

## A Sheaf of Picture Books

Reviewed by RACHEL FIELD



THE days of "A penny plain, tuppence colored" are over and done with, but it seems a pity that there are no more street criers to go about calling:—"Fine picture books, done in richest scarlets, indigos, and bright true greens, come buy my fine colored picture books!" Certainly no year could have provided more variety in subject matter, or type of illustration, than this season's. Nowhere, I think, does the improvement and growing high standard of book-making for young readers, show itself more than in this particular line. As recently as five years ago there would be perhaps three picture books for little children that stood out with distinction from the ordinary output of the cheaply crude, sentimental, or dully instructive type. Now there are no less than a dozen or so of outstanding excellence and beauty, while even the poorer products of this field today are far above the earlier average. Color printing is expensive in this country and because American publishers must print large editions in order to make a picture book pay, there is more chance of inaccurate reproduction, bad overlapping, or dulling of color plates. It is often depressing to see an exhibit of some illustrator's original pictures and to compare them with those appearing on the book page. But persistent struggle on the part of artists and those in charge of art and manufacturing departments, as well as genuine response from the buying public have performed wonders of late.

Of the animal books "Tigers and Things" (Macmillan: \$2) stands out as a particularly interesting and happy experiment. The pictures, and indeed the whole conception of the book, originated in the minds of Andy Kauffman and his little Sister Mary Barbara. Perhaps because they happen to be the children of a certain well known dramatic critic and his literary wife, or because, as Andy wrote to his publishers:—"Mary Barbara says this book is to teach three-year-olds all about animals, because of course we'd been to circuses and zoos and we'd studied animals a lot, so they were easy for us,"—they were able to carry out their picturesque character studies of animals so successfully. Certainly the book, reproduced as an exact duplicate of the notebook of gay and amazing beasts colored in by Andy's own lavish brush, has a vitality and infectiousness all its own. Here is a child's own first hand contribution, unspoiled, fortunately, by adult sentimentality or any attempt at exploitation. Equally spirited and vigorous, but in entirely different ways, are "The Runaway Sardine," by Emma L. Brock (Knopf: \$2.), and "A Monkey Tale," by Hamilton Williamson, illustrated by Berta and Elmer Hader (Doubleday, Doran, 75 cents). For the latter the Haders, already successful children's book artists, have contributed a number of simple, well-planned, and well-executed pictures of a small monkey's adventures in the jungle. The monkey himself has real personality and the color reproductions are remarkably fresh and effective for so inexpensive a book. Miss Brock's lively account, both in pictures and text, of the miraculous escape and doings of an independent sardine in a Breton fishing village, has already been hailed as the outstanding picture book of the year and a worthy successor to "Millions of Cats." It is certainly all that a little child's book should be, with a flavor and vigorous, rollicking humor too seldom found between bookcovers. More animals have been characterized in "Zoo Book," by Jimmy Garthwaite (Harper's: \$1.50), each portrait being done with regard for anatomy as well as an excellent sense of design. A short prose description accompanies the pictures, and the printing and general format of the book are excellent. "The Adventures of Tommy" (Stokes: \$2.) is more the story of a boy and a "very proud rich man," but there is an unusually nice elephant in it, too, and pictures as well as text have been made with considerable artistic skill and much relish by the none other than H. G. Wells himself. The Katie Kruse picture books, those realistically colored photographs of toys in

action illustrating simple nursery stories, I have always found particularly irritating, and this latest addition to the series, "The Perfect Zoo" (McKay: \$2.), is no exception although the text is better than usual since Eleanor Farjeon, the English poet and story writer, is responsible for it. I daresay I shall be told that children dote upon this sort of thing. It may be true, I do not attempt to deny it. I only continue to maintain that it is cheap and forced, both qualities which one would rather not hand over to children if one could help it.

Picture books with gaily patterned borders and quaint foreign designs have been increasingly popular abroad since the war, and their beautiful, colored pictures have been, I think, instrumental in raising our own standards of color printing. Honors in this special line should go to the Macmillan Company for two outstandingly attractive importations,—"A Forest Story" from Czechoslovakia and "Spin Top Spin," printed in Leipzig. They are as different from each other in style and subject matter as books can be, but they are equally captivating in their clear, sure colors and unspoiled naïveté. The former is brilliantly colored, primitive and peasant-like in its feeling, with scarlet toadstools and innumerable small, bright wood creatures moving through its pages. The other shows small children at play, plump little girls and boys in old-fashioned garments, executed in delicate pastel colors that never become wishy-washy or flat. They are pictures that would have cheered the heart of Kate Greenaway although they are in no way reminiscent of her own work. "Miki," by Maud and Miska Petersham (Doubleday, Doran: \$2), also belongs in this class and deserves special mention because the book was printed here in this country and not imported in pages as in the case of the others. The Petershams, already well loved for their other picture books, have made a gay and altogether delightful volume about the surprising things a small American boy did and saw when he returned to visit his grandparents in Budapest. Undoubtedly this is the ideal way to acquaint young readers with geography and racial differences. "The Magic Flutes" (Longmans: \$3.50) is also alive with color and action. Although it seems a little less successful than "The



Illustration from "Out of the Everywhere."

Forest Story" (both are similar in scheme and type of design) it is none the less gay and colorful, and should be in the children's room of every library.

"A Busy Day," written and illustrated by Beatrice Tobias (Dutton: \$2.), should be much better than it is. The simple verses and pictures illustrate the small doings of a child's day and while this is not an especial novelty in the world of children's books, still, there is always room for one more that does this from a fresh, new artistic angle. Here there is less originality displayed. The color plates, too, are disappointing. Outlines are often slipped and blurred and colors less clear than the artist evidently intended. And the children depicted are neither realistically drawn nor quaintly conventionalized.

"Green Pipes," by J. Paget-Fredericks (Macmillan: \$3.50), was another disappointment. It was unfortunate enough that the verses, supposedly meant to be such sympathetic excursions into the feelings and emotions of childhood, should be so evidently done to order and should sound like nothing so much as diluted De la Mare, but to have the full page pictures and decorations no better is deplorable. This is especially sad since the publishers have spared no pains on the make-up of the book. J. Paget-Fredericks is a self-conscious, mannered draughtsman with a gift for adopting certain special tricks of other and better artists. In "Green Pipes" his pictures show evidence of his having pored over Rackham, Beardsley, and Alastair far too assiduously. His children are outlined in flower-sprays; their hair is drawn with meticulous accuracy; if they are shown in canopied beds,

every ruffle is over-elaborated. Throughout there is never a hint of the freedom or naturalness of childhood. Seldom, it seems to me, has there been a more outstanding example of trumped-up ingenuousness.

From the same publishing house, however, comes decidedly more attractive metal in Peggy Bacon's "The Ballad of Tangle Street" (Macmillan: \$2.50). It is difficult not to begin writing many pages on the ballad itself, which seems to me like an American "John Gilpin" in its humor and contemporary recital of moods and manners of our time. As for the pictures, they are in Peggy Bacon's best and most genially-blighting manner,—than which those who know her work need hear no more. Those who do not know it should repair to the nearest bookshop and invest in "Tangle Street" ostensibly, perhaps, to present it to a child, but in reality to chuckle over it for weeks to come in restaurants, subway expresses, and other unlikely places, when some passing face reminds them of a humorous twist that this most pleasantly ruthless of American artists has given to just such another set of human features.

With the craze for antiques what it is at present, it is no wonder Dugald Stewart Walker felt he had found a treasure in the sampler wrought in 1790 by a little girl named Sally. Accordingly he has turned it into an alphabet picture book, making his own rather elaborate and intricate decorations for the words (such as W is for Whale, I is for Idler, Ice and Ink, etc.). "Sally's Alphabet" (Harcourt, Brace: \$3.) is an offshoot of the past, rather than one which follows the old samplers in actual stiffness and charm. Mr. Walker's work is reminiscent of Walter Crane and his school and in this case the subject matter fits his work better than has sometimes been the case. Children will undoubtedly like his book for its old-fashioned lace-paper Valentine quality; the delicate colors and lettering are beautifully reproduced. But taken as a whole I cannot help feeling it lacks spirit and spontaneity. After all one might almost say that the final test of a child's book, whether regarded from the point of view of pictures or text, should be,—Is it sincere, and simple and unselfconscious?

Wanda G'ag has followed in the steps of her own last year's success "Millions of Cats" with "The Funny Thing." This is a pleasant, simply written little tale of a fantastic animal who devoured dolls until this unfortunate appetite was curbed, and as usual Miss G'ag has written, illustrated, and even hand-lettered the entire book. Once more we have a humor and a curious, grotesque charm that are highly individual. There is excellent technique here. Miss G'ag knows how to draw and while to us personally the designing of some of the double-page pictures seemed over conscious and mannered at times, still there is certainly no one else who can touch her in her own particular line. The publishers (Coward-McCann) have made it uniform in format with its predecessor.

### Thrillers All

Reviewed by ROBERT L. ROE

IT is to be doubted whether Mr. Turnbull wrote his biography of Commodore Porter for juvenile consumption for it treats seriously of subjects not ordinarily calculated to win a boy's interest. Such, for instance, as Porter's fight against the bureaucratic, inefficient administration of a century ago, when he fought for long guns and speed as opposed to carronades and weighty ships, thus proving his farsightedness, since to have the range and ability to outmanoeuvre enemy ships is the cry of the naval man of to-day. Despite this seriousness, "Commodore David Porter" is a thrilling book. What boy's breath will not come fast to read of fights with picaroons, pirates, and Barbary corsairs, encounters with ships of the line of His Britannic Majesty's ships, and French frigates (in our unofficial war with France early in the nineteenth century), imprisonment in Tripoli, when the American first lieutenant who was taken off the ill-fated *Philadelphia* defied the Dey.

Porter learned much from pirates, through fighting against them. He used this knowledge to aid him when in the 32-gun

<sup>1</sup> COMMODORE DAVID PORTER. By ARCHIBALD DOUGLAS TURNBULL. New York: The Century Company. 1929. \$3.50

<sup>2</sup> THE SEA DEVIL'S FO'CS'LE. By LOWELL THOMAS. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1929. \$2.50.

<sup>3</sup> FROM SANDY HOOK TO 62. By CHARLES EDWARD RUSSELL. New York: The Century Company. 1929. \$3.50.

<sup>4</sup> THROUGH SEA AND SKY. By E. KEBLE CHATTERTON. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1929. \$1.75.

<sup>5</sup> THE INCOMPLETE MARINER. By LEONARD NASON. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1929. \$2.



Illustration from "A Buccaneer's Log," by C. M. Bennett.

Essex he raided the Pacific, destroying British shipping in the war of 1812 as Luckner raided the allied shipping a century later. He was a tactician, a scientist, a disciplinarian, and somewhat of a martinet, but it is as a dashing, intrepid officer (lieutenant at nineteen!) and an able commander that he wins our hearts, whether he be winning a battle over great odds against a picaroon in a Haitian bay or as an Admiral in the navy of the new Republic of Mexico, taking Spanish prizes from under the nose of the Spanish fleet. This is a picture not only of a man, but of an epoch when a naval captain was the monarch of a small state and not merely a marionette dancing to radio wires from Washington.

Whatever progress may have done for the world, it has certainly made individuality a rare and precious thing. Only when despatched on forlorn hopes, like Luckner in the World War, does it get a chance to assert itself, but that it is still with us is amply proven in Lowell Thomas's "The Sea Devil's Fo'cs'le," wherein he gives us that modern Porter in full-flavored, direct discourse, punctuated with explosive "By Joe's," which the Count uses to mean many things. This might have been called "From Castle to Forecastle," for the sea devil ran away from his father's castle to try the hard tack and hard usage of sailing ships. He makes the forecandle what it so rarely is in sea fiction, or sea fact, for that matter, a home, a place where men live who are members of an old honorable calling, although they are simple, childlike men, liking a good joke, a good drink, a good fight. . . . The Battle of Jutland is here described by Luckner as he saw it. Adventures in the South Seas and in our own country. Old sea legends retold. The humorous and sometimes pathetic stratagems he employed to feed the cadets on the training ship which was to supply officers for the new German navy after Scapa Flow. Through it all Luckner stands out reckless, genial, simple, whimsical. That is fine stuff, by Joe!

"From Sandy Hook to 62," is the record, not of one man but of many—the New York and New Jersey Pilot's Associations. It is a chronicle of their growth and of their internal and external competition to be first aboard a ship when pilot boats ranged as far east as the sixty-second meridian. Mr. Russell tells in vivid and sometimes sparkling journalese the service done by pilot boats as privateers during the war of 1812; the havoc wrought by the blizzard of 1888, when twelve pilot boats were wrecked, and relates some hitherto unrecorded sea tales to be added to a tradition of great-hearted service growing out of a commercial venture. The pilots are real knights of the sea.

The fiction treated here is a good deal less interesting than the fact. "Through Sea and Sky" is one of the those mystery stories based on the theft of the deadly Z-ray from the British Admiralty by a gang of international thieves called the Black Hand Rovers. Young Bob Crane and Wilmer Lorning help their friend Captain Harwood in the British super-flying boat *Gannet* set everything right, and win the thanks of the Lords of the Admiralty and a dinner from the Federation of Ship Owners. The story suffers from the inability of the crooks to do anything effectual.

Leonard Nason has titled his collection of three tales of the sea "The Incomplete Mariner." The first of the stories, the tale of a young man who put out in one of his father's ships wearing an unauthorized naval officer's uniform and thereupon had terrific adventures with U-boats and secret service men, is, to my thinking, far less interesting than either of the other two, "Hunger," the tale of a boy who signed on a hell ship, or "Narrow Waters," in which a shrewd yankee skipper in a windbag outwits the German and British navies and brings his cargo safely to port. Mr. Nason knows how to spin a yarn, and his stories have the ring of authenticity.

## Acclaimed by the Book Critics of BOYLAND

### Walt Henley, Skipper

By Alfred F. Loomis

Here is the latest tale of the exploits of this popular hero—a born "son of the sea." Mr. Loomis writes out of his own nautical experience.

Illustrated \$1.75

### Walt Henley, Overseas

By Alfred F. Loomis

Quartermaster Henley learns the real life of the seaman in war time.

Illustrated \$1.75

### Walt Henley, D. S. M.

By Alfred F. Loomis

The first of the series, with Walt breaking into the navy and winning fame on a submarine chaser.

Illustrated \$1.75



### Hungry Crawford, Legionnaire

By Captain Walter Karig

Captain Karig served in the Foreign Legion during the war and writes this exciting yarn out of his amazing experiences.

Illustrated \$1.75

### The Luck of The Blue Macaw

By

Kenneth Payson Kempton

Excitement galore in the fisheries off the Maine coast.

Illustrated \$1.75

### The King Of The Trail

by Emma Turner Blake

A thrilling story of the Alaskan trails.

Illustrated \$1.75

At Your Bookseller's

IVES WASHBURN, PUBLISHER  
119 West 57th Street, New York



## Stories of Foreign Lands

Reviewed by MARION C. DODD

IF the prevalence of a certain type of book indicates a corresponding bent of mind in group consciousness, shall we not then feel that the large number of what might be called nationality-books in this fall's children's list indicates a mood of especially lively interest in other nations and a desire to interpret them and their background to our children? (And is this then one of the few good results [if there can be any such] of the World War? . . .) Not that the book about the foreign child is in itself a new type—it is one of the oldest and most popular. But this autumn seems to have produced an especially good group wherein a description of the foreign land is successfully carried to the reader through a story or a character, with an excellent balance maintained between narrative and atmosphere. Surely this type of book when well done will always have a special value for the American child, whose country is so far in every sense from the traditions of the older world, and who is only too apt to catch any spirit of national self-sufficiency that may be (and alas so often is) abroad in our land. It seems certain that both his practical and his imaginative geography will be broader and more suggestive of distance realities for reading these books and others like them. So up with our many-colored standards—French, Polish, Russian, Norwegian, and all the rest; and let us look for all we can find of life and lore in far-away places.

Inconsistently I shall begin with a book which might be catalogued otherwise than with this group among which I rank it the most distinguished. Autobiography should perhaps be set in a different category. Yet this very interesting and satisfying work achieves so completely the ideal in question (the truthfulness of the narrative being only an added value) that I shall include it here. Youél Mirza's account of his childhood and boyhood in Persia is simple and dignified, too serious, perhaps, for children under twelve or thirteen, but full of charm and interest. The English is admirable—would that our native American writers could always reach the level of such a style. The scenes in the primitive family domicile and those among the Kurdistan rug sellers are perhaps the most unusual though every chapter has its own appeal. Youél takes his readers with him finally on his long, rough journey to the New World which has been calling him and of which we see first impressions through his eyes. He leaves us sure, however, that his heart has good reason always to be faithful to the more primitive scenes he first loved. The illustrations are not lavish in number but fully in the poetic spirit one senses in the author himself.

Slightest in size and for the youngest in age is the book I wish to mention next because it also (in spite of observing carefully the proper limitations for younger children) achieves almost perfectly a delightful combination of story with imaginative entertainment, and with a by-product of an informative background. (How satisfying when done, and how difficult, apparently, to do!) We are reading here in lighter vein, not to be compared with Youél's thoughtful Persian recollections, but Miss Coatsworth's poetic insight has led her to a vivid appreciation of this highly-colored Moroccan land, and enabled her also to add the pleasing lyrics in which Ahmed frequently comments with abandon upon his fortunes good and evil. The author's humorous touch adds a last element to make this a most satisfying little book, which this reviewer, having traveled recently in the neighborhood of that vivid atmosphere, was able thoroughly to enjoy and appreciate. The illustrations fling themselves delightfully into the spirit of the story, with much fantastic and suggestive detail.

Again in lighter vein but with no attempt at fantasy or a poetic background, are two books of the type called "stories for girls," one set in Paris and the other following a tour through South Africa. The former, "Chestnut Court," will be found worth while and pleasant—for boys as well as girls. It follows the daily life of a group of oddly assorted people who have become friends by reason of their shabby but affectionate propinquity in an old, lost

<sup>1</sup> MYSELF WHEN YOUNG. A Boy in Persia. By YOUËL B. MERZA. Illustrated by THEODORE NADEYEN. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1929. \$2.50.

<sup>2</sup> TOUTOU IN BONDAGE. By ELIZABETH COATSWORTH. Illustrated by THOMAS HANDFORTH. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1929. \$2.

<sup>3</sup> CHESTNUT COURT. By MABEL L. TYRRELL. Illustrated by MARIE A. LAWSON. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1929. \$2.

courtyard of Paris, where they all love the beauty of the great central chestnut tree and wait for the bettered fortunes which its protection is supposed to bring them. Of course it does all this and more. Readers will enjoy not only the mysteries of the plot and their solution but the fresh and lively style and the pleasant characterizations in old Paris.

The other book of the pair, "Sally in South Africa," is in much more conventional vein and a rather ordinary style. Its unusual South African setting and good travel descriptions, with the addition of an adequate though conventional mystery plot, would give it value if only it were written in English of more dignity or of some literary value. It is such a pity not to distinguish platitudes from crisp English, nor banalities from interesting situations. Here all is mixed, and the girl reader will have to discard much as valueless if she holds her standards high.

Step down a year or two in age from Sally and the lively French group, and travel far eastward to Russia and Siberia, and in "The Little Siberian" will be found a story which, though superficial, does create some successful pictures of these vast lands. The plot, to be sure, is based on the ancient lost-and-recovered-child theme, with the exchanged-child mystery added unto it; yet it has some elements of interest. It is a pity, therefore, that here again the language is not of higher grade and more simple. The melodramatic descriptions of the first few pages tend to repel the reader, and he knows also that children seldom exclaim "For God's sake," in dramatic appeal. However, if he persists, he will fare better further on, though not at any time so well as the subject deserves.

A Norwegian and a Hungarian book will fall next into a pair as far as method is concerned,—not, of course, as to the mental pictures formed in reading them. Both, although in story form, follow a child's experiences not within a superimposed plot but through a natural year of his life. Olaf,<sup>4</sup> the little Norwegian boy, in a book small in scope but well made and written, lives for us in a simple and straightforward account of his wintry visit at a Norwegian fishing-station, and Andrus<sup>5</sup> through a description of his life on a Hungarian farm. The author of the latter is a Hungarian and therefore able to give a series of authentic pictures of life on this farm, centering them about the two children of the squire-owner's coachman. Hungarian customs are the feature of the episodes—especially the festivals that mark off the various periods of the year on the farm and in school. The lively illustrations keep the picturesque backgrounds vividly before the reader, and an artistic and very decorative whole is evolved.

Poland and Finland, it seems safe to say, are hazy in the minds of most American children,—something extremely far north but otherwise rather unfamiliar. "Under Two Eagles" and "Vaino" will leave them with clearer impressions, as well as offering them two interesting stories to enjoy. An ingenious plan has been followed in "Vaino,"<sup>6</sup> the Finnish volume. A thread of narrative concerning little Vaino and his mother follows so closely the story of Finland in parts of the World War that it will be of real informative value to young readers who are apt to know little of the relationships of that remote country. At the same time the imaginative legends of Finland are introduced as Fru Lundberg, knitting before the great stove, tells stories to Vaino. These make a quite different contribution, with their atmosphere of ancient lore and adventure. The two parallel parts of the book may, as the author suggests, be read either separately or together, but the plan being cleverly managed, they form an interesting whole. The illustrations are not always up to the imaginative level suggested by the text.

Vasily, the little Polish hero of "Under

<sup>4</sup> SALLY IN SOUTH AFRICA. By GULIELMA DAY ORR and HENRIETTE SCHIELE. New York: The Century Co. 1929. \$1.75.

<sup>5</sup> THE LITTLE SIBERIAN. By L. A. CHARSKOYA. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1929. \$2.

<sup>6</sup> OLAF—LOFTEN FISHERMAN. By CONSTANCE WIEL SCHRAM. Translated by SIRI ANDREWS. Illustrated by MAJORIE BLACK. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1929. \$2.

<sup>7</sup> THE ADVENTURE OF ANDRUS. By ELIZABETH B. JACOB. Illustrated by KATA BENEDIK. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1929. \$2.

<sup>8</sup> VAINO. A Boy of New Finland. By JULIA DAVIS ADAMS. Illustrated by LEMPI OSTMAN. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1929. \$2.50.

(Continued on page 406)

### Walt Whitman

By HARRISON S. MORRIS

Intimate association with Whitman during the latter years of the poet's life, as well as long connection with the family of Anne Gilchrist, forms the basis of this new and authoritative life of Whitman. Mr. Morris has gathered material which shows a mature Whitman that most biographers have not been able to delineate; as a member of a younger group of writers, more conservative in tone, he evoked a side of Whitman's nature not touched by his other friends. His book is a distinct contribution to American literary history. \$1.50 a copy.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
PRESS

2 RANDALL HALL,  
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

*Keats*

All the  
Children's Books  
advertised in  
this issue  
may be secured  
promptly ~ at

**BRENTANO'S**  
Booksellers to the World

No. 1, West 47th Street  
Branch 5th Ave. at 27th

## LOW RUN TIDE AND LAVA ROCK

Two Novels in One Volume  
by ELLIOT PAUL  
Author of *Imperturbe*, etc.

"The best thing of its kind that has appeared since O'Neill's *Desire Under the Elms*... Mr. Paul has given us a valuable record of American life."—*Horace Gregory, N. Y. Herald Tribune.* \$2.50

HORACE LIVERIGHT NY  
GOOD BOOKS



## THE PUSSIOS AND THE PURR

By HELEN CAUTLEY

Rich milk flows from pearl-tinted trees, where soft, fluffy kittens prance about in quaint Pussioland. But the Pussios are unhappy for the neighboring Gwatkins have stolen their Purrr. Two small children help them recover it. Genuinely fine fantasy that cannot fail to entrance any child. Pictured by Mary Bonham. \$1.50

LOUIS CARRIER & CO Ltd.  
33 East 10th Street New York

