

The Window

NOVEMBER 13-19 this year marks the fourteenth annual Children's Book Week. This genial and now firmly entrenched custom of designating one November week in which to emphasize the various ramifications of youthful reading, began when boy's and girl's books were just graduating from a left-handed, step-child position into what is now generally and rather importantly recognized as The Field of Children's Books. There was need of crusaders in those days. The contemporary creators of such books were regarded with tolerant amusement. There was a tendency on the part of grown-ups to sniff at the insipidity of all books for children except those which were halloved in their own memories of youth. A small and enthusiastic group of believers inaugurated this children's book week to demand from an apathetic public proper attention. They have succeeded. This week schools, libraries, clubs, lectures, bookstores to be sure, and even the radio join in the annual celebration. The united drive furthermore has succeeded in raising the standard of the books themselves by its emphasis and guardianship of true artistry in all that goes into the making of a book. Today's child has a remarkably spirited and ever-growing library in which to move about. But now that children's books *per se* have rightly and well won to a bright place in the sun, they have also earned the privilege of being treated not as a unique sport, something strange or foreign to adult comprehension, but like any self-respecting book, to be damned or praised by the standards of criticism which apply to all printed expression of creative endeavor. It is the policy of *The Saturday Review* to look upon them in this fashion.

A Poet's Journey

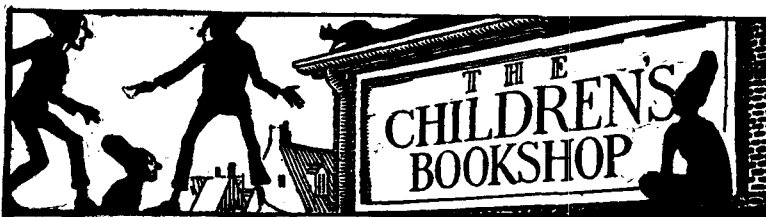
NICHOLAS AND THE GOLDEN GOOSE. By ANNE CARROLL MOORE. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1932. \$2.

Reviewed by DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER

IF the child for whom you are buying books this year is one of the "sensible" logical kind, who likes to know exactly what things mean and stops you for an explanation over every new word and new name, keep Miss Moore's fantastic, imaginative, rather disconnected second series of Nicholas's adventures from him. Don't even let him look at the bright colored modernistic frontispiece, made up of circles and dots and zig-zags with (apparently) a lighted city at night down at the bottom. It might well give him brain fever. But if your prospective reader is one of the dreamy, poetic, fairy-tale-loving little boys and girls, the kind who likes to drape himself over a chair and listen half-absently to somebody reading aloud a poem filled with words and ideas half of which he can't understand, but all of which give him a mysterious pleasure—"Nicholas and the Golden Goose" is the book for him.

Nicholas, the imaginary yet real Dutch boy of Miss Moore's first book, well remembered by children and their parents, goes in this second volume a-travelling—apparently wherever Miss Moore travelled in 1921, when the story (if you can call it a story) is laid. He goes to France where he naturally—(Miss Moore being one of our finest children's librarians) visits the Children's Library at Soissons and Vic-sur-Aisne. Also Paris and the French countryside and Mrs. Anne Dike and the war-devastated part of France and Belgium and Mlle. le Cartier and Coucy and Mme. Mouricaud and much more, some of it intelligible to a child, some of it just words and names, fascinating to your dreamy-eyed little poet, maddening to the child who wants a story to get on.

He goes to England, too, and—here is a chapter that will make even your hard-headed little realist sit up and give ear—visits in her home the Beatrix Potter who wrote the adorable and adored "Peter Rabbit." Also visits Walter de la Mare



Conducted by KATHERINE ULRICH

in his home, and fine old farms in the English countryside, and Alice Meynell and Hampstead Heath and Leslie Brooks and "goodness knows what-all!" your dreamy child will say, relishing the very lack of sequence of these adventures. And then Nicholas returns to America and there are more of these strange, dream-like, lifelike, disjointed trips in and out of books and reality.

The charmingly illustrated and well-printed volume has a flavor of its own, indescribable, like all flavors. A strongly marked flavor, too, sure to make some children turn away in bewilderment, sure to be unreasonably, delightedly savored and enjoyed by others.

The American Scene

THE PRAIRIE PIRATES. By EARL CHAPIN MAY. New York: Duffield & Green. 1932. \$2.

SWIFT RIVERS. By CORNELIA MEIGS. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1932. \$2.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER BOY. By EDWIN L. SABIN. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1932. \$2.

Reviewed by ROYAL J. DAVIS

A GRAPHIC picture of the perils of travel by road and river a hundred years ago in what is now the Middle West and of the general stress and strain of living under primitive conditions is presented in Mr. May's historical novel, "The Prairie Pirates." Intended for older boys, it will interest their sisters, too, not only by its thrilling adventures but also by its touch of romance. Prairie pirates were gamblers, counterfeiters, robbers, and murderers who took what they considered a short cut to wealth. Andrew Fowler, the hero of this story, encounters some of the stripe on his way from his native Maryland to Illinois, attracted westward by stirring tales of the Indians and by a blue-eyed lass who had passed through Maryland on her way to Galena. Reaching the land of his dreams, he meets a tall fellow named Lincoln, under whom he fights in the Black Hawk War, and has glimpses of the Millerite end-of-the-world delusion and of the Mormon troubles at Nauvoo. He becomes a leader of the Regulators and does his bit against the prairie pirates. As the book closes, we see him setting out with his wife for a still longer trek westward, for he joins the gold rush to California. There is action aplenty in these crowded pages, and there is also a display of the virtues of courage and public spirit.

In "Swift Rivers" the time is again a century ago, and the scene the Middle West, but not the rolling prairies. The story takes place on the Mississippi and a Minnesota tributary. Inspired by a chance conversation, Christian Dahlberg, a lad living with his grandfather on the Goose Wing River in the wilderness of northern Minnesota, cuts some of his trees and does the unprecedented by floating them in the spring flood down to St. Louis. It is an extra-hazardous undertaking, there being dangerous men as well as dangerous waters, and there is greater variety of possible mishap from both than one might imagine. A feud complicates matters somewhat, and a group of Indians threatens the success of the venture, but all difficulties are surmounted as only logging skill and indomitable spirit could overcome them. The details of these manifold operations, far from being wearisome, provide some of the most fascinating passages of the narrative.

Another story of the great river, "Mississippi River Boy," has the atmosphere of the South. Tony Lee, yielding to the

call of the stream which, flowing to the Ohio, joined the "Massassip" and at length got to New Orleans, finds himself on the *Nancy Jane* after a series of hair-breadth escapes from being caught by the hard-fisted foster-father who had found him, a tiny youngster, afloat on a hen-coop turned bottom side up in a shore eddy of the Ohio and, after a fashion, had raised him. The *Nancy Jane* was no steamboat—she was propelled by sweeps wielded by powerful oarsmen—but she was infinitely preferable to the dugout in which, following a treacherous attack upon her captain and crew by a robber gang, Tony was set adrift by an old woman. So his voyage went on from adventure to adventure until one night, asking for shelter at a cabin, a woman saw the locket which had always hung around his neck and so identified him as her long-lost son. Even this momentous event, however, did not end his exciting experiences on the Great River, of whose activities, in keel or steamboat, he became a part.

Spacious Picture Books

OLA. By INGRID and EDGAR PARIN d'AULAIRE. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1932. \$2.

DANIEL BOONE. Historic Adventures of an American Hunter among the Indians. Boston: Bookshop for Boys and Girls. 1932. \$3.50.

THE STORY OF NOAH. By CLIFFORD WEBB. New York: Frederick Warne & Company. 1932. \$1.75.

Reviewed by ANNE CARROLL MOORE

SPACE, light, and movement in harmony with a subject that lives in the artist's mind are the distinguishing characteristics of these three notable picture books.

Totally different in theme and in the technique by which each one is consistently developed, the effect on the mind of distinct refreshment, and on the memory of recapturing that mood at the turn of a page, is common to all three and it is this which sets the books apart from other picture books of the year and assures them a place among the cherished possessions of children for years to come.

"Ola" is not merely another picture book to look at. "Ola" is a living character, a new friend whose adventures in a strange country—Norway—are as convincing as a child's own dream of adventure. "Ola" has been created out of great love of childhood and great sensitiveness to the atmosphere of a country backed by sound knowledge and accurate observation of material forms. It is a book to delight a four year old child with its quality of intimate companionship and zest for adventure and it is also a background book for later reading of Norse literature.

In "Daniel Boone" we have a distinguished and intensely interesting picture book, brilliantly rendered in the mood and technique of today but dealing with early American history as seen and felt by a gifted European artist. "When as a boy (in Russia) Rojankovsky played Indian," says Esther Averill, one of the editors of this unique contribution to picture books, "he was not always chief; sometimes he was a buffalo, which is an important memory for a foreign artist who would give authentic poetry to the early American story."

Brilliant in their drawing, color, and pattern as are these lithographs for "Daniel Boone," and authentic as the reproductions appear on the generously spaced pages the book with English, as well as with the French text is printed in France), the pure magic of its appeal lies in a rare

quality of imagination, stored up in memory from boyhood. It is given artistic expression in forest and river scenes which, with all their gaiety and dramatic significance, hold also the beauty of shadows on snow, silver birch trees, sunlit spaces and the very life of the broad river down which the flatboat is coming.

This book, with its simple narrative text, may well point the way to more imaginative pictorial treatment of America. It should be carefully noted, however, that such books originate only in richly stored minds of imaginative power endowed with strong selective instinct for perfectly balanced composition.

Art lovers as well as children will want to add "Daniel Boone" to their treasures among books.

"The Story of Noah" plays with an old theme in a thoroughly delightful new way. The artist, Clifford Webb, has written the text in two parts, interspersed by line drawings of varying merit. Telling the familiar story with a wealth of domestic detail of his own devising, he carries it to the point of entering the Ark and then introduces a procession of animals, two by two, rendered in woodcuts of soft, harmonious colors. This beautiful and lifelike procession taking up page after page in the center of the book would make a delightful wall decoration for a child's room. One comes upon it in the book as a complete surprise.

In a lean year the three books, printed respectively in the United States, France, and England, are indicative of faith in the integrities of childhood interests and in the art of book-making.

A Young Novel

HEPATICA HAWKS. By RACHEL FIELD. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1932.

Reviewed by BERTHA E. MAHONY

A "YOUNG novel," some one has called Rachel Field's new book. In the best sense of the word, it is a novel, for the book is a prose narrative of real beauty with characters and action out of real life portrayed in a plot. It may properly be called a "young" novel because all the action of the story occurs in the year Hepatica Hawks, its heroine, is fifteen. It will be liked by young people and many older ones as well.

Hepatica Hawks was the big daughter of Hallelujah Hawks, the Giant in Joshua Pollock's World Famous Freaks and Fandangos—"You couldn't find a more decent first-class set of freaks anywhere," Joshua boasted on all occasions. "Nor a kinder set of people," Joshua Pollock might have added.

When the story opens all are interested in their celebration of Hepatica's birthday. Hepatica herself is moved by a cherry tree in blossom, the spring, and all the emotional experience of a sensitive girl of fifteen, who is living on the outskirts of normal life with a troupe in which she has grown up but where life is becoming impossible to her. She can't bear any longer to be a spectacle, and she longs for a friend who is not a freak.

She has her wish when Tony Quinn, a bright boy of about her own age but a rascal, joins the troupe. And when he leaves, his friendship has served only to remind Hepatica that there seems to be no place for her in the every-day world. Exciting things happen to the troupe. Hepatica continues to use her lovely singing voice behind the scenes to help Titania Tripp in her act. And that leads to a strange turn of the road where Hepatica finds after all a place in the world really big enough for her.

These are the bare outlines of a story which has a special delicacy and loveliness. A good story in itself, for grown-ups it might stand also as a symbol of those years when the spirit of youth—consciously or not—reaches out after beauty; is filled with yearnings; is troubled by imagined, if not real, oddity, and has little or no peace. "Hepatica Hawks" has no trace of a morbid quality, is free from sentimentality, and infused throughout with kindness, generosity, and humanity.

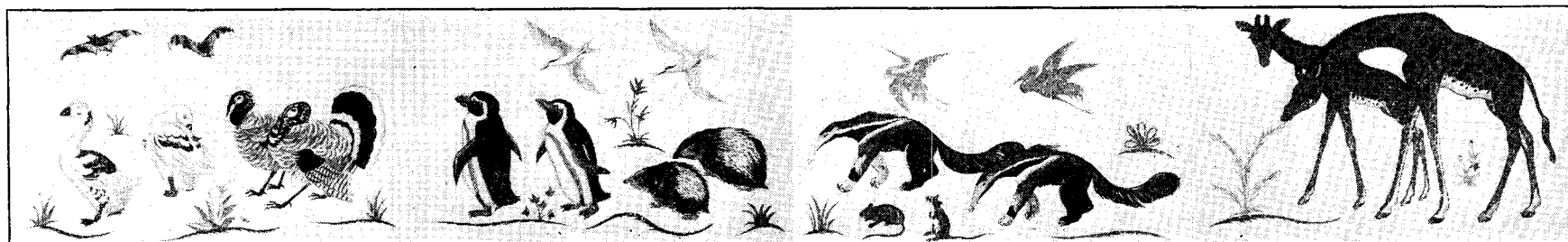


ILLUSTRATION FROM "THE STORY OF NOAH."

Overture to Man

By WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

CHILD with a wish,
Ever the child with a wish,—
Hands waving to grasp the light like a golden fish,
Fists beating its golden gong; diminutive fat
Hands that would clutch at Night like the fur of a velvet cat. . . .

Voracious infant desire
For all things bright, for fluttering ribbons of fire,
Sparkles of shattered glass—every surprise
That flashes before owlish unfocussed eyes,
Stared at, flapped at, greeted with vehement cries. . . .

Delight of the flesh,
Easeful delight of flesh,
Drunken delight in the fount flowing afresh,
Swollen affront at the insult of any pin
Minutely touching the skin. . . .

Power swelling the heart,
Exultant power
Flailing blankets and pillows, stopped in a stour
Of utter amazement over a fly on the wall,—
Power to creep, to crawl,
At last to stand—great magic!—to totter and fall
But stand again, after all. . . .

Faces and hands
Familiar grown with all their astounding demands,
Hands and faces that first descended from heaven
Enormous with doom on the early languid sweven
Now passing from rounded eyes and limbs that kick in their bands,—
Omnipotent faces and hands!

Huge cooing and grinning and winking
Masks that waxed and waned while the eyes were blinking,
Massive arms and terrible sweeps of motion
With the floor below like an ocean
Under the high precipitous cliff of dandling,—
Awful prolonged much-handling!

The wonder of words,
Syllables like the ruffling feathers of birds,
Brusque bubbles of sound lost in the infinite pool
Of language, of words rippling and cool
And words electric and hot,
And words that are not
One or the other, but out of some dream forgot
Summon enchantment. . . . Looming mouths that mull
Over such words in multitude gleaming or growing dull. . . .

Patterns of things,
Contours with legs and tails and beaks and wings
Striped or spotted, colored with this or that brightness;
Objects of heaviness, lightness,
Large and small, lumpy or round or square—
Stool and table and chair. . . .

Edens to name,
Taught by the Gods, till syllables sound the same,
And the din called laughter is less, and the consequent shame. . . .
Edens to explore
All through the jungle over the nursery floor,
Impeded by blocks and books, till a thunderclap
Of dire necessity lifts one to nurse's lap. . . .

Dark, and then lovely light;
Between the shutters of night
Dazzling, absorbing days,
Yet always somnolent haze
Over phase on phase
Of busiest idling, of extortionate seeing
Of the being not yet being. . . .

At last, a Spell
Coaxed from each fumbled and tumbled syllable,
Compelling the Gods on high
More surely than a cry
Or a fist that waves at a fly or a star in the sky—
Words that stammer in sequence, mortality's "I am I!"

Charming Light Verse

SYCAMORE SQUARE AND OTHER VERSES. By JAN STRUTHER. Illustrated by ERNEST H. SHEPARD. New York: Oxford University Press. 1932. \$1.25.

PUNCH, the English humorous weekly, has long been famous for its light verse. The names of Sir Owen Seaman, A. A. Milne, A. P. Herbert, and "Evoe" immediately occur to the mind. Since his earlier years on *Punch*, A. A. Milne has succeeded notably with his Christopher Robin, and now we greet another assiduous contributor to *Punch* of verse for children of all ages.

"Sycamore Square" is a collection of the work of Jan Struther, whose illustrator has been the Ernest Shepard so well-known in connection with the verses of Mr. Milne, and long ere that in his own right. Struther and Shepard together have made a wholly charming book out of their former *Punch* contributions. One unique feature, quite up to the minute in telephonics, is the section called "Dialling

Tones," an excellent idea for verse. In London, it seems, you dial the first three letters of the exchange, rather than an exchange number and two letters, as now with us. But the poet takes into consideration the whole exchange-name, for the things it suggests to him; and names like "Frobisher," "Gulliver," "Shepherd's Bush" are full of poetic suggestion.

In the first section, dealing with "Sycamore Square" itself, we are told of the milk ponies, the cats, the pigeons, the children's cycling club, the pavement artist, the street musicians with their barrel-organ. And of course there's the muffin man, too, and the flower woman, and the bobby. The third section of the book contains graceful miscellaneous verses. Children will like the first section best; the third may prove too adult for them. In between, certain of the "Dialling Tones" may please them. But Ernest H. Shepard's pictures should charm them throughout. As for us older people, we welcome the new combination of Struther and Shepard to the world of polite letters. It is a fortunate alliance.

Struwelpeter Lives

By PHILIP HOFER

THE Spencer Collection of the New York Public Library has recently acquired a very remarkable book with which many readers of the *Saturday Review* are doubtless familiar—only probably few, if any, have ever seen it in its original state: the excessively rare first edition! Here it is entitled, "Lustige Geschichten und Drollige Bilder—für Kinder von 3-6 Jahren" instead of "Struwelpeter" or "Slovenly Peter," as we know it so well today, the direct, unblushing ancestor of the comic strips in the Sunday newspapers. It marked a new era in the writing of children's books.

What did Dr. Heinrich Hoffmann, the author and illustrator, a busy general practitioner living near Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany, find on the bookstore shelves one Christmas time in 1844, when he went to buy a book for his son, three years old? Only long moral tales about good little children filled with admonitions and platitudes! This is what children of that day had to read.

He was disgusted and refused to buy any of them. In this attitude of mind he sat down with a blank book, the day before Christmas, 1844, and gave his imagination full play. He did not write about insipid good children, but about most vital and wicked young sinners. "Cruel Frederick," who not only

*Killed the birds and broke the chairs
And threw the kitten down the stairs"*

but also

*Caught the flies, poor little things,
And one by one tore off their wings.*

He wrote and drew the story of the "Inky Boys." Can anyone who has ever seen it, forget the almost naked little negro with his ridiculous pink under-drawers, and his green sun-shade over his head, marching down the street pursued by the jeering Kasper, Ludwig, and Wilhelm? Then "Great Nicholas," the "Bogey Man," if ever there was one, came with his huge inkwell, sending shivers down the reader's back, and dipped each young bully in turn.

The effect upon the three-year-old boy was just what his father expected, but the Doctor was amazed when his own "grown up" friends demanded that he have the manuscript printed and published. He withstood them for a while, but shortly before the following Christmas he gave in, and a first edition of some 1,500 copies appeared on public sale.

It is one of these copies, in its original binding, uncut and undamaged, but obviously a little rubbed and worn, in which the Library takes such pride. A sober, almost shabby book, really—but one of the only four known complete copies left in the world today. The rest of that edition—and probably over ninety percent of the more than five hundred subsequent editions have been simply thumbed out of existence by child readers!

There is the proof of its real greatness which any thoughtful person will admit. The first edition of "Alice in Wonderland" whose reputation, deservedly, is so very great in the English-speaking world, is by no means so rare; because, I contend it is not appreciated to its full by children, but rather by their parents.

The success of "Struwelpeter," with its naïve but strangely direct pictures, was immediate and extraordinary. It is estimated that several million copies, with various covers, and rather more sophisticated copies of the first illustrations, have been issued, in a dozen countries, and even more languages. Is it not extraordinary, then, that Dr. Hoffmann did not capitalize further his success and write other children's books? But he did not. Indeed, ten years were to pass before even another German produced a worthy successor: Wilhelm Busch's "Max und Moritz."

But the revolution had been wrought, and year after year, more natural, normal stories for children appeared in every country.

There is to be a remarkable comprehensive exhibition of children's books, this coming March (1933), at the New York Public Library with the collaboration of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Somehow I believe the visitor will be able to find this simple little quarto amongst its many more brilliant neighbors there. It will stand out. Certainly those who had the book as children, will gather there, and wonder why they never thought to preserve the copy they read—so many years ago!



WILHELM BUSCH.

An Old Friend

MAX AND MORITZ. By WILHELM BUSCH. Translated by CHRISTOPHER MORLEY. Illustrated by JAY. New York: William Morrow & Co. 1932. \$1.75.

Reviewed by HENDRICK VAN LOON

THIS is not a review. It is a Question, but before the House that Literature built. And the question, reduced to the irreducible minimum, reads as follows: "Can It Be Done?"

I myself feel that it cannot be done, but it is difficult for me to say so. I would not for the life of me hurt the feelings of the excellent Jay for, all things considered, she has done an honest and true piece of work. But she tried to do the impossible. Or rather, the publisher probably talked her into trying to do the impossible. And Chris Morley, in a moment of weakness, allowed himself to be persuaded that the boys and girls of today needed pictures that should be more understandable to them than the originals of Wilhelm the Blessed.

Of course, people not brought up according to the Gospel of the Great Sage Wiedensahl will hardly know where to speak. The pictures are very nice and the text is as faithfully done as the pictures. Why these violent shudders at something that is merely a part of our modern ideal of progress? Why rebel against the inevitable? *Tempora mutantur* and so do our illustrations and more words to that effect. Very well, if you want the answer, I will give it to you.

Busch has gone to his ultimate reward. He is spending his happy days smoking interminable self-rolled cigarettes and drawing funny pictures for the little angels on the backs of old envelopes. But Busch was more than a mere illustrator. He was a writer of extraordinary ability and a philosopher for whom I would gladly swap the assembled faculties of all our assembled schools of Philosophy. He was all those things in one. *Incredible ergo verum*. When I get to Heaven I shall feel deeply flattered and honored if once in a while I may be allowed to sharpen one of the old gentleman's pencils.

No, this is no rhetorical exaggeration, writ with a becoming blush of modesty. It is a plain statement of fact. Just as I feel firmly convinced that once in a while he will give me one of his originals and that he will address me as Lieber Kollege. For we both belong to the extremely small guild of those who think simultaneously in words and in lines. And the members of the Guild know that their pictures and their text belong together. That they are an integral part of each other and that mutilation of the one means mutilation of the whole, and their request to posterity is, "Translate our text into every tongue of the Tower of Babel but do not try to translate what is already writ in the universal language of lines, for the moment you try to do this you disfigure us beyond the hope of recovery and better be dead and decently buried than maimed for life."

I hate to say this for I have a very sincere admiration for the work of Jay. The blame lies entirely with the publishers. They should have asked her to decorate a Sistine Chapel of her own. When they persuaded her to modify Michelangelo's paintings so as to make them "a little more familiar to the American public," they committed what was not so much an act of sacrilege as an act of bad taste.