

MORROW  
BOOKSFOR BOYS  
AND GIRLS

## TAL:

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## Black

*A Horse of*



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*the Kansas Hills*

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WILLIAM



MORROW

## From the Bookseller's Angle

By GERTRUDE ANDRUS

CERTAINLY it pays to advertise. Isn't B. V. D. a part of our "American language" and doesn't "it floats" mean soap to us? Even the courts have been invaded of late, in the clash between "Luckies" and "sweets," so vigorous has been the denial of the commercially damaging reiteration that sugar is hostile to the fashionable contour of the female figure. And for the past ten years publishers, booksellers, librarians, teachers, and the more intelligent public have been working together through Children's Book Week, so that the idea suggested by "children and books" may become associated in people's minds. When we say "children" we want them to think "books," just as they now think "shoes and stockings," "bread and butter," or "ham and eggs."

There was once a children's librarian, who was convinced that public libraries weren't doing their whole duty unless they persuaded people to buy more books for children and better books. But the publicity at her command was limited, so she asked permission of her librarian to spend several hours a day in the weeks just before Christmas in the book department of a large department store, actually selling books, and to the amazement of the store managers, selling books that cost two dollars and a half as readily as those which cost fifty cents. This venture into salesmanship focussed the attention of a slightly larger group than previously had been reached on the responsibility of the grown-up to purchase the best in books for a child, but it was of slight use except as it demonstrated that given a bookseller plus a sales force interested in the good books, you will have at the end of the season a bookseller minus the better books but still plus the poor ones.

Even though unorganized in their publicity, public libraries have always been in the vanguard of any effort toward making children owners as well as readers of good books, but it is only since there has been the definite and powerful organization of Book Week back of the idea that rapid progress has been made.

It is never difficult to interest people in a movement for the good of children. Some of them, of course, fail to see why there is so much agitation over the children's reading. But the bombardment of club programs, magazine articles, radio talks, school essays, and library exhibits, is having a cumulative effect and is finding the majority of people needing only the slightest encouragement and direction, so eager are they that their children shall have every opportunity for development and expression.

This emphasis on better books for children has been so effective that it is a peculiar pleasure this year to be a bookseller, for never have there been so many beautiful books for children and never have there been so many good books at a low price.

Miss Massey, of Doubleday, Doran deserves a special word of thanks for making available the Windmill Books at a dollar a volume and thus giving those with lean pocket-books the chance to buy some of the newer story books. If Macmillan's Little Library, so wisely chosen by Miss Seaman, contained no other title of merit than "Silver Pennies" it would be worth while, for "Silver Pennies," edited by Blanche Thompson, is one of the best small anthologies of poetry ever made for children, and its price of one dollar brings it within reach of all.

And one of the best books for both mothers and daughters is Dorothy Canfield Fisher's "Understood Betsy," which comes from Grosset & Dunlap, beautifully dressed, for one dollar.

The old books of real merit will always endure, and we hope no girl will ever be allowed to miss Miss Alcott's "Little Women" or Johanna Spyri's "Heidi," and unfortunate is the boy who fails to read "Treasure Island" or Howard Pyle's "Men of Iron." But new things are to the fore, and mystery stories and aviation must be given a place, else our choice of books for young folks becomes pedantic. The mystery story offers no classics, as yet, to be included in the "must-haves" on a child's book shelf, but in the meantime Augusta Seaman's long list of titles will bridge the gap until the time when the "Gold Bug" by Poe and Wilkie Collins's "Lady in White" will meet with approval.

And young America is certainly air-minded! Ever since that memorable day when the whole nation went mad over an unknown youth and his tiny plane, there has been an increasing demand for fact and fiction concerning air adventure. The best of the books, so far, are those which have

been seized upon by the children though they were planned for grown-up readers, and the older folks must share Byrd's "Skyward," Lindbergh's "We," Wilkins's "Flying the Arctic," and Bruce's "Skylarking" with the younger crowd. And how the boys do love Hall's "High Adventure" and the new title of this year, "Falcon of France."

We have been deluged this year with books of information for children, information not only on aviation but on all sorts of subjects and put up in the most charming packages. What wouldn't Rollo give to be alive to-day, and how Jonas would have enjoyed the picturesque and graphic new "Geography of the World" by Hillyer and the story of a Persian boy by You'el Mirza, "Myself When Young." This is really a contribution to children's literature and deserves a wide reading by the whole family. Perhaps we think we aren't interested in Madame Roland, but let us once subject ourselves to the charm of Eaton's "A Daughter of the Seine," and we shall find that the dramatic spell of the French Revolution has us in its thrall. So many of the new story-books have a background of foreign lands and their manners and customs, that, although they are told as fiction, they also have value as fact. A special example of accurate information garnished with an interesting and humorous tale is "Taktuk, an Arctic Boy," published last year by Helen Lomen and Marjory Flack.

On every publisher's list there are titles which compel us to stop and compare to-day's colorful, entertaining, and scientifically accurate books of information for children with the Rollo books and others of their ilk, which were the mental provender of our grandparents. When we think what the older generation had to endure, let us give thanks to and for the National Association of Book Publishers. They have attracted to the writing of children's books some of the cleverest authors in the field of general literature, they have made it a pleasure for booksellers to promote, and a joy for purchasers to buy, children's books, and, last and most important of all, they have made children eager to read.

### Fighting the Germans

SHORTY IN THE TANK CORPS. By EDWARD W. KEEVER. New York: The Century Co. 1929. \$1.75.

SHORTY MACK, a young and ungrammatical truck driver, tells how he "went and fought the Germans" with his college-bred buddy, Red Halliday. He describes their work with an ambulance unit in the French Army, the rescuing of the wounded being varied by episodes with spies, lunatics, and men on leave. Red's superior education enables him to fix things up with Shorty's girl at home by correspondence. The United States comes into the war and the boys, grown weary of being passively shot at, enlist. With an ever-increasing pressure of excitement the reader goes to the Argonne, rides a tank into action, sees street fighting, and suffers with Shorty at the loss of Red, feels with Shorty the relief and the emptiness of homecoming.

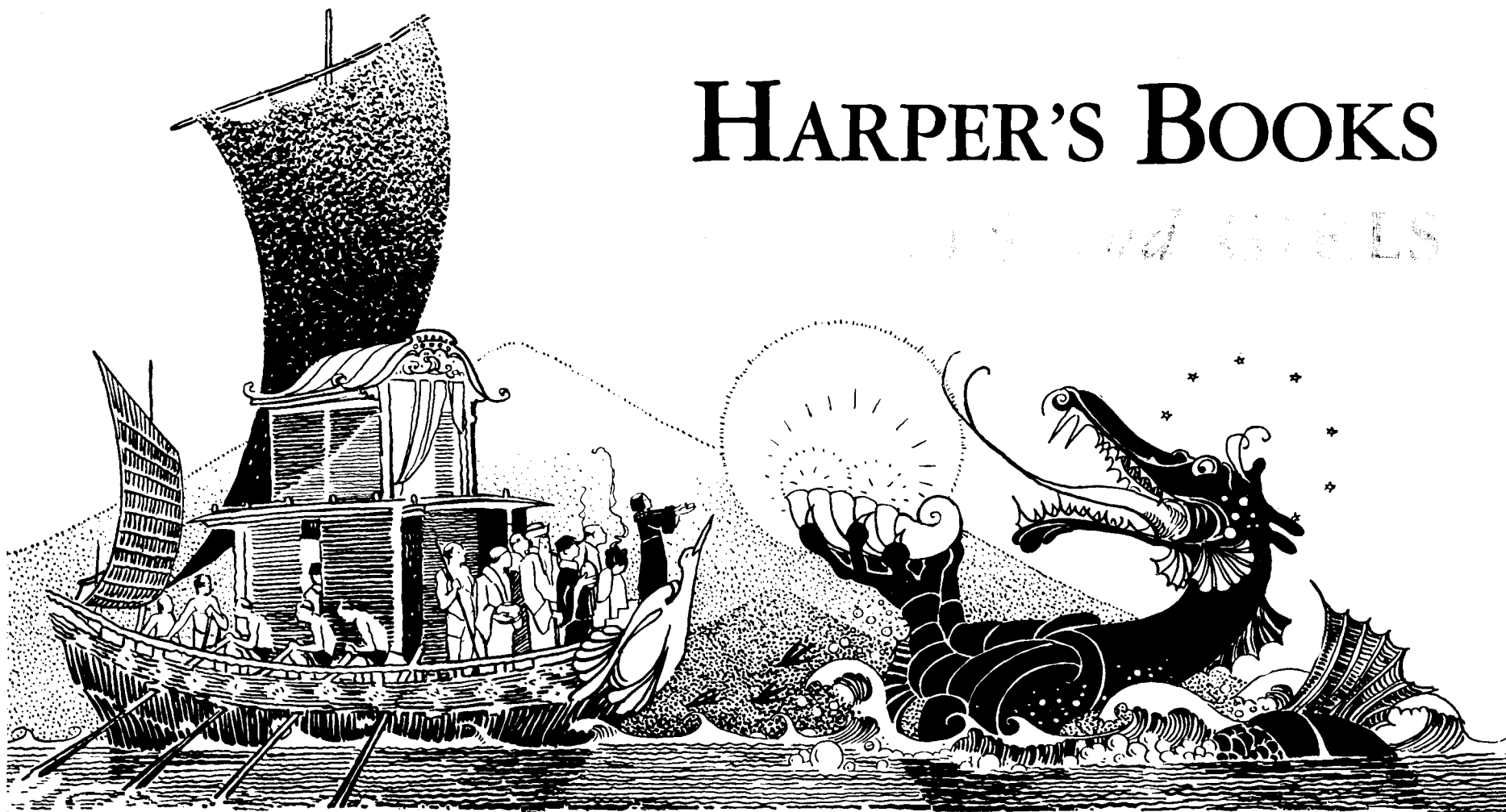
This book, so masculinely humorous, so humanly true, is no mere juvenile of adventure. It is a peep at the war itself made available for boys by the proper omissions. But these omissions weaken very little the pulse and throb of the ghastly truth. Restraint is on every page, yet the sensitive reader gets finally that atmosphere of tragic unfeelingness which is the natural miasma of slaughter. "I soon learned," says Shorty, "that in war a dead body don't mean anything except to the folks it grew up with at home." But it is a balanced peep. There is much laughter, much comradeship along with the selfishness and blood. The style is artfully artless, and its native American humor would set it apart. The book is far more than information or entertainment; it is a trustworthy spiritual record which should drive a rivet in war's coffin for every copy sold.

THE GALLANT LALLANES. By LOUISE H. GUYOL. Harpers. 1929. \$2.

It is disappointing that Miss Guyol was not capable of meeting her opportunity with this book. For then through its pages hundreds of ignorant American children might have been tempted to make their first bow to the fascinating old city of New Orleans. As it is, the story is *fade*—to use the author's favorite French—and the characters are wooden; though now and then some of the charm and strangeness of the town does peep through.



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