

Some Fact and Some Fiction

By T. MORRIS LONGSTRETH

THE boy who wants to discover the world and all its works can find guides, handbooks, examples, incentives, in every book-list. Here are half a dozen roads to interest, and the first is sign-boarded by Harry Franck, one of the planet's indefatigable travellers. It leads into the real China, and not only to Shanghai and Canton but to the Great Wall, up the 11,000 foot stone stairway to Omeishan, among the bandits of Hunan, into the President's palace. The book has several virtues: it is patently true, it reveals a land which in many ways seems queerer than Alice's, it shows the way to travel, and it is a help toward comprehension of probably the stupidest, but potentially the most powerful, people on the globe. It would be hard to exaggerate the value of this two-year fruit of Mr. Franck's sojourn in this land of transition.

The next book² takes us 1700 miles up the Amazon and Madeira rivers, in Brazil, to the railroad being built around some rapids. Mrs. Jekyll is the wife of a mem-

ber of the engineering firm and writes from first-hand experience of the jungle. Snakes, storms, fever, and inimical Indians make this remote adventure even more difficult. Vividness marks the writing. Here is dangerous living indeed.

From the equator to the North Pole, next, with Bob Bartlett in command and an intimate friend of his, Mr. Fitzhugh Green, at the typewriter. In these pages one learns the steps to mastery of the sea: grow up in the Newfoundland sealing fleet, take command of a schooner at seventeen, tramp the seven seas with cargoes as varied as in the Masfield poem, be cast on rockbound coasts, escape from shipwrecks twelve, take Peary to the Pole, then call yourself a mariner. Mr. Green, who has eluded ice-packs himself, builds up a skipper at once hardy and sensitive, humorous and stern, and certainly every inch a man. Nobody can lay down the book without wishing Captain Bartlett luck on the new voyages he is planning.

The next turn is with Roald Amundsen

to the Poles by ice and over one by air in a volume³ which is content not to flatter. This life impressively reveals the study and preparations which lie behind the labor of modern exploration. Mr. Partridge's picture of a genius's patience, and petulance, is engrossing. He has the advantage of a life-story which grew constantly more picturesque, through the misadventures of the Northwest Passage, the conquest of the South Pole, the flight in the *Norge*, to the dramatic decision to go to the rescue of the hero's bitterest enemy, Nobile.

Mr. Masters has tapped a less familiar topic, the salvage of treasure-ships from the bottom of the sea. \$25,000,000 is lost each year on the coast of Britain alone. Calculations as to the wealth which has accumulated in the yellow sands since Caesar lived are left to someone else. It is enough to lure men to superherculean efforts. For five years they tried to raise the *Laurentic* off Malin Head. Since 1799 spasmodic attempts to raise H. M. S. *Latine* have gone on, in vain. Here is treasure-hunting beyond the imagination of novelists, and Mr. Masters's book⁵ has actually instigated an amateur to start raising the \$200,000,000

German fleet sunk at Scapa Flow. Boys are warned not to be carried off by these fascinating pages unless they have lots of pocket-money.

Mr. Reeves has been too eager to communicate the on-rush of progress in aviation to make literature, but his journalism⁶ is absorbing. He takes us for a ride on the "Lindbergh Limited" across the continent. We follow the Lindbergh circle around Central America. We learn plane-building and air-mapping and how to select an airport. We find out how to get a job in a new profession. We hear that Harry Gugenheim will consider that he has failed if he cannot bring two hundred million dollars into aviation. If a book like this, if books like these, don't put the spark to the dynamite of ambition in a boy's make-up, something must be damp.

One advantage of the pressure on the juvenile field is the necessity to be various. Sincerity would have hunted for new themes anyway, but now the merely methodical have to hump themselves, forsake their beloved series, which now only scatteringly continue, and search for subjects wearing at least some aspect of novelty. For instance here are seven books, not very striking, most of them, but at least as different as the courses at a dinner. Of this meal the *pièce de résistance* is "The Second Mate of the Myradale,"⁷ the story of a young officer who failed when raised too suddenly to the command of his vessel, and who retrieved himself when acute danger sheared life of its veil of safety. The first part of the tale breathes an atmosphere unusual in a juvenile. There is a fine leisure, a portentous thickening of clouds scarcely seen, which makes the rough crew most happily credible and the ensuing events real. One feels a genuine concern for Jim. Had the growth of dismay and suspicion been carried over into the chapters of climax Mr. Lesterman would have had a notable book of adventure. But plot begins to pull the strings and one realizes it is a story again. Boys, however, will not quibble over the details of excitement. Mr. Lesterman's prose is effective, and the feeling of the tale is, by a rare exception, enhanced through the imaginative excellence of Mr. Rowland Hilder's pen and ink drawings, twenty-nine in number.

Miss Price's "Luck of Glenlorn"⁸ illustrates the range of contrast commented upon. Instead of the Pacific islands, we are in northern Scotland. The conflict lies, not between cannibals and a boy, but between a young American with a sense of humor and two clans of Scotsmen largely without. A feud is being carried on, chiefly to please Lady Macmoriar, whom age and loss of kin have rendered more than a little mad. The hero, divided between loyalty to the inherited nonsense and friendship to his foe, is in a trying position. From it, Miss Price extricates him with much tenderness and considerable skill. The use of plain American sanity as a measuring stick is very amusing. The book is such good reading that one loses sight of the substructure of local knowledge which has made it plausible.

Plausibility, which is mainly the offspring of patience and good sense, is lacking in "The Builder of the Dam."⁹ Ricky contracts to build a dam for \$5,000, the lowest adult contractor bidding \$9,000. Most of the conceivable misfortunes ensue. But Ricky employs boy scouts. By doing "good turns" *en masse*, by detecting the villain before irretrievable damage is done, the job is concluded and Ricky finds a berth with the company that once disdained him. Once more loyalty and pluck and ambition and the other virtues are harnessed up for dray-horses to pull a book to market. And knowing all this, one desires to read to the end. That is Mr. Heyliger's strength. He concocts stories that charm and arrest in

¹ MARCO POLO, JUNIOR. By HARRY A. FRANCK. New York: The Century Co. 1929. \$2.

² TWO BOYS IN SOUTH AMERICAN JUNGLES. By GRACE B. JEKYLL. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1929. \$1.75.

³ BOB BARTLETT, MASTER MARINER. By FITZHUGH GREEN. New York: Putnam Sons. 1929. \$1.75.

⁴ AMUNDSEN, THE SPLENDID NORSEMAN. By BELLAMY PARTRIDGE. New York: Frederick A. Stokes. 1929. \$2.50.

⁵ THE BOYS' BOOK OF SALVAGE. By DAVID MASTER. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1929. \$2.

⁶ LINDBERGH FLIES ON. By EARL REEVES. New York: Robert M. McBride & Co. 1929. \$2.

⁷ THE SECOND MATE OF THE MYRA-DALE. By JOHN LESTERMAN. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1929. \$2.

⁸ THE LUCK OF GLENLORN. By EDITH BALLINGER PRICE. New York: The Century Co. 1929. \$1.75.

⁹ THE BUILDER OF THE DAM. By WILLIAM HEYLIGER. New York. D. Appleton & Co. 1929. \$1.75.

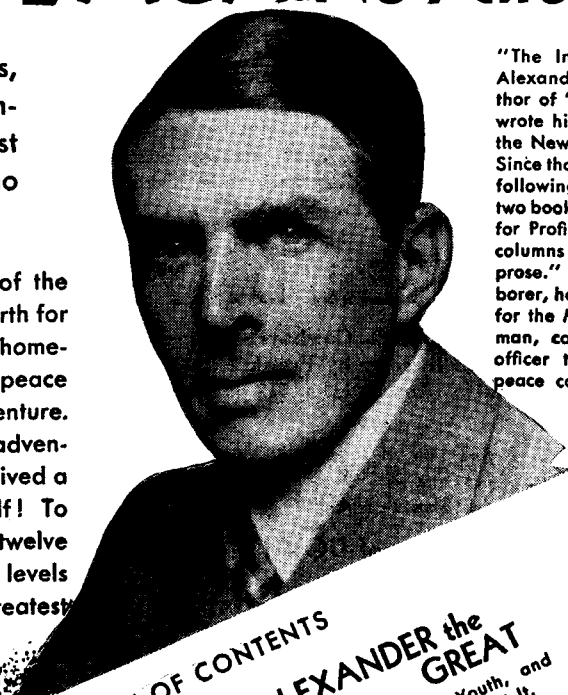
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"The Incomparable BOLITHO," as Alexander Woolcott named the author of "Twelve Against the Gods," wrote his first foreign dispatches for the New York World six years ago. Since that time an increasingly ardent following* has enjoyed and praised two books, "Leviathan" and "Murder for Profit," and his all too infrequent columns of "swirling and eddying prose." He has been newsboy, laborer, honor student, even candidate for the Moslem priesthood, infantryman, cavalryman, bomber, liaison officer to the French press at the peace conference and finally Paris correspondent for the Manchester Guardian.

*Including Christopher Morley, Heywood Brown, Alexander Woolcott, Frank Crowninshield, Herbert Bayard Swope, Walter Lippmann, Laurence Stallings, Deems Taylor.

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Fact and Fiction

(Continued from preceding page)

spite of their being concoctions. The more realistic "Macklin Brothers" of last year was a step in a finer direction. That way lies a more durable success for this author.

Those of us who have been lucky enough to live for a while in the Yukon regret the flow of bogus stories about that treasure land when so much that is genuinely thrilling lies to an author's hand. Service's flamboyant "Trail of '98," without a quiver of humor in its 300 pages, touched off the sort. The hero must land at Skagway (or Dyea), climb the White Pass (or Chilkoot), escape robbery (or murder), manage not to freeze (or drown), and finally locate the wondrous claim (there is no alternative here). Micky and Hank in "Klondike Pardners" follow the same deep-trodden course. But there is a reason for Mr. Sabin's retreading the old trail. In "The American Trail Blazer Series" he is fictionizing history, and this veracious little book, by its restraint and humor, at once corrects its predecessors and eliminates any need for a successor. This shows what happened, and humor takes its rightful place amid the mud and the pathos. Young Mickleheimer is funny. To be sure, he is incredibly able in emergency, and he finds the exceptional gold, but he conveys the atmosphere that was as well as it can be conveyed in a book meant for boys.

Puget Sound lies on the way down from Dawson, and here is located the loggers' camp of "The Winning Hazard."¹¹ The plot might have come from a department store, but the smells and the sounds, the doings and the jargon of the lumberers are authentic. "Banjo and Pistols"¹² is even slighter in construction, and yet the lure of "Pap's land" which the two youthful heroes struggle to keep in the family takes hold of a reader even before he is aware. Here is the native charm of the Blue Ridge *in parvo*. It can be marked "genuine." The same adjective can hardly be applied to "The Boy Scouts Yearbook,"¹³ which is a medley of cheap sheriffs, dime-novel cowboys, and the stock Indian. Some of the stories are undeniably racy. In Joseph Ames's "Mumps," Bronco Bill disguises himself and bets another cowman out of \$200. William Hart contributes "Cowpunchers' Law," where a sheriff and deputy connive at a murderer's escape. Appropriate as these tales would be to some of the pulpwoods, one wonders if they fit in with Scout standards. Of course, many are above reproach, as Constance Lindsay Skinner's Christmas tale of Fort William in the old Nor'wester days. Chief Standing Bear gives some timely directions about scouting for buffalo, and Dan Beard stands by to advise on Indian costuming. But the volume as a whole comes as a surprise to this reviewer, who supposed that the reading fed to the Scouts would be less raucous and rather finer.

LEGENDS OF THE SEVEN SEAS. Retold by MARGARET EVANS PRICE. Illustrations by the author. New York: Harper & Bros. 1929.

ITALIAN FAIRY TALES. By CAPUANA. Translated by DOROTHY EMMERICH. Illustrated by MARGARET FREEMAN. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co. 1929. \$2.50.

In these tales of sea wonder and enchantments the author has drawn upon the legend and fairy-lore of many races, including the Japanese, in whose popular literature the sea plays so large a part. There are tales from Hawaii, from Ireland, China and Cornwall, of mermaids, sea monsters and enchanted fishes, and of the seal-people of Celtic folklore. The tales are well-chosen and effectively retold, though one feels that the author is carried away here and there by the poetic quality of her material. The decorations are pleasing and combine to make a very attractive gift-book.

Capuana's stories run to a different extreme. Here is neither poetry nor sentiment, but the old-fashioned harlequinade humor, cunning matched with cunning, life turned topsy-turvy, and the kind of quick, ruthless justice that is the backbone of folktale logic—the ball kept continually rolling. Such tales were designed for a hardy audience, one demanding a good story with plenty of familiar ingredients rearranged, but their humor is of the sort that will appeal to children of any race. Dorothy Emmrich has preserved the character of the narrative excellently in her translation.

¹⁰ KLONDIKE PARDNERS. By EDWIN L. SABIN. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1929. \$2.

¹¹ THE WINNING HAZARD. By ALLEN CAFFEY. New York: The Century Company. 1929. \$1.75.

¹² BANJO AND PISTOLS. By ROSA AUBREY WOOD. New York: Robert M. McBride & Co. 1929. \$2.

¹³ THE BOY SCOUTS YEAR BOOK. New York: D. Appleton Company. 1929. \$2.50.

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The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received. Many of them will be reviewed later.

THE MYSTERY AT STAR-C RANCH. By HILDEGARDE HAWTHORNE. Appleton. 1929. \$1.75.

GLOOM CREEK. By MARY F. WICKHAM PORCHER. The same.

The current of books for girls (as well as boys) still sets strongly westward. The two books cited above are an index of the trend. Both stories, moreover, feature Wyoming, and both make further appeal to favor with the captions: "A Mystery Story for Girls."

In "The Mystery at Star-C Ranch" Miss Hawthorne's capable youngsters, Deedah and Wendy, their juvenile sister, Treachy, and their brothers, Zach and Enley, are discovered upon the Star-C ranch, operated, apparently, in the Cody country outside of the Yellowstone Park, by the St. Clair family with whom Deedah had become acquainted in England. The mystery hangs upon the efforts of an alleged timber-cutting company to run Mr. St. Clair off his property—the title to which was clouded by reason of lost naturalization papers. In thwarting the attacks all upon the ranch—particularly Treachy and Chin Fo, the Chinaman cook—take a hand. Between the episodes of persecution and reprisal there are the round-up, the saddle trip into the Park, and incidents of ranch and range life. Since the story deals with the new Wild West, the radio and airplane figure in the inevitable corraling (not without gunplay) of the gang of scoundrels. It is a story for boys, too. One thing more: "Pronto" is sterling, north and south; but is "Si habla Española, Señor?" really the Wyoming cow-country vernacular for that query?

"Gloom Creek" by Miss Porcher is a "mystery" story in that the interest of continuous narrative focuses upon the development of the mystery of characters, actions, and situations, until the unknown has been made known. For what would be action and adventure without an ending, and that ending, a something to be found out? The mystery element in this story is Gloom Creek, whose trail taxes the nerves and imagination of the two girls, Nancy and Cherie. They have to ride this trail in order to get their supplies brought by Overland airplane to the landing field fifteen miles from their dude-ranch quarters of Cloud Peak. These supplies are chiefly books and magazines with which to keep up their Book Corral circulating library for their guests and the ranchers and cowboys. Nancy's brother, Paul, and his chum, Arthur Gregory, and other friendly "hands" of the Bar B 2 outfit are here again, also. The story is told by Nancy; is most excellently told (thanks to the fine color sensitiveness of Miss Porcher). It lives and moves and is not without its thrills from rodeo, hold-up, visiting aviators, and a romantic crash. It is well suited to girls who have passed the juvenile teens.

BUMMER'S CIRCUS. By ROBERT STARKEY. Duffield. 1929. \$2.

"Bummer's Circus" is a modest little book of a town where only dogs live. Bummer is an optimistic young pointer who conceives the idea of making his fortune by getting up a circus. He does it, but circumstances do not make it easy for him. It would be possible, no doubt to write an attractive little tale with this for a theme without knowing a great deal either about dogs or about circuses. But the reading of it would bring one no-where. Mr. Starkey, however, writes about very doggy dogs and a very doggy circus without concealing a human situation behind it. He knows very well what he is writing about, for he has traveled for years with a circus and Bummer has traveled with him, too. He is an expert acrobat and has succeeded so well in telling this story, that one hopes some day to hear more directly of his professional life of which this tale is but a doggy reflection.

MARCHING NOTES. By ERNEST LAPRADE. Doubleday, Doran. 1929. \$1.25.

Several years ago, Mr. Laprade, formerly a member of the New York Symphony Orchestra, wrote a book called "Alice in Orchestra." In it he introduced children most delightfully into the mysteries of musical instruments and to their significance in the orchestral ensemble.

"Marching Notes" is an ingenious and vivid answer to Alice's question "How many notes make a piece?" She is forthwith transported to a far country where the notes come alive. To her astonishment, she finds that each has a place in a well-trained army and that the rules and regulations of that army are complicated and numerous. In expounding these rules Mr. Laprade con-

trives to be clear and entertaining at the same time. Alice is shown elaborate rhythmic drills. She learns the difference between major and minor modes, is taught to distinguish between different intervals, and to listen for cadences, phrases, periods, and parts. So that when a great general arrives to marshal the notes to the making of a piece, she is quite ready to attend intelligently.

The General in this case proves to be a young person not quite five by the name of Mozart, who, nevertheless composes a pretty little piece and plays it *à merveille* on the harpsichord. Alice with her new knowledge, discovers new joys in listening to music, joys that one could wish for every child. "Marching Notes," however, is not a book for every child. It should be read either with guidance, or by a child with some musical knowledge and enthusiasm.

THE CHILDREN'S PLAY-HOUR BOOK—THIRD HOUR. Edited by STEVEN SOUTHWOLD. Longman's, Green. 1929. \$2.

This is the first of the Children's Annuals to reach us this year, and a very high standard it sets. There are many of the same names in the list of contributors as last year—very good names, such as John Drinkwater, Walter de la Mare, Rose Fyleman, Eleanor Farjeon, and others, with a sprinkling of excellent stories by Steven Southwold himself and a few riddles and suggestions for parties. The selections seemed to us more varied than in the past to suit different ages and temperaments or moods, from real fact of history and nature to the most delicate fairy tale and humorous poem, with attractive illustrations to each.

We think that many provident mothers and aunts will be glad to tuck away this Third Hour volume on their gift shelves to be brought out some rainy day for a little convalescent, or for the more fortunate youngster with a long railroad journey ahead.

THE MAGIC MUSIC SHOP. By MARY GRAHAM BONNER. Macaulay. 1929. \$2.50.

This is a fanciful tale of a little girl's entertainment with the musical instruments of a music shop. In the first chapter an attractive picture is given of an October day in a country town and the enthusiasm of a happy young girl starting off on a new year of music study with an understanding teacher. How many of us have felt the same thrill on a golden October day!

The little girl is mysteriously admitted into a shop full of delightful surprises. She meets the different musical instruments and learns from one of their number a bit of their family history. This part is rather ingeniously told and one wishes that the story might have progressed further in the same direction. The little bits of music history related by the bass viol are very interesting to the average intelligent child. Children like to be told the truth, and plain facts told in story form are always welcome. It is a pity that more is not told of the ancestry of these instruments, for instance, the origin of the violoncello and the real ancestor of the piano-forte, which is the dulcimer, and not the psaltery; the child of the psaltery is the harpsichord, and not the piano. More could have been told about the violin than the short reference made to it, and with all the wealth of material to draw from as well as the author's evident gift of writing for children it is to be regretted that the book is not of more intrinsic worth.

The story is accompanied by simple piano pieces, easy enough for children of the first and second year, and by amusing pictures which are sure to bring pleasure. The whimsical ending has no especial point and rather weakens the story. Altogether the book, though of no great value, will doubtless interest many a young music student who will find in its pages some interesting information and plenty of amusement.

PEEP IN THE WORLD. By FRANCIS ELIZABETH CRICHTON. Longmans, Green. 1929.

The German pine forests, especially in *Winter, wenn es schneit*, dwarfs, and castles, and country folk, can be called upon to give a powerful Santa Claus sensation. Although it isn't Christmas until the last chapter of this story about a little English girl visiting her German uncle, that full-faced, strong-armed, hugging atmosphere is the personality of the whole book.

This flavorsome mixture of scenery and feeling is well presented for a child about eight to eleven years old. The rest of the story, except for a few real ideas plaited

into the whole, is very unimportant. Such a good little girl was Peep in the World!

The book is nicely printed and widely leaved, which increases its pleasantness even when its readers are quite able to read close print. It is illustrated, but the style of illustration is out of character with the warm-hearted atmosphere of the story. A little hunch-backed dwarf who can talk with animals should look much more human than graceful, and not at all like the kind of figure that might form a design for the latest style in silk bandannas.

UNDER THE ADMIRAL'S STARS. By WARREN HASTINGS MILLER. Appleton. 1929. \$1.75.

The boys who read "Ensign Wally Radnor U. S. N." can now follow this keen, good-natured, unselfish gunnery shark aboard the U. S. S. *Montana* and experience something of the life on a dreadnought. Experience is the word, for Mr. Miller's terse and confident style drives the realism home. His conversation, with its slang and technicalities, sounds from the life. Indeed, one at first believes that Mr. Miller has been pleased to write a veracious as well as thrilling juvenile. He has taken pains with Wally and Stanguay and Oiseau and Pebs and the higher officers. It would be hard to contrive incidents more exciting than the crises of Dummy's whaleboat exploit, of Oiseau's sacrifice in the gun turret, of the tidal wave, of the target mystery; yet these incidents are doubtless the cullings from life's own log by Mr. Miller's skilful hand.

Only one thing is lacking to make this book literature, an inner veracity; but that is everything. The hero turns out to be omnipotent after all. He lectures the commander and corrects the captain with an aplomb and selfless unconcern which would be remarkable—if true. The Navy, one supposes, is not like that. Neither, one fears, are boys quite so invincible. And so all this observation, this invention, these pains, become not literature but a passing entertainment. As entertainment, however, the book is unimpeachable.

AMERICAN BOY SPORTS STORIES. Selected from *The American Boy*. Doubleday, Doran. 1929. \$2.

Bob Zuppke, the renowned coach, introduces this collection of fourteen stories written by eight men well skilled in the preparation of thrills for boys. Football, baseball, basketball, tennis, hockey, track, swimming, rowing, and dogs are drawn on and the result is as high-powered as a boys' storybook can be. Indeed most men will enjoy the volume. Men as well as boys will be held by Frederic Nelson Litten's "The Code of a Champion" which shows that the best blood does not carry grudges. They will laugh over the clever psychology in George F. Pierrot's "The Sheriton Paint-up," and one can imagine Ring Lardner cracking a smile over Rex Lee's "The Winning Pop." Franklin M. Reck has illuminated football from a new angle in "The Yale and Princeton Quarterbacks Talk it Over," a very interesting post-mortem of the 1926 game. To single out stories where all reach so high a level is hardly fair. Nearly every story contributes something towards the technical grasp of the sport treated, and every one has its special item of ingenuity; while as for excitement, one simply pushes the eye along to see how the well-known ending is to be brought about. An added excellence lies in the realization that the morals of sports are conveyed without the indecency of preaching.

THE JUMPING-OFF PLACE. By MARIAN HURD MCNEELY. Longmans, Green. 1929. \$2.

The four young Linvilles, Becky, Dick, Phil, and Joan, at the death of their beloved Uncle Jim, are faced with the prospect of fourteen months' homesteading in the Dakotas, in order to make the land staked out by him their own. He has left them detailed instructions, a makeshift house in which to live, and the bare necessities for keeping body and soul together, but to the four children the task seems insurmountable. Poverty, drouth, and freezing cold, a family of vindictive squatters who have made their home upon the Linville's land and threaten to contest their claim, do all they can to make their life on the prairie insupportable. But their pluck and perseverance win for them many warm friends and alternate success.

This simple and sincere story should have for young people the same sort of appeal as "Robinson Crusoe" and "Swiss Family Robinson." There is an undying fascination about making a home out of practically nothing but the raw materials at hand. The book has a winning spontaneity and straightforwardness, and the author succeeds in capturing effectively the feeling of the prairie.

One marvels, at times, however, at the unfailing resourcefulness of sixteen-year-old Becky and wearies of the sometimes trite philosophy of Uncle Jim continually being quoted. But withal the story moves along and has in it more of reality than the general run of children's books. The illustrations are wood-cuts and, though not remarkable, seem to have caught the spirit of the story.

NURSERY RHYMES FROM BOHEMIA.

By HANUS SEDLACEK. Translated by ROF. D. SZALATNAY. Verses by ANNA V. WINLOW. Illustrated by RUDOLF MATES. McBride.

Whatever one may think of the verses which accompany the illustrations in this volume, the book as a whole is charming. Its gay pictures in their lavish use of strong, clear colors, its amusing or charming portrayal of personalities old and young, its effective employment of white to set off the page, and its bright hued borders make it a lively and a lovely book. No youngster of nursery age could resist its good humor and its vividness.

THE GOLDEN BALL. By ALICE BROWN. Macmillan. 1929. \$1.75.

YOUTH'S HIGHWAY. By CONSTANCE D'ARCY MACKAY. Holt. 1929. \$2.

Good plays for children, played by children—how we do need them! And how few there are! Perhaps it was because the name of Alice Brown sent our hopes soaring too high that we were a bit disappointed in "The Golden Ball." It is, of course, delightfully written—a whiff of Barrie, a flavor of Maeterlinck, plus Miss Brown's own humor and sureness of touch in the home scenes that begin and end the play. But the producer who attempts it had better gird up his loins. It is a three-act play. The sets will test his ingenuity unless he has a well-equipped theatre; and the training of his dryads and angels and bright spirits will test his patience and enthusiasm, and theirs. The reviews have called the play "ingenious," and we are afraid that is just what it is. The main idea is a good one: a little boy, left alone with his baby sister on the eve of her christening, is troubled because the Wicked Fairy has not been placated by an invitation. Determined to set things right, he meets enough strange creatures to confuse anybody, but comes out of his adventures with credit, only a little dazed and very sleepy. This plan would have made a pretty one-act play, but the author's ingenuity has expanded it to three, which was, we think, a mistake.

Miss Mackay's volume, "Youth's Highway," will be a godsend to schools, churches, and settlement houses. She has given us five plays, of five old-English types: an interlude, a morality, a miracle play, a pageant, and a nativity play; all short, all adapted for use on a modest stage. The interlude dramatizes the moment when the boy Michaelangelo found the door of opportunity opened to him by Lorenzo the Magnificent. It is a charming little piece, with many chances for spirited acting and artistic stage setting and costuming. The morality is a dramatic adaptation of "Piers Plowman," showing Youth, beset by temptation and learning the difference between false friends and true ones. The miracle play, "A Calendar of Joyful Saints," is the sort of material Sunday schools are always looking for. It offers a series of short scenes, bound together into a rather impressive whole. The nativity play is good because of its simplicity and its employment of the well-known Christmas hymns. The "Pageant of Sunshine and Shadows" was written for use in the crusade against child labor, and has been played from coast to coast under the auspices of the National Child Labor Committee. The book has an appendix with helpful directions for putting on the plays.

LITTLE CHRISTMAS, OR HOW THE TOYS CAME. By J. GUTH. Macmillan. 1929. \$2.

Christmas folk-tales have a special appeal. Their very anonymity binds them close to the universal experience of the great feast; and their simplicity takes a straight road to the heart of a child.

This lovely little book comes from Czechoslovakia and is profusely illustrated. We see Little Christmas growing up in the gay interior of his peasant hut. He wears a warm red coat with a big fur collar when he frolics in the snow. His friends are merry angels. They, too, wear furry coats which do not seem to inconvenience their wings at all. Together they devise a plan by which all the children in the town are made as happy as they should be on Christmas Eve. It will be nice to know of this slender volume during the coming holidays.

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