
 175, 178
 Stone, Irving, 135-6
 Stong, Phil, 76-8, 79, 80
 Streatfeild, Noel, 90-2
 Strindberg, August, 182
 Strong, L. A. G., 95-8, 112-3, 116
 Sugimoto, Etsu, 71

 Sweden, 19, 48, 182
 Swift, Hildegard, 24
 Swift, Jonathan, 46
 Switzerland, 74
 Syngé, J. M., 64

 Taylor, Ann, and Jane, 176
 Taylor, Malcolm, 99
 Teachers College (Columbia), 22
 Tennant, E. Wyndham, 168
 Thackeray, W. M., 99
 Thomas, Mary, 147-8
 Thompson, Blanche, 170
 Tinyanova, Helen, 142
 Tolkien, J. R. R., 31, 66, 168
 Tolstoi, Leo, 30
 Tomlinson, R. R., 146
 Topelius, Zachary, 48, 182
 Tousey, Sanford, 78-9
 Towsley, Lena, 19
 Tozer, Katherine, 62
 Travers, Pamela, 9, 63-4
 Trease, Geoffrey, 5, 86, 100-1
 Tuwim, Julian, 30
 Twain, Mark, 77-8

 Uttley, Alison, 106-7

 Van Hichtum, Ninke, 74
 Verne, Jules, 187
 Villiers, Alan, 79
 Vocational stories, 88, 91-5

 Warner, Rex, 98-9
 Warner, Sylvia Townsend, 106
 Watson, Elizabeth, 132
 Webb, Clifford, 36
 Wheeler, Dorothy, 140-2
 White, Eliza Orne, 11, 75, 78, 82-4
 White, Robb, 189
 Whitney, Elinor, 44
 Wiese, Kurt, 37, 164
 Wilde, Oscar, 99
 Williams, Archibald, 150
 Williams, Michael, 169
 Williams-Ellis, Clough, and Amabel,
 65, 150-1
 Williamson, Thames Ross, 160
 Wolfe, Humbert, 167, 169
 Wood, Grant, 76, 79, 145
 Woolf, Virginia, 108

 Yates, Elizabeth, 194
 Yeats, William Butler, 64

