

Important New Books for Young Readers

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A LONDON BOOKSELLER, John Newbery, pioneered in the field of book publishing for children in the eighteenth century, and ever since that day the writing and publishing of materials for younger readers has been increasing. During the past quarter of a century books for children have become a recognized part of a publisher's output. Quality has improved steadily and "more and better books for children" may well have become the slogan of publishers, parents, teachers, and librarians.

The recognition of the importance of supplying young people with suitable books is reflected in the fact that in this year of scarcities and rationing there comes again from the press an array of inviting and worthwhile books for youthful readers. Many of these titles deserve attention because of noteworthy content and pleasing format; many invite recognition because of outstanding quality, timely subject, or beauty of illustration.

From the number of books available

may be chosen reading for fun and joy or reading for information and advice; from the number may be selected books of fantasy and enchantment or books of courage and noble deed. The array is bewildering because of its many offerings of beauty, charm, and appeal which confuse choice. There is the practically irresistible picture book, the delightfully told brief story for the beginner, the excitingly related adventure tale, the faithfully recounted life story, the breathlessly narrated war experience, and the rhythmically singing book of poetry. All cannot be chosen. Some must be taken and others left. Of the ones to be chosen the following are but a few.

Picture Books

From any year's offering there is need for choosing picture books—those first books for children on which reading is built.

Among the makers of beautiful books the d'Aulaires rank high. This year they have *Don't Count Your Chickens* (Doubleday) which no doubt will be found one of their best. Richly colored, minutely detailed pictures illustrate this story of an old woman who counted her chickens before they were hatched. The scene of the tale is in the country; so pigs, chickens, dogs, and cats are in pictures and text. Humor and imagination mingle with realism making this a modern American folk tale.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP is pleased to bring its readers Frieda M. Heller's article on books for children, an annual Christmas feature formerly carried by EDUCATIONAL METHOD. Miss Heller of Ohio State University, Columbus, writes with deftness and clarity of outstanding fall publications, whose subject matter ranges all the way from the trials of a family of Pekingese puppies to life in a submarine.

Not only children grow sleepy as night comes, but birds and animals also become drowsy. It is the spirit of a world gradually becoming sleepier and sleepier that Margaret Wise Brown has captured in *A Child's Good Night Book* (William R. Scott). This is a tale of slow rhythm, which can be used to meet the demand of children for just one more story before they settle down to sleep. The sleepy bunnies, the sleepy pussy-cats, and the sleepy sheep all support the fact that "night is coming. Everything is going to sleep." This is a very small book containing softly colored lithographs by Jean Charlot, which sustain the drowsy spirit of this charming little tale.

At Our House (William R. Scott) by John G. McCullough describes, with rhythmic text and large, distinguished illustrations by Roger Duvoisin, an average day in the life of a busy family. Each morning as very young children leave home for school they perhaps wonder just what happens at home while they are away. This book helps answer that question.

All children love puppies and in *Puppies for Keeps* (Macmillan) Dorothy

Lathrop introduces three newly born Pekingese and their mother. Marianne and Terry watch the little creatures from the day they first open their eyes until they are large enough to tumble about at play. Their names are Lucky Star, Mouse, and Sugarplum. Young readers share the mother dog's suspense concerning their fate. Will they be drowned or will they be permitted to live? With delight they learn that the decision is to keep all the puppies. The daily growth of the little dogs is shown in attractive pictures by the author. In this day of victory gardens the story of Mary Jane's squash will strike a sympathetic note with many children. In Grace Paull's *A Squash for the Fair* (Doubleday) the reader by brief story and pictures follows the seed from the day of its planting until it finally grows into a big fine squash which was taken to the fair where it won a prize. This is one of those stories of everyday things which hold such an appeal for very young readers.

Children like pets and stories about pets. In very simple text Marjorie Flack in *The New Pet* (Doubleday) tells how Dick and Judy received the nicest pet



The Red, White and Blue Auto (William R. Scott)

of all—a baby brother. The children had been promised the finest pet of all and had made many guesses as to what it would be. They were disappointed to find it was not a dog, a kitten, a bird, a rabbit, but a baby, which took no notice of them and gave them no pleasure. But day by day as the baby grew and began to know them their disappointment changed to joy. This is a short tale but it deals with a problem which looms large to many little children—the adjustment to a new baby brother or sister.

With little children, stories of familiar things are very popular and that is why they will like Lucy Sprague Mitchell's *The Red, White and Blue Auto* (William R. Scott). It is the story of Mr. Blue, a foreman of an airplane factory, Mr. White, a machinist, Red, the furnace boy, and Mr. Head, the manager of the factory. These four had not been able to work together until one morning, as they were on their way to work, things happened that caused them to learn that working together was much better for them and everyone else. Illustrations in red, white, and blue accompany the story, which stresses for the child the need for cooperation.

James Thurber's first attempt at writing for juvenile readers, *Many Moons* (Harcourt), is a fable containing both wisdom and nonsense. The brightly colored illustrations by Louis Slobodkin are also tinged with these qualities. The tale is that of a little princess who ate so many raspberry tarts that she became ill and had to go to bed. With a haughty royal air she declared that the moon was the only thing that would make her well. In vain her father called

upon all the wise men of the kingdom to find a way of getting the moon. At last the court jester solved the problem in such a way that the little princess did not know she was being deceived. The solution of the problem is indeed original and humorous and it provides material for an entertaining picture book.

A little boy has a very busy day in Lois Lenski's *Davy's Day* (Oxford). The story of a 3-year-old getting up, brushing teeth, washing face and hands, eating breakfast, going on errands with his mother, taking a nap, and going through the day's activities may not be exciting to older readers but to little boys and girls of Davy's age it is high adventure. It is the familiar which they love so well and they will follow with delight the bright blue and yellow pictures which the author has used to illustrate the day's experiences.

In Robert Bright's *The Travels of Ching* (William R. Scott) a small doll was sent from China to a little girl in America. This little girl had so many toys that none seemed to please her and so the little doll was neglected. Fortunately for Ching he is sent back to China to become the property of a child who loved him dearly. The bright red coat and the happy smile of the little toy are present in the illustrations of this story of a doll's journey, which contrasts Chinese and American life and customs.

In *Mr. Red Squirrel* (Viking) Tom Robinson has provided the text and Kurt Wiese the illustrations for the story of a little girl who gave a tea party in the woods to which came little animals. Animals from all over the world are found in Raymond Ditmar's *Twenty*

Little Pets from Everywhere (Messner). Pictures by Helène Carter help describe the habits and characteristics of big and little pets.

The rain falls with a pitter-patter and in Dorothy Baruch's *Pitter Patter* (William R. Scott) nursery school groups will hear the story of the rain which falls upon cows and chickens, automobiles and airplanes, and little boys and girls. Little boys and girls, however, may remain dry if they put on raincoats and galoshes—so says the story. The patter of the raindrops and the sloshy noises of the heavy rain are reproduced in the text, and the long, slanting lines of the illustrations by Charles G. Shaw carry out the idea of rain falling upon the earth.

Munro Leaf has given children a number of books—each designed to render a service. This year it is *Health Can Be Fun* (Stokes), which is most timely in this period of renewed emphasis upon physical fitness.



Sensible Kate (Viking)

Good Stories

Frequently a "good story" is the wish of both boys and girls regardless of their age. This year there are a number and they vary in kind, for there are stories of today and of yesterday, stories of our land and other lands, stories of mystery and of fact. Indeed, there are stories to meet many demands, to satisfy many tastes.

For the group of readers from 8 to 12 years old there is a very excellent Indian story by Florence Hayes, *Hosh-ki, the Navajo* (Random House). It is a well-written and sympathetic tale of a little Indian boy who had to leave his home to go to a school where he could learn the ways of the white man. It contains homesickness and longing for native ways and adjustment to new surroundings. A good story for girls of this group is that of Kate a red-haired, freckle-faced 10-year-old, who worked as a "family helper" and felt that since she could not be beautiful she must at least be sensible. In *Sensible Kate* (Viking) Doris Gates tells how this girl discovered that even she was needed by someone who could love her.

Eleanor Lattimore has given this group of readers some of their best stories of China. In *Peachblossom* (Harcourt) she tells of little children in wartime China. Peachblossom, but 6 years old, had to leave her home as the invaders approached and go many miles to reach a safe place. This new home was strange to her and the treasures she had carried with her—a doll, a caged cricket, and a pink pebble—shared her long hours of loneliness. However, people were kind and finally she felt more

at home and found in this strange place a measure of happiness. At last an aunt found her and she again had a family of her own. In the story the horrors of war are not stressed but the emphasis is upon the kindness and courage which wars bring out in people—even in the youngest. Another story with a Chinese background is Pearl Buck's *The Water-Buffalo Children* (Day). This is one of the author's books based on childhood in China and the story concerns two Chinese children, a water-buffalo, and a magic stone. It is told in a manner which will help eradicate some of the false ideas concerning people of strange lands.

A riot of fun is given the 8-to-12-year-olds by Robert McCloskey in *Homer Price* (Viking). Six preposterous tales and many amusing pictures describe the activities of two small but very lively boys—Homer and Domino. There are three other good stories for this group. One is Ruth Holberg's *Marching to Jerusalem* (Crowell), which mingles reality and romance in a story set in the time of the Children's Crusade. Another is Clare Ingram Judson's *They Came from France* (Houghton), a story of a French family which came to New Orleans in early days hoping to make a fortune and return to their beloved country. However, they found the new land to be so fine that they felt compelled to remain. The third, called *Summer at Buckhorn* (Viking), is Anna Rose Wright's story of a group of children and the good times they had on a Virginia plantation.

For those readers just past 12 and in their early teens there are inviting stories. For the girls there is an unusually good college story, which is most up-to-

date, for it concerns the school experiences of Lucy Ellen in this year of 1943. Included are some of the everyday happenings of the college girl—the talk in the drug store over a “coke,” dancing to the blare of a juke box, the thrill over a man in uniform, and the worry over the faithfulness of a distant boy friend. In all it is a breezy modern story.

Today many communities are overcrowded and finding a place to live has become an acute problem. This timely



Peachblossom (Harcourt)

subject is handled by Gertrude Mallette in *Wenderley* (Doubleday), a story of a girl and her life in a trailer camp where several thousand defense workers make their home. For these same girls Florence Crannell Means provides *Teresa of the Valley* (Houghton), a story of a Spanish-American family in Colorado. Misfortunes befall them but they overcome many by their fine qualities of happiness and friendliness. In Lavinia Davis' *Stand Fast and Reply* (Doubleday) a would-be glamour girl from the great city of New York comes to an Ohio farm. There she expects to find life drab and dull but instead finds it full and interesting.

Two stories for girls of this age dealing with the services are Helen Hull Jacobs' *By Your Leave, Sir* (Dodd), a story about a WAVE, and Jean Stansbury's *Bars on Her Shoulder* (Dodd), which follows the experiences of a girl who left the business world to become a WAC.

For boys of 12, 13, or 14 years there are also good stories. One that will be interesting to them (and also to their elders) is Esther Forbes' *Johnny Tremain* (Houghton), a most engrossing story of a 14-year-old boy in Boston at the time when the Revolutionary War was brewing. Apprenticed to a silversmith and doing the work he loved, Johnny met great disappointment when a serious accident to his hand prohibited him from following this vocation. It was then that he became a messenger boy for the Whig paper, *The Boston Observer*, and from then on he was drawn more and more into the affairs of the party which had dedicated itself to independence for the colonies. This title is an exciting story of Boston under the leadership of the Sons of Liberty and provides both pleasure and information for its reader.

A story of the re-education of a boy who had been drugged and poisoned by Nazi ideology is told by Emma Gelders Sterne in *Incident in Yorkville* (Farrar). Erich Braun, a lad of 14 years and a fine specimen of Hitler's *Jungvolk*, comes with his younger sister to the Yorkville section of New York to live. Here the boy undertakes to carry on his loyalty to the Nazis and to regard Americans with contempt. To his utter amazement things happen that prove that Nazi agents are not supermen and Americans are not stupid

dolts. In this neighborhood filled with a love for democratic living the boy learns that there are ways of living that are infinitely better than belief in "might is right."

Fiction titles of the war for this age group of boys are Stephen Meader's *Sea Snake* (Harcourt), a story of submarine activity around the Bahamas, and Frederic Nelson Litten's *Air Mission to Algiers* (Dodd), adventure just before invasion of North Africa.

Christmas Books

This fall there are several good Christmas books and several religious books which may prove to be exactly what one may want in the way of a "Christmas" book.

Every growing child has questions about God and in a simple-story fashion Mary Alice Jones in *Tell Me About God* (Rand) answers these questions in a way which the very youngest child can understand. The book is non-denominational and will no doubt meet the approval of many leaders in the field of religious education. Pelagie Doane has furnished illustrations of beauty and serenity which make the volume truly beautiful. Tenderly and simply the story of the birth of Christ is told by Louise Raymond in *A Child's Story of the Nativity* (Random House). The many illustrations by Masha are beautiful and attractive in every detail. Dorothy Hogner in *The Bible Story* (Oxford) has used great skill in selecting and arranging the material of the King James version of the Bible. Nils Hogner has furnished for it seventy illustrations which invite the reading of the text. On the whole it is a very dignified and attractive book.

Poems, songs, and stories are needed at Christmas time. Therefore, Natasha Simkhovitch's *Merry Christmas* (Knopf) will be welcomed by young and old for it contains some of each. A favorite Christmas poem is "A Visit from St. Nicholas," and in Thyra Turner's *Christmas House* (Scribner) the story is told of how Clement Moore happened to write this poem. Flavia Gag adds to the holiday spirit of the story by her many beautiful illustrations. Just as this is a favorite poem, so is "Silent Night" a favorite Christmas song. In *Silent Night, Holy Night* (Knopf) Herthi Pauli writes and Fritz Kredel illustrates the story of how that song was written.

Not only the words but also the music in simplified form is given by Opal Wheeler in *Sing for Christmas* (Dutton), a collection of thirty carols. Among those included are a number of best-loved ones. The book is large and contains wonderful illustrations by Gustav Tengenren, some of full-page size done in glowing colors.

War Books

Many books devoted to the subject of the war have come from the presses and many are excellent indeed. Some have been written primarily for adults, but many of these are being read by younger readers. Some, written primarily for the juvenile group, are catching the attention of older readers.

Among the titles for those in their early teens are three which deal with the marines. Keith Ayling in *Semper Fidelis* (Houghton) gives to the reader stories told to him by marines who have been under fire in the present war. *Our Marines* (Dodd) by Irving Crump nar-

rates the history of this branch of service, and in *Leathernecks* (Crowell) Ralph Boswell relates the history and describes the achievements of the marines in the present war.

Long will the Hornet hold a place in naval history as a gallant ship. In *A Ship to Remember* (Howell, Soskin) Alexander Griffin narrates for young and for old the Hornet's service in the Battle of the Pacific. Convoy duty is the subject of Lieutenant John Childs' *Navy-Gun Crew* (Crowell), and General Doolittle figures as the hero of Carl Mann's *Lightning in the Sky* (McBride), a biography with a most timely appeal. *Fighting Americans of Today* (Dutton) by Don Cook presents sketches of our important military leaders including among others MacArthur, Eisenhower, and Chennault.

Even the very young reader is interested in books about the war. Mary Elting and Robert Weaver have given them one, *Soldiers, Sailors, Flyers and Marines* (Doubleday), which is a wealth of information for them about our fighting forces. Tiny sketches in blue or khaki with now and then a touch of red are found illustrating many of the pages. The pictures with a very brief text answer many questions about the Army and Navy.

Biography

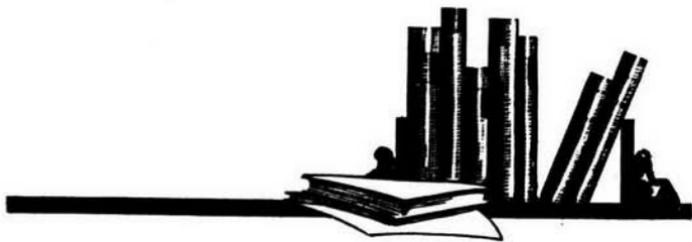
Men and women of both the present and the past have been chosen as subjects of this year's biographies. For children of the early teens, Hendrik van Loon has *The Life and Times of Bolivar* (Dodd) which will give readers both a portrayal of a great South American liberator and the story of South American independence.

The theater and music furnish the background for several titles. The inspiring story of Harry Lauder is found in Gladys Malvern's *Valiant Minstrel* (Messner), which is the winner of the 1943 Julia Ellsworth Ford Foundation prize. One of America's most popular composers is the subject of David Ewens' *The Story of Gershwin* (Holt). In this book the career of George Gershwin, famed for his classical jazz music, is traced from Tin Pan Alley to Carnegie Hall. It is written with authority and sincerity, and music lovers will find it fascinating. In *Curtain Going Up* (Messner) Gladys Malvern gives older girls who like the stage a splendid biography of one of the first ladies of the present-day theater—Katherine Cornell. This book has a valuable foreword written by the actress herself in which she emphasizes the hard work which accompanies a theatrical career.

Men who have figured prominently in our country's history are favorite subjects for biography. This year we have *Henry Clay* (Farrar) by Barbara Mayo. This story of the life of the great statesman gives a rich and colorful picture of that period of American history

upon which the influence of the "Great Compromiser" was brought to bear. *Paul Revere, Patriot on Horseback* (Stokes) by France Beard and Alice Beard reflects the many sides to the life of the patriot. This very vivid portrayal shows him as silversmith, patriot, messenger, and member of the Boston Tea Party. The book is authoritative and will provide valuable information on the period of the American Revolution. A great American naval genius is the subject of Hildegarde Hawthorne's *Matthew Fontaine Maury, Trail Maker of the Sea* (Longmans). This very fine and well-balanced biography stresses this scientist's work to chart the seas and to establish a weather bureau. However, it is not easy reading for the early-teen level and will no doubt be most useful with older boys and girls.

Other biographies for this group are Jeannette Covert Nolan's sympathetic story of a beloved short story writer, *O. Henry* (Messner); Irmengarde Eberle's *Wide Fields* (Crowell), the life of a great scientist, Henri Fabre; and the biography of the inventor of wireless, *Marconi, Pioneer of Wireless* (Messner) by Douglas Coe.



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