



The Child's Library

By ALICE I. HAZELTINE
Columbia University Library

CHILDREN'S libraries are an expression of community responsibility to boys and girls, placing within their reach a means by which they may become increasingly aware of life in its fullest and richest aspects. For the printed page conveys to children, as to us all, much that our own experience and that related to others does not touch or does not fully interpret. The growth of this idea of joint ownership of books for children is an indication of our appreciation of their power for good or for evil in the lives of boys and girls. The mediocre in literature, as in life, has a way of making itself appallingly easy to find. Children's libraries offer an answer to the question of how to make equally or more attractive and accessible the books which children acclaim as "good" whenever they have an opportunity to become acquainted with them, and which also satisfy adults as to their worth.

Library service to children was of comparatively slight importance in the early days of the library history of America. Yet the very fact that some rivalry exists as to which library was the first shows that in more than one place there were those whose vision of book service was comprehensive enough to include the needs of boys and girls.

It was only in the 90's, however, that public libraries, to any number, began to set apart special shelves and special tables and chairs for children. With the turn of the century came a considerable impetus through the establishment by the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh of the first Training School for Children's Librarians under the direction of Miss Frances J. Olcott. About this time also, public libraries showed increasing recognition of special service to children as an educational opportunity, as

well as a means of making the use of the library more comfortable for adults. Children's corners, children's rooms, children's departments were multiplied. School libraries were no longer looked upon as mere collections of books, but as book laboratories planned to meet the needs of new curricula and of new methods. From that time until now a steady development may be observed. School libraries have come to be considered necessary to the program of modern schools for children of all ages. Many public library systems now appoint a director or supervisor whose business it is to plan and to supervise all divisions of library work with children. Comfortable and artistic rooms are set apart in school and in library, with furniture built especially for children's bodies, and with adornment planned for esthetic effect. Here boys and girls of all ages come freely to read or to consult books, or to borrow those which they may read at home.

These libraries for children are built upon two ideas,—first, that the art of reading is best fostered through voluntary use of books, and, second, that every child should have the opportunity to find a bit of desired information at the time when he needs it most.

Neither school library nor public library can ever take the place of a child's own bookshelves. Yet very few children have the run of a large enough collection of books so that ample choice is afforded. Development of discriminating taste, a slow growth, can best be furthered by life-long experience in comparison and in choice. Among the books of a collection wisely provided any child may safely browse and learn for himself the best that he is capable of enjoying at any given time. This is far more effective than any effort to induce children to read books that "every child should know."

The past thirty years have been characterized by experiment in library work

with children and by the development of certain policies of administration. Nearly every public library reserves a corner, or an attractive room for children's own use. Separate buildings are used in some instances, as in the Toronto Public Library. An unusual and delightful example of a separate children's library is that at Westbury, Long Island. School libraries are just coming to be fully appreciated as an integral part of school life. The next thirty years may reasonably be expected to bring about an even greater growth in book service to children. It is not true that children's libraries with high standards and adequate book collections are to be found everywhere, even in America, where they have been more highly developed than elsewhere. It is probable that we have just begun to appreciate values in voluntary reading, and to understand the recreative value of books in establishing habits of the wise use of leisure.

A generally accepted idea in library work is that the librarian for children should be a specialist, who by reason of endowment of personal characteristics and by virtue of specialized education is able to help children to learn to know the books which are theirs by inheritance and to find the information they most need at any given time. Both in school library and in public library the ideal of children's librarianship is to place personal contact with individual children above all methods and devices. However, in many institutions groups of children come to listen to stories from literature, to attend clubs organized to present programs relating to books and reading, or to learn how to use catalogues and books of reference. Anything which contributes directly to greater appreciation of books and reading may be included in the program of a children's library.

Five library schools now offer special courses in library work with children or in school library work. The Carnegie Library School in Pittsburgh, the School of Library Science at Western Reserve University, the St. Louis Library School, and the School of Library Science at Simmons College all offer work leading to a certificate or to a bachelor's degree. This year, for the first time anywhere, advanced work leading to a Master's degree is being given. This is in the new School of Library Service at Columbia University.

The modern children's library is, then,

a twentieth century institution. Its relationship to children's reading and to the production and distribution of children's literature make it one of the most important factors in the education of children.

Reviews

TOLD AGAIN. By WALTER DE LA MARE.
New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1927.

Reviewed by LEE WILSON DODD

IN this handsomely contoured and amusingly illustrated volume, I believe the parents of younger children will discover something they have long looked for and, perhaps, despaired of finding. They will find there a score of the famous old fairy-stories and folk-tales "told again," as only a poet (whose Fairy Godmother presented him at birth with an invincible key to Fairy Land) could tell them. Here, at last, are the histories of Cinderella, of Little Red Riding Hood, of Sleeping Beauty, set forth simply, imaginatively, in terse, rhythmical English embellished with many an odd endearing quip of humor. With his perfect literary tact Mr. de la Mare has resisted the temptation to even elaborate these stories; he found them simple, though permanent things and left them so. But while, in our customary printed version, these tales are simple, thought-powered narratives, they are usually written in a stodgy, heavy-quoted prose—entirely inappropriate to the poetic content. It is no secret by now that Mr. de la Mare has the secret of style; and while reading these famous old tales to children as he has retold them, parents will have the added satisfaction of knowing that their children's ears are, all unanimously, being moved to an appreciation of a pure, though picturesque and living, English. Here, certainly, is a book that no shelf for "reading aloud" should be without.

THE YOUNG FOLKS' BOOK OF FISHES. By IDA MELLE. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company. 1927. \$2.

Reviewed by JOHN T. NICHOLS

American Museum of National History

WITHOUT the fish there never could have been any higher animals, and so there never could have been any human beings; and that is, to us, the very important "why" of the fish. Fishes were the first animals to have backbones, and frogs and snakes and birds and four-footed animals, all of which have back-bones, all came directly or indirectly from the fishes in the beginning.

The smallest of fishes are less than an inch long when full grown, the largest is probably the whale shark of the Indian Ocean which is thought to reach a length of sixty to seventy feet. The eggs and young of different fishes have very unlike histories. The young of many of the big sharks are born alive, as are also those of many top-minnows, little fishes found in warm fresh waters which eat mosquito wrigglers. On the other hand many fishes like the cod lay innumerable small eggs which float unattached in the sea and take their chance of hatching and growing up, a very slim chance for any particular egg. Other fishes again build nests, sometimes nests of bubbles at the surface, sometimes nests of pebbles at the bottom, or of bits of weed and sticks,—and guard their eggs and young. Some hatch their eggs in their mouths. The little sea-horse is a true fish, though it has a head shaped like that of a "knight" in the game of chess, and can hold on with its tail like a monkey. Father sea-horse carries his eggs in a pouch, much as a mother kangaroo does her young. The waters are so wide, there are so many things true about fishes, that it is hard to say anything is impossible. There is so much to know about them, and their life is so largely in a world that is not our own, that for one person to tell even a part of the story and not make the least mistake seems almost impossible. Miss Mellen of the New York Aquarium has brought together in this book many interesting facts, just a very few of which are here mentioned. We are grieved to see that a picture of a big ray which she calls *Myliobatis*, is really of its first cousin, *Manta*, and very likely other people with other special knowledge about fishy matters will find other items to disagree with. However, the book is not only interesting reading—it gives a very excellent bird's-eye view of an immense subject. Its author's wide experience makes her advice about keeping aquarium fishes of especial value. She has learned, furthermore, what questions naturally occur to the uninitiated, and she answers them admirably.

DELUGE
BY J. FOWLER WRIGHT

ON the islands which jut above a flood that covers the earth and destroys civilization, one man and two women work out their destiny together. **DELUGE** is a novel of irresistible vitality and imaginative force, carrying on every page the evidence of a brilliant mind that humanizes whatever it touches.

Not since Mr. Wells wrote his romances of the future has a story-teller of Mr. Wright's particular quality been seen. Others have written fantasies of unknown worlds, Mr. Fowler Wright creates one. —*The London Daily News*

DELUGE is the best thing of its kind in a dozen years or more.—*London Mercury*

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Points of View

Fact and Fiction

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
SIR:

As the *Saturday Review* has already pointed out, Fannie Hurst's "A President is Born" is cursed by a mass of undigested detail, mechanical manipulation of plot, and characters whose salient traits are over-emphasized in the sloppy fashion of the Sunday newspaper special. Readers in the corn belt—the section of which Miss Hurst writes—will add another charge: The details on farm life in northern Illinois are not only undigested; they are inaccurate.

Miss Hurst set out to show that the environment of the farm and the small town, working on stock of exceptional vigor, might produce a statesman. This purpose committed her to a portrayal of farm life of a not unusual sort. Instead she selected a small farming region, heavily capitalized, over-equipped. Not only this, but having described the unusual situation, she seemed to think it only the standard thing. To the farm reader's inquiry, "How could they make a living on farms like that?" she only says something vague about fat cattle, dairy cows, pork, butter, and eggs.

There are a host of minor inaccuracies. Bek sends "the plow share blade" back to the factory for repairs. Out here we take it to the blacksmith. She strides down to "the open cattle mart," and so out of the range of our experience and nomenclature. She lectures on "the inheritance of black-stripe in China-Poles," a breeding problem no one out here has ever heard of and a breed that does not exist. By some quirk, her corn huskers leave the shocks standing with the husked corn on the ground inside.

The most diverting error in the book is also one of the main cogs in the machinery. Miss Hurst wanted David, her hero, to herd sheep through the summers in order that he could think the deep and long thoughts of a prospective president. Poor boy, the pasture was a small one and well fenced—they all are up that way—but he had to herd the sheep anyway. Probably no one, except David, has herded sheep in northern Illinois for some fifty years.

It will amuse any farmer to go through the book and note the fantastic errors. Yet it may irritate him a little, too. It should irritate city dwellers as well. There is enough misinformation about farming circulating in urban circles already. I suggest that they try Miss Suckow, Miss Cather, Mr. Frederick, if they want a farm background built from observation and experience. Miss Hurst has evolved her farm background from a badly-kept note-book.

DONALD R. MURPHY.

Managing Editor, *Wallace's Farmer*.

Saved by Grace!

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
SIR:

It seems that I have been living in a state of sin and did not know it until I read the review by Mr. Paul Shorey (University of Chicago) of Professor Gilbert Murray's "The Classical Tradition in Poetry." I was horrified! For that book had charmed the heart out of me. In it I had seemed to find wisdom, beauty, humor, scholarship, intellectual good manners, high suggestion, and deep insight. In fact, I read it twice, annotating and indexing, noting things to be remembered and thought over and over. I was having a fine time. But all the while my soul was in a parlous state. It seems that Professor Murray, having first wormed his way into my confidence by his personal charm, abused my innocence to lead me into ways far from orthodox. Forsaking "Arnold's and Jebb's conception of the serene rationality of the classics," I am in company which is dubious to say the least. My companions are Miss Jane Harrison, Mr. Francis Cornford, Mr. J. A. K. Thompson, and Sir James Frazier,—not to mention such creatures as Susan Glaspell (though how she got in is a puzzle to me, as I suspect it is to her too) and Mr. Stark Young, who is probably as much surprised as the rest of us. "Warned in time!" is all I can say. I had been following along this primrose path with a beautiful trust, in such company as Mr. Alfred Zimmermann's and Mr. R. W. Livingstone's. There, too, have I fallen among thieves! For it seems that Professor Murray's scholarship is quite off color. Mr. Shorey does not leave it a leg to stand on. If I must be quite honest with myself, I had already suspected that all was not quite right, for I knew that it was a fashion among the youth of Oxford University (as among the youth of every other university) to scoff

at Professor Murray (whilst scoffing at everybody else) as a "piker," and one of them has said to me:

"You know, I don't stand for the way Murray translates Greek tragedy."

My impulse was to reply that nobody was hindering him from translating it to suit himself, but remembering my admiration for Professor Murray's own good breeding, I contented myself with the thought merely. A simple soul, Professor Murray's translations suited me well enough, even though I had gone to the trouble of reading many of the plays in Greek. Similarly with his works of scholarship. I had never dreamed that a mortal man could perform the miracle of writing a book on the Homeric question and remain courteous and good-tempered throughout, or a book on the five stages of Greek religion without sideswiping mystical religion and Hebraic cults. Yet all this was disingenuous of me and my damnation slumbered not. My hour of awakening came and it was all the more terrible for being delayed. For years I had been wallowing in what Mr. Shorey so scathingly defines as "corybantic Hellenism," following after the Miss Jane Harrisons and Susan Glaspells, the Francis Cornfords, and Gilbert Murrays of life. Only last autumn, all in the mild warm sunshine of Indian summer, sitting on a brawny granite shore cliff down at Seabury, I was conducting a private corybantic revel over the pages of this very book; lingering, delighting, marking, glancing up now and then at the *Molpe* of white gulls and sunlit sea. And now it seems that *Molpe* out-Freuds the Freudians, it being, in fact, doubtful whether there is any such bunk; and people who believe in it had better look out. Innocent as my joy may appear to have been, I was in a state of mortal sin. Mr. Shorey has saved me, and none too soon. I owe everything to him. Yet, wretch that I am, I am not grateful. Saved by grace, I am ungracious. Since reading Mr. Shorey, it is true, I feel myself a stronger and a better man. But I am not so happy.

Desolately yours,

LUCIEN PRICE.

Victoria Woodhull

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
SIR:

We are acting for the executor of the will of the late Mrs. Victoria Woodhull Martin (formerly Mrs. Victoria Woodhull) who died on the 9th June, 1927.

Our attention has been drawn to the letter from Mr. Samuel Scoville, Jr., which appears in *The Saturday Review of Literature* of the 7th instant. In this letter Mr. Scoville states, referring to *Woodhull and Claflin Weekly*: "This was a publication at one time suppressed by the Authorities as an obscene paper and Victoria Woodhull served a term of imprisonment for publishing the same." We beg to inform you that it is absolutely untrue to say that Mrs. Victoria Woodhull served a term of imprisonment for publishing the paper in question. Mrs. Victoria Woodhull and her sister, Miss Claflin, were arrested no fewer than eight times and when the case for the prosecution was heard, it resulted in the Judge of the United States District Court informing the accused that there was no occasion for them to introduce any evidence on their behalf, that no case had been proved against them, and he instructed the Jury to render a verdict of "Not Guilty," which they immediately did without leaving their seats. As evidence of this we beg to enclose copies of extracts from the *Republican* (Washington, D. C.) of the 9th, 1873, the *Mercury* (New York City) of the 12th January, 1873, *Evening Journal* of Jersey City of the 14th January, 1873, the *Commercial Advertiser* (New York City) of the 14th January, 1873, *Weekly Record*, Aldeo (Illinois) of the 15th January, 1873, the *Sun* and the *Evening Journal*, both of New York City of the 30th June, 1873. You can no doubt verify the extracts by inspecting the files of the newspapers in question.

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London, Eng.

(The extracts from newspapers mentioned above are in the files of THE SATURDAY REVIEW.—The Editor.)

Heidelberg, from the earliest times to the end of the eighteenth century, is the subject of a charming volume by Rudolf Sillib and Karl Lohmeyer (Leipzig: Klinkhardt & Biermann). The book contains a graceful running commentary, but its greatest attraction is its excellent illustrations.



R. Austin Freeman and what a man!

R. Austin Freeman. And what a man! You can have your J. S. Fletcher with his four books, at a minimum, per year. To me he is writing himself out. You can even have Sherlock Holmes with his Case Book, by this time; "We are not once the strength that in old days—!" Yes, you may even have "Father Brown," in whom I have often taken vast delight. But give me, oh give me, and how I wish you would, the forthcoming "A Certain Dr. Thorndyke." And read Freeman's latest before that; "The Cat's Eye," and his collected short stories. Yet better still go back and read "The Singing Bone." Thorndyke is, again according to Wright "the purely scientific detective"—and just contrast him with Arthur B. Reeve's "Craig Kennedy," pseudo-scientist! Convincing detail versus flagrant concoction.

So writes WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT
in "Here's to Crime"
in *The Saturday Review*

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