

phrase as keenly as you do, until at last he can enter upon his full birthright, the "rich deposit of the centuries."

As to "adaptations" of the great things of literature by means of which the child may get a hint of the glories which await him just at the turn of the road—that subject, too, can be argued eloquently on both sides. Is it possible to expurgate, abbreviate, adapt, some of these books which the reading world agrees to call "classics"? It can be done, especially by word of mouth, in the form of the story told to groups of eager listeners, and in the written volume it can be successfully

done too, perhaps by two persons in a million. My own belief in this form of literature is a trifle theoretical and weak on its legs. In my heart I incline to agree with somebody who said, "What's the use of adapting the classics to children when the children are already adapted to the classics"?

FROM EDWARD EVERETT HALE

Author of "The Man Without a Country," "Ten Times One is Ten," etc., etc.

At the bottom I always wish that children might be brought up as I was, and as my children were, in a house which



ROBINSON CRUSOE

Drawn by Louis Rhead, for R. H. Russell's new edition of "Robinson Crusoe."



DANIEL DEFOE  
From an engraving.

contained a few thousand of the best books in the world, with quite general freedom to browse at their pleasure—of course with the eye of a watchful mother over them. I am quite clear that the books which are written for children are, with a few great exceptions, no good.

1. Realistic narrative is good for children. This was proved by the success of the Rollo Books. Any one who will do for this generation what Jacob Abbott did for the generation past will be one of its greatest benefactors. I find that children read to profit the more advanced Rollo Books to-day.

2. Avoid mere sentiment, particularly the sentiment of grown people. Do not have books about dead children and flowers, nor in general any sort of rot.

3. For myself I like good narrative, but I get very little of it outside the Bible, "Robinson Crusoe," the "Arabian Nights," and the letters of one of my correspondents. I think that if I had to take six or eight children to my castle in Spain, which is in fact somewhere up among the Maine Lakes, I should take the Bible, "Robinson Crusoe," and "The Swiss Family Robinson." Oddly enough, "The Swiss Family Robinson," which is

in every way inferior to Defoe's masterpiece, is the most popular book with children. My cabinet think that this is due to the amount of domestic life in it; it is family life, and "Robinson Crusoe" is not.

I should also take Schoolcraft's "Algic Researches," a book of which some very intelligent people have never heard. I should take "Old Deccan Days," and a book called "Norse Tales." I do not know but the new "Norse Tales" would do as well, but I cannot speak of that. I should take the old series of Grimm's "Fairy Tales," and I should take Lane's "Arabian Nights."

4. I should like to introduce children to books of travel, only so few people write them even decently.

5. I am sorry to say that the modern fad is that children should not learn to read in early years. For myself, I could read as well when I was two years old as I can now; and I owe much happiness in the years between 1824 and 1830 to this. My grandchildren are not going to have a similar recollection, and I am sorry for them.

Let the intelligent father and mother observe that many books are enjoyed by children when they are read to them,

which they do not like if they have to read them themselves. Mrs. Hale has read the best Waverley Novels aloud six times to as many children, and lives to have their thanks for doing it. I do not believe that the same children would have read "Ivanhoe," "The Talisman," "Guy Mannering," and "Rob Roy," at the same dates.

I have known intelligent children who read Shakespeare at the age of eight with pleasure. I am not one of them. My mother tried to entrap me with "Julius Cæsar" and "The Soothsayer," but she did not succeed.

#### FROM HORACE E. SCUDDER

Author of "The Bodley Books," "The Children's Book," etc., etc.

A child when first approaching books is delightfully ignorant of any such thing as authorship, and the earliest literature belonging to him is unembarrassed by this element. The fables which have clustered about the name of Æsop should be his first real book. The stories are short, they go straight to the point, they are about his natural playmates, and they answer to his own dramatic imagination. Then, a step beyond, come the best of the folk stories or nursery tales—first the English variety, then the stories collected by the Grimms. With these, scarcely separated from them, should be named the best of Andersen's stories.

All the books just named quicken the imagination and are native to the mind not yet hemmed in by experience. The "Arabian Nights' Entertainments" add just that touch of Orientalism which the Western child needs to give him the freedom of the world.

A child fed on this literature, with a good collection of the best lyric poetry, such as may be had in, for example, the "Children's Garland," or my own selection, "Verse and Prose for Beginners," will read with avidity the Odyssey—Palmer's translation is an acceptable one—will find delight in Hawthorne's "Wonder Book," and pass easily into the vernacular wonders of "Robinson Crusoe" and the "Pilgrim's Progress." By this time his interest will begin to be awakened in authors, and in Scott's poems, later in his novels, he will enter consciously the great world of literature.

#### FROM THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON

Author of "A Young Folks' History of the United States," "Cheerful Yesterdays," etc., etc.

This is a subject which has always interested me, both through private observation and through long experience as a director of the Cambridge (Mass.) Public Library, where I was instrumental in introducing a Children's Room. I write also after special consultation with the librarians of this institution.

It is necessary to remember at the outset that a considerable range now separates the child of six from the child of twelve in respect to reading. I say "now," because formerly children learned to read much earlier than at present—too early, in my judgment—and my mother wrote of me in her diary on my fourth birthday, "He has already read many books." Children now usually graduate from the picture-book at about six years of age, and then plunge rapidly into comparatively mature reading. "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" and its companion book capture them very promptly. Ruskin's "King of the Golden River," Kipling's "Jungle Book," and Kingsley's "Water-Babies" follow soon after, and even the immortal "Little Women" does not fail to reach them, although it begins in a nursery and ends in a love story. Hawthorne's "Wonder Book," of course, follows, and Scudder's admirable "Children's Book," drawn largely from those delightful German Popular Tales (Grimm's) which, under the name of "German Pops," delighted my early playmates. Perhaps I may venture to link with this my own "Tales of the Enchanted Islands of the Atlantic," all more or less traditional. Mr. Lang's "Fairy Book" and "Arabian Nights" may come in at ten or twelve; and Professor Norton's "Heart of Oak" series cover a wide range. I am sorry not to include in this Mr. Alcott's favorite book, Carove's "Story Without an End," which was the delight of my boyhood, but I do not know whether it is still in print. Its reception would help to solve a problem which I find to divide librarians, in some degree, as to the capacity of children to enjoy books of outdoor natural history. I suppose the truth is that children themselves vary a great deal on this point; yet surely such