

Eastern Illinois University

The Keep

Plan B Papers

Student Theses & Publications

8-1-1960

Children's Literature in the Primary Grades

Ruby I. Bethard

Follow this and additional works at: https://thekeep.eiu.edu/plan_b

Recommended Citation

Bethard, Ruby I., "Children's Literature in the Primary Grades" (1960). *Plan B Papers*. 162.
https://thekeep.eiu.edu/plan_b/162

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Theses & Publications at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Plan B Papers by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN
THE PRIMARY GRADES

By
Ruby I. Bethard

Expanded From A Term Paper
Written For Education 470
Dr. Edwards

August, 1960

PREFACE

Children's books should be selected with great care. It is in books that children find a world they can understand. In today's world of speed and confusion, children need to find reassurance and gain confidence. Movies and television offer more excitement for today's children than any generation has ever encountered before, but good literature is the balance wheel in this age of jet propulsion.

Children haven't changed. Books haven't changed either, in what they can do for us. There are more books for children than ever before, many more. New books are being published every day on all subjects, from snakes to "sputniks."

This paper does not tell the complete story of literature. It does not pretend to tell about all the books that are of interest and are available to children. It does contain information about some of the best-liked books of all time, some of the new books of recent times - books which small children will enjoy.

THE LAND OF STORY-BOOKS

At evening when the lamp is lit,
Around the fire my parents sit;
They sit at home and talk and sing,
And do not play at anything.

Now, with my little gun I crawl
All in the dark along the wall,
And follow round the forest track
Away behind the sofa back.

There, in the night, where none can spy,
All in my hunter's camp I lie,
And play at books that I have read
Till it is time to go to bed.

These are the hills, these are the woods,
These are my starry solitudes;
And there the river by whose brink
The roaring lions come to drink.

I see the others far away
As if in firelit camp they lay,
And I, like to an Indian scout,
Around their party prowled about.

So, when my nurse comes in for me,
Home I return across the sea,
And go to bed with backward looks
At my dear land of Story-Books.

Robert Louis Stevenson

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
	PREFACE	iii
CHAPTER		
I	PURPOSE OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE	1
II	CHILDREN'S INTERESTS IN GOOD LITERATURE	4
III	WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN BOOKS	8
	Physical Make-up of Book	
	Illustrations	
	Authenticity	
IV	PROSE OLD AND NEW	11
	The Classics	
	New Books	
V	MAGIC IN RHYME AND RHYTHM	15
VI	BOOKS FOR A CHILD'S OWN LIBRARY	20
	Picture Books	
	Picture Dictionaries	
	Folk and Fairy Tales	
	Animal Stories	
	Fact Books	
	Poems	
	Magazines	
VII	CONCLUSION	30
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	32

CHAPTER I

THE PURPOSE OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

What is children's literature? Literature about children is not necessarily literature for children. Literature which is written for children is enriched with their experiences, both emotional and intellectual. It is literature that children can understand, interpret, enjoy, and appreciate.

The author who writes for children relates experiences which are of interest and significance to young readers. He records these experiences from a child's viewpoint. To do so gives assurance that the book, story, or poem will be literature for children.¹

Books are no substitute for living, but they can add immeasurably to its richness. When life is absorbing, books can enhance our sense of its significance. When life is difficult, they can give us momentary release from trouble or a new insight into our problems, or provide the rest and refreshment we need. Books have always been a source of information, comfort, and pleasure for people who know how to use them. This is as true for children as for adults. Indeed, it is particularly true for children.²

What is it, then, that books can do for children? Books seem to transport children to other worlds, other places, other people, other times.

¹Barbara E. Weekes, Literature and the Child (New York: Silver, Burdett Company, 1935), pp. 4-5.

²May Hill Arbuthnot, Children and Books (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1957), p. 2.

Creating a permanent interest in, and proper tastes for, a wide variety of good literary material, is a worthwhile goal. We, as teachers and adults, can guide children into the reading of the best there is in literature for them. In time, most children will learn to choose good books.

Is there a more profitable way to spend leisure time? Reading gives children as well as adults, things to think about when sitting quietly, traveling, having time on their hands.

In her book, Proof of the Pudding: What Children Read, Phyllis Fenner says that books stretch children's imaginations. The old folk tales with trolls and giants are loved by children. The magic in the marvels of modern inventions stretches children's understanding and curiosity.

Furthermore, she says that books teach children tolerance - tolerance for other kinds of people, other customs, other ideas. Children like to read about other children with problems, too. It is good to know that other people have problems. It helps us in ours. Parents and teachers find that they can bring to children through books the results of thoughtlessness, unfairness and cruelty.³

It appears that few children fail to enjoy the beautiful words found in books. The words in stories expand a child's speaking vocabulary, teach him new meanings in reading.

Moreover, through listening and reading, children can acquire a vast store of knowledge in history, geography, facts of science, and many

³ Phyllis Fenner, The Proof of the Pudding: What Children Read (New York: The John Day Company, 1957), pp. 7-22.

other things. The desire to explore these fields is often quite evident in small children.

May Hill Arbuthnot says that some children are more readily lured into reading by informational books than by fiction. It is now possible to find sound, well-written books to meet or inspire almost any scientific hobby a child may develop.

The young child, she says, explores whatever is at hand - caterpillars, turtles, tree toads, starfish, mice, garter snakes, and frogs.⁴

It is quite apparent, then, that stories about nature, the animals about us, or those of the forest, all have a definite place in children's literature.

Literature for young children is valuable, we note, in that it enriches their experiences, fosters an interest in good literature, aids in character building, develops vocabulary, and provides recreation. Then, adult readers, with an interest in children, should make an honest effort to bring children and books together.

⁴ May Hill Arbuthnot, Children and Books (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1957), pp. 551-553.

CHAPTER II

CHILDREN'S INTERESTS IN GOOD LITERATURE

From the beginning of time it has been the universal custom of mothers to sing lullabies to their children. This is a natural manifestation of mother love which reassures and quiets the baby and soon sends him to the land of "Wynken, Blyken, and Nod."

...In this earliest period, while it may appear that he is merely soothed and quieted, yet there is an underlying influence. This is the very first step in teaching the child the love of books and reading.⁵

The very first books for a little child should contain pictures of his own small world. A picture-book of familiar objects introduces the tiny tot to the land of story books. There are many animal picture-books available for a child's first adventures in reading. Lined picture-books lend themselves readily to little children's first reading efforts.

Picture-books are then replaced by books with simple stories. These books are for the listening pleasure of the tiny tot. They are shared with mother, father, brother, or sister. "Read me a story" and "read it again" soon become familiar sounds to our ears. Children seem to never tire of hearing good stories. Neither should the adult grow tired of reading them.

For reading aloud to children not only introduces them to good books before they are able to read them, but it also encourages children

⁵ Clarence Wesley Sumner, The Birthright of Babyhood (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1936), pp. 29-30.

to be good listeners. Good taste in literature may arise from this experience.

Reading interests change as the child's experience grows and as his imagination develops, says Terman and Lima.

The chief interests of children before five are in jingles and nursery rhymes. Mother Goose jingles are favorites.

Besides the jingles, simple fairy tales and little nature stories are enjoyed. The child of four and five sees life in everything that surrounds him. He talks to his Teddy Bear and wonders if the moon ever goes to sleep. He enjoys the nature stories that contain talking animals. He likes "The Three Little Pigs" and "The Story of the Three Bears."

We see in children, then, before five years of age, an interest in jingles, in picture books, in simple fairy tales, and in the talking-beast type of nature and animal story.⁶

Children of six and seven still enjoy Mother Goose rhymes and picture books, but they also have a new interest in nature stories. Thornton Burgess's Mother West Wind tales appeal to children at this age.

"The child's book at this age must be short, profusely illustrated, and rather fanciful."⁷

"Most children of six and seven are not yet reading any too well, and what they do read is simple in content and style. Much of their literature is presented to them orally by the grown-ups."⁸

⁶ Lewis M. Terman and Margaret Lima, Children's Reading (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1926), pp. 31-33.

⁷ Ibid., p. 34.

⁸ Arbuthnot, op. cit., p. 597.

Peter Rabbit, Timothy Turtle, Little Black Sambo, and Benjamin Bunny have a universal appeal to six and seven year olds.

At eight years, children show greater interest in fairy tales. The fairy stories of Andersen and Grimm, and the Oz books usually fascinate eight year olds.

"At eight, too, begins the interest in stories of real life. Child life in other lands, and stories of children in general, have great appeal. Realistic animal and nature stories are now read."⁹

The parent or teacher who has a comprehensive knowledge of children's literature is still confronted with the task of encouraging children to read good books, and the accomplishment of this task sometimes requires tremendous patience and ingenuity. Teachers make use of many devices to motivate the children to read. Book displays, use of the bulletin board, book sharing, dramatization, and storytelling are some of the methods used to interest children in good books.¹⁰

Children's interest in good reading may be stimulated through the use of a free-reading table. Classrooms can profitably use a reading table on which can be displayed new books, children's magazines, and other reading materials.

The bulletin board can be used as another means of stimulating interest in literature. Book cover displays constitute good material for advertising literature to children.

⁹Terman and Lima, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

¹⁰Porter Adams, About Books and Children (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1953), pp. 205-206.

Children often enjoy telling others about new stories, books, and poems they have read. Reading experiences are more fun when they are shared with others.

Dramatization gives a child the opportunity to act out a favorite story. A cane, spectacles, a dress-up hat, or a purse may be enough to make the child feel the part he plays. Perhaps he is only Grandfather Rabbit on the way to the woods to ask Mr. Groundhog to help choose a name for the new baby. Dramatization of stories bring them to life.

A period devoted to the presentation of stories and poems by the teacher may inspire an interest in literature. Enjoyment of a story, which he has heard, is often incentive enough to lead a child to read that same story.

"I do not know a keener joy for a child who loves books, than to be allowed to select some of them for himself," says May Lamberton Becker.¹¹

Children often receive books as gifts from time to time. "There are no lovelier gifts for a child than good books. They add to the richness and fullness of life and instill the one thing that neither wealth nor effort can buy - the habit of reading."¹²

¹¹May Lamberton Becker, First Adventures in Reading: Introducing Children To Books (New York: Fredrick A. Stokes Company, 1936), p. 216.

¹²Sumner, op. cit., p. 46.

CHAPTER III

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

The text, pictures, and general quality of books for little children should be of the best.

Little folks like to look at the same books over and over again, which is another reason for choosing books that will wear not only physically but artistically as well. A book, to be good enough for children, must have qualities that make it acceptable to an intelligent adult.¹³

It is plausible that the physical make-up of a book influences a child in his choice of books to read. This is true of the size of the book as well.

"There is a size in picture-books that I describe as 'two laps wide.' That is the shape that opens out widely enough to permit the pages to spread across one little person and one older one who is doing the actual reading."¹⁴

In general, then, the book should be large, yet small enough to be handled by the child. A book which is about seven or eight inches long, approximately five inches wide, and an inch thick is a nice size for a small child to hold. Very small books do not lend themselves to large pictures and large print so often found in books for primary children.

Blanche Weekes says that the print in children's books should stand

¹³Annis Duff, "Bequest of Wings," The Family's Pleasure with Books (New York: The Viking Press, 1946), p. 25.

¹⁴Becker, op. cit., p. 26.

out clearly. Good black ink against dull white paper is the most desirable combination because it produces the clearest impression. Whatever is selected should assist and not interfere with the acquiring of reading skill, and must reduce eye strain and fatigue to a minimum. Letters should be simple in pattern, free from design and ornamentation.¹⁵

The cover or jacket of a book seems to have some significance in children's choice of books. As first to catch the eye they can prove factors of attention and interest when they are designed in attractive form.

"No book should be bought for its physical appearance alone; the content is the important thing, but a book which is satisfying both in appearance and content is likely to become a book of first choice."¹⁶

Children's books are filled with beautiful illustrations. Some are done in bright colors and others in pastels. May Hill Arbuthnot tells us that some illustrations are so effective that they sometimes sell a poor book, while an unattractive format may consign a fine book to retirement on the shelves of bookstores and libraries.¹⁷

Then, is it not important that these illustrations be authentic and accurate?

The length of time required to read a book is another factor to consider when choosing children's books. Most young children seem to prefer a book that can be read in a comparatively short time. Small

¹⁵Weekes, op. cit., pp. 36-37.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁷Arbuthnot, op. cit., p. 27.

children lose interest in books that require several sittings to complete the story. It seems reasonable to believe that children should come to the end of a book with a desire to re-read it. Size, as well as story content, then is a factor influencing children's choice in books. Titles influence choice, also.

The content of a book is far more significant than the form. It is wise to be on guard against the book that is pleasing in appearance but lacking in other qualities.

Then, momentous is the task of determining whether or not books are good. In judging their value, it might be helpful to ask these questions about the books.

Who is the author? What else has he written? What are his qualifications? What is the subject of the book? Is it written within a child's comprehension? Who publishes the book? Is it a reliable publishing firm?

It seems evident, then, that a good book should not only have beauty and charm, interest, and readability, but integrity and authenticity as well.

existence and our first reason for using them.¹⁹

From old folk tales we learn a great deal about people. We know their superstitions and beliefs, their fears and loves, their ways of living and the environment in which they lived.

Furthermore, fairy tales teach a lesson. The greedy one, the cruel one, the lazy one, are always in the wrong.

Another point of interest in folk tales is their similarity in form as well as in the plot. There is the rule of three - for instance, three little pigs, the three bears, three sisters, three goats. The hero performs three deeds.

Little will be said here about the fables. Since the fables are written in terms of abstract ideas with an attempt to teach a moral, they are of little interest to small children. Only a few fables, such as, The Lion and the Mouse, The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse, and The Hare and the Tortoise should be included in young children's literature. The fable is enjoyed more by children ten, eleven, and twelve years of age.

The distinction between the old folk tale and the modern fairy tale is of no importance to the child. Magic is magic to him whether he finds it in Grimm, Andersen, or Dr. Seuss. . . . The elements in the folk tales which make them particularly appealing to children are the same ones which make fanciful tales attractive. In fact, interesting story patterns, style, and characterizations are elements essential to any good story for children.²⁰

Hans Christian Andersen is counted as the originator of the modern fairy tale. Andersen not only retold the old folk tales but he also created original patterns of his own.

¹⁹Arbuthnot, op. cit., p. 264.

²⁰Ibid., p. 306.

However, Andersen's tales, such as "The Snow Queen," are more suitable for ten and eleven year olds rather than for younger children.

"Because of the double meanings, the adult themes, and the sadness of many of these stories, the whole collection is usually not popular with children."²¹

Helen Bannerman's Little Black Sambo is closely akin to folklore stories. It has a theme, a plot, and proper style. The text of the story and the pictures are concurrent.

Millions of Cats, written by Wanda Gag, is another modern tale in folk-tale style. The illustrations, alone, tell a simple story so well that even a three year old can understand. Adults who read the story aloud and show the pictures enjoy it quite as much as the children.

However, on the whole, few stories are being written in folk-tale style today.

Beatrix Potter's The Tale of Peter Rabbit, is a classic favorite of every young child. Peter's adventures can soon be "read" by even the pre-school child. The charm of the humorous and exciting plot never grows stale.

Another book which appeals to many children today is Kenneth Graname's The Wind in the Willows. The warm friendliness of the animals brings this book close to the hearts of young children. This is a book to be read aloud -- to be shared.

Marjorie Flack's Ask Mr. Bear is the nursery-school and kindergarten favorite. Her little books have a clearly defined plot and delightful

²¹Ibid., p. 313.

humor. Wait for William is the story of a small boy's struggle to get his shoelaces tied.

Marjorie Flack's books are picture-stories in the best sense of the word.

Nursery classics in everything except age, the Angus books are favorites of the child of four or five.

Carlo Lorenzini's The Adventures of Pinocchio, with a puppet for a hero, is certainly on a child's level. This is the children's own story, their images in wood, full of good resolutions, but given to mischief.

Stories in which boats, trains, engines, and even steam shovels seem to come alive are quite popular with today's children. Each machine becomes a personality with obstacles to overcome. Virginia Burton has written such stories as Choo Choo, Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel, The Little House, and Katy and the Big Snow. Who Built the Bridge? by Norman Tate is a favorite of small boys.

Children's literature owes much to Lois Lenski, the author of The Little Auto, The Little Fire Engine, The Little Airplane, and others.

I have given only a sampling of the books available in children's literature. Among the modern books for children we find not only poetry, fiction, and biography, but factual books to encourage children in their hobbies. There are good reference books, from children's dictionaries, and encyclopedias, to books on birds, reptiles, airplanes, boats, and the like. Whatever the child's needs may be there are books to meet them.

CHAPTER V

MAGIC IN RHYME AND RHYTHM

What is poetry? Who knows?
Not the rose, but the scent of the rose;
Not the sky, but the light of the sky;
Not the fly, but the gleam of the fly;
Not the sea, but the sound of the sea;
Not myself, but something that makes me
See, hear, and feel something that prose
cannot; What is it? Who knows?²²

Eleanor Farjean

"Poetry is beat and rhythm and dance. It does not walk. It runs, skips, soars, flies," said Stephen Vincent Benet, one of our American poets.²³

Poetry is the oldest form of literature that we have. It is the magic of rhyme that makes poetry easier to remember than prose. That is why, since earliest times, much wisdom was stored in rhyming syllables. People learned to say them when they wanted to recall how many days there were in each month, or weather signs, or homely proverbs, or bits of folklore, or merely counting-out rhymes.

It is easy to understand why one of the most essential elements of good poetry is its melody and movement. For the most part, the lyrical quality of the poetry children like is even more lively than poetry for

²²Duff, op. cit., p. 80.

²³Fenner, op. cit., p. 172.

adults. "In children's poetry there is no blank verse and very little free verse," says May Hill Arbuthnot.²⁴

Most poems use choice words that describe with accurate perfection. Words that stir the imagination, that speak to the senses, that incite laughter and deep feeling -- all of these are a part of good poetry.

Needless to say, children's literature would be far from complete if the teaching of poetry was neglected. Most children's poetry tells of the experiences and emotions of children. Children need poetry as a part of their everyday lives. Poetry makes us aware of the beauty of the commonplace. To read a poem is to step into a realm of wonder. "The musical rhythm of words tunes the listening ear, unlocks the heart, and frees the imagination."²⁵

Nevertheless, not all children love poetry as a matter of course. Most of them learn to love it through hearing it. Like music, poetry is meant to be heard. Children need to be led into the enjoyment of poetry through the pleasure of listening. Select the right time and the right place -- a time when the listeners are relaxed, a place where the listeners are comfortable.

Can any better time or place be found than in baby's nursery? No nursery is complete without a good Mother Goose. Long before the tiny tot's hands are strong enough to hold a volume of any size, or his eyes ready to focus on pictures, the routine of bathing and dressing is enliven-

²⁴ Arbuthnot, op. cit., p. 188.

²⁵ Grace Thompson Hufford and Laura Mae Carlisle, My Poetry Book: An Anthology of Modern Verse for Boys and Girls (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1934), p. iv.

ed by rhymes, chanted, said, or sung. No other verses that have been written are as ideal for young children as the Mother Goose rhymes. They are a perfect basis on which to build an appreciation of poetry. The rhymes appeal to the child's love of rhythm. The rhythm is easy, natural, and gay. Children can run or march or skip to the measures, and that is part of the fun.

Characters in the Mother Goose rhymes are interesting and likeable. They behave as real people, and they do things that the child can understand. True, they often do highly fanciful things, but those actions are closely related to real life experiences, and possess the imaginative qualities of the child's own world of "let's pretend."

For very little children, there are short poems about everything and anything to catch a child's spontaneous attention. "My Shadow" is a poem for children, especially the five and six year olds. To little children belong "The Cow" and "The Hayloft," relating to simple pictures of farm life.

Robert Louis Stevenson has written some pleasing and delightful poems about things common to the everyday life of a child such as "The Swing." Then there is "Wind" written from a child's own viewpoint in simple, language and form. In fact, a copy of his poems should be on every child's bookshelf.

Robert Louis Stevenson's A Child's Garden of Verses abound in happy memories. He dared to express the joy that he felt was the rightful heritage of every child. To him, writing for children was fun.

"Rose Fyleman's poetry is poetry for children."²⁶ The verses have

²⁶Weekes, op. cit., p. 178.

a child-like imaginative quality. They are written from a child's point of view. She wrote a number of fairy poems which are quite suitable for elementary school children. Her poetry, if chosen for children in terms of their interest and expressions, will be enjoyed by them from nursery school age up to and beyond even sixth grade.

Another of the poets who has contributed much to literature for children is A. A. Milne. In Now We Are Six and When We Were Very Young, he has woven his poetry about a single child -- his games and play, his likes and his dislikes.

Rachel Field is an American writer who has made a contribution to the field of children's literature. Her poems are easy to read and easy to follow if one is the listener, and not the reader. Rachel Field's poetry is filled with childish imagination. She writes of the very things which tend to capture a child's interests.

"Hiding", the most popular verse written by Dorothy Aldis, is a favorite of six and seven year olds. It reflects a parent-child relationship which is the dream of every child. Mrs. Aldis, in her poems, writes of the modern child's play, full of surprise endings and humor.

Before leaving the field of children's verse, there is still another phase of poetry that should be explored. Choral speaking, though comparatively new in our schools, is old in the history of literature.

"The objectives of choral speaking in the elementary schools are the enjoyment of poetry and the development of the children, rather than a polished, finished performance."²⁷

²⁷Arbuthnot, op. cit., p. 209.

If children are going to speak poems in groups they must develop a feeling for the rhythm of the poetry for it is the rhythm that is an essential part of choric speaking. Children must first have experiences in responding to the rhythm in poetry with body movements before they can do a good job of speaking rhythmically.

In kindergarten and the first and second grades, preparation for choral speaking is begun. Children of this age group should not be drilled to the extent that choral reading really requires. They can say simple poetry, as in Mother Goose, keeping their voices soft and light as in singing. Practicing the rhythm -- skipping and marching to poetry -- is good choral practice. They may gallop to "Ride a Cock Horse," rock to "Hush-a-bye, Baby," skip to "Hey, Diddle, Diddle," and "To Market, To Market," or walk to "Hot Cross Buns" and "The Old Woman in the Shoe."

Hearing a great variety of poems from nonsense verse to lyrics, developing a sense of rhythm, entering into the saying of these verses individually and in a group, keeping the poetry light, crisp, and clear in sound, the children will have as much of a foundation for choral speaking as you should expect at the five and six year old levels.

CHAPTER VI

BOOKS FOR A CHILD'S OWN LIBRARY

A child who can go back to a book again and again makes that book a part of his life. This is only possible when we have our very own books. There is nothing like having some books that we can claim as our very own. If a child owns even a few good books, he is sure to think of them as his friends. And if a child has had a chance to share in the selection and purchase of these books, his delight will be even greater.

Certain books seem essential to every home library. Others will vary according to the tastes and interests of the family.

Many good book lists are available. In compiling this suggested book list, the writer has selected books from several sources. One of these sources is a catalog of Best Books for Children, compiled in the offices of Library Journal/Junior Libraries, by Mary C. Turner, 1960 edition. This catalog is available at the State Library, Springfield, Illinois. Also, it can be purchased for a fee of two dollars from R. R. Bawker Company, 62 West 45th Street, New York 22, New York.

Other sources used for selecting reading materials for children were:

A Parents' Guide to Children's Reading. Nancy Larrick. 1958. Doubleday. \$2.95.

Children and Books. May Hill Arbuthnot. 1957. Scott, Foresman. \$7.35; Text Edition \$5.50. This book includes over 200,000 words of

actual excerpts from the books mentioned in the text.

The Proof of the Pudding: What Children Read. Phyllis Fenner. 1957.
John Day. \$4.50.

First Adventures in Reading. May Lamberton Becker. Revised Edition.
1947. Lippincott. \$2.50.

Even though many good book lists are available, we should keep in mind that even when age levels for books are indicated, children of the same age differ materially in tastes, interests, and reading ability. Any grading of books according to age can only be tentative. Every child and his reading must be considered as an individual case.

Blanche E. Weekes says that before the age of five, children are interested in jingles, in picture books, in simple fairy tales, and in the talking beast type of nature and animal story. At six and seven, children like little books about the wind, birds, animals, trees, and flowers. They also like fairy tales, myths, and legends if these are short. At eight years, the fairy story is in its full glory.²⁸

The first book likely to arouse a child's interest is the picture-book for it expresses an idea in a way which he can understand. Such a book should have little, if any, text.

The fairy tales and nursery rhymes formed the content of the early picture-books for young children. The illustrator often creates the informational picture-book. There are picture-books of travel, transportation, animals in a zoo, domestic animals; picture books about food, clothing, shelter; occupations.

²⁸Weekes, op. cit., p. 19.

Probably the first book in every child's collection is a book of Mother Goose rhymes. Their lilting rhythm, their musical end rhyme, and repetitive phrases, appeal to children long before they show any interest in the content. If for no other reason these old verses then belong to little children.

Book of Nursery and Mother Goose Rhymes (pre-school). Illustrated by Marguerite de Angeli. 1954. Doubleday. \$5.00. A big, illustrated collection of 376 rhymes, including some of the unfamiliar ones. Indexed by title and first line.

Johnny Crow's Garden (pre-school). Illustrated by Leslie Brooke. Warne. \$2.50. Favorite nonsense rhymes, illustrated with eight full-page drawings in color and thirty-nine black and white pictures.

ABC Bunny by Wanda Gag (pre-school). Coward-McCann. \$3.00. Simple ABC book giving a continuing story of a rabbit's adventures.

Wanda Gag's ABC Bunny can be used to introduce children to dictionary arrangement. Children are amused and fascinated by the alphabet books, learn their alphabet, and often enjoy making alphabet books of their own. These activities give them a start toward understanding the dictionary's alphabetical arrangement.

Even three and four year olds enjoy the simplest picture dictionaries. They turn the pages, see a familiar picture with a label, and feel they are reading.

More advanced picture dictionaries also include one or two sentences giving the meaning of each word.

The Golden Dictionary by Ellen Wales Walpole. Simon and Schuster, 630 Fifth Avenue, New York, uses more than 1,500 colored pictures with simple sentences to show the meaning of more than 1,000 words.

Such a dictionary is useful to children in the primary grades. If the child is just beginning to read, the picture will help identify a new word. Also, he will begin to understand the A-to-Z arrangement of words and learn to use it.

By the time children are in the third and fourth grade, many of them are beginning to use a school dictionary.

Fairy tales include along with the literature of pixies, elves, and so on, all stories that have an element of magic, of enchantment.

Children reach the peak of interest in fairy tales when they are around seven, eight, and nine years old. There are some stories, of course, that younger children ask for again and again, like "The Three Little Pigs" and "The Little Red Hen."

May Hill Arbuthnot believes that "Cinderella," "Hansel and Gretel," and "East o' the Sun" are far better for children of eight or nine than five or six.²⁹

Few fairy tales are really "easy reading," and many can hardly be successfully read aloud until after the first or second grade.

Tall Book of Fairy Tales (K-4). Illustrated by William Sharp. 1947. Harper. \$1.95. Sixteen old favorites, with full color pictures on almost every page.

Great-Grandfather in the Honey Tree (2-4). Samuel F. Swayne. Illustrated by author and Zoa Swayne. 1949. Viking. \$2.25. Tallest of all tall tales: what happened when Great-Grandfather went hunting for wild fowl on the banks of the Wabash.

²⁹ Arbuthnot, op. cit., p. 264.

Goose.

My Poetry Book (6-14). Grace T. Hufford, and others, eds. Winston. 1956. A collection of some five hundred poems.

The Golden Treasury of Poetry. Selected and with a commentary by Louis Untermeyer. Golden Press, New York. 1959. \$4.95. Beautifully illustrated volume containing more than four hundred carefully selected poems, beginning with the simplest verses, then progressing through twelve categories.

Read-Aloud Poems. Marjorie Barrows. Rand McNally and Company, Chicago. 1957.

A Child's Garden of Verses (4-10). Robert Louis Stevenson. There are many editions of this classic.

When We Were Very Young and Now We Are Six. A. A. Milne. Dutton. 1924 and 1927.

Magazines, too, are a part of children's literature. Every child should have one or two good magazines of his own. I would like to mention some that are published especially for children.

Child Life (4-8). William S. Hawks, Publisher, 30 Federal Street, Boston, Massachusetts. Monthly except July and August. \$3.00 per year. Stories, verses, riddles, games.

Children's Activities (6-10). Child Training Association, Inc., 1111 S. Wabash, Chicago 5, Illinois. Ten issues. \$4.00 per year. Stories, recipes, science, puzzles, cut-outs.

Highlights for Children (2-12). 968 Main Street, Honesdale, Pennsylvania. Monthly except June and August. \$5.00 per year. Stories, science, puzzles, poetry.

Humpty Dumpty's Magazine (3-7). Parent's Institute, 80 Newbridge Road, Bergenfield, New Jersey. Monthly except June and August. \$3.50 per year. Digest size. Things to do, stories to read to children, stories for beginners to read, puzzles, games, and so forth.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In this paper some of the facets of children's literature have been explored.

Some of the principal aims in writing literature for primary children were examined. Ways of introducing children to the "land of the storybooks" were explored. The significance of good literature for children was discussed.

The role of the adult in guiding children into good reading was considered. The parents usually provide children with their first experience in literature.

Physical make-up and content of children's books were also discussed. Both are especially important to children in the primary grades.

The need for old fairy and folk tales, as well as the modern books on science and nature was evident. A wide variety of reading materials interest small children and give them a greater desire to read.

Poetry and its role in children's literature was explored. Poetry, from Mother Goose to modern day verse, has a significant place in the young reader's library.

The names of some of the children's classics as well as names of modern books can be found in Chapter VI. A brief description of the content, the name of the author, the publisher, age level for which the book was written, and the cost of the book, have been listed as a guide for selecting children's books.

This paper is not the complete story of children's literature. It has only opened the door to further research and study for those who are interested in good reading for children.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, Bess P. About Books and Children. New York: Henry Holt Company, 1954.
- Arbuthnot, May Hill. Children and Books. Chicago: Scott, Foresman Company, 1957.
- Arbuthnot, May Hill. "Books for Boys and Girls," Sunday Tribune (Chicago), Part 4, Section 2 (November 15, 1953), 4.
- Barrows, Marjorie (ed.). Read-Aloud Poems. Chicago: Rand McNally Company, 1957.
- Becker, May L. First Adventures in Reading: Introducing Children to Books. New York: Fredrick A. Stokes Company, 1936.
- Becker, May L. Adventures in Reading. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1956.
- Cavannah, Frances (ed.). Family Reading Festival: Stories and Poems to Read Together. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1958.
- Childcraft. Chicago: Field Enterprises, Inc., Volume II, 71-82.
- Duff, Annis. "Longer Flight": A Family Grows up with Books. New York: The Viking Press, 1955.
- Duff, Annis. "Bequest of Wings": The Family's Pleasure with Books. New York: The Viking Press, 1944.
- Eaton, Anne Thaxter. Treasure for Taking. New York: The Viking Press, 1946.
- Eaton, Anne Thaxter. Reading with Children. New York: The Viking Press, 1943.
- Fenner, Phyllis. The Proof of the Pudding: What Children Read. New York: The John Day Company, 1957.
- Ferris, Helen (ed.). Favorite Poems Old and New. Garden City: Doubleday Company, 1957.
- Gardner, Evelyn and Ramsey, Eloise. A Handbook of Children's Literature. Chicago: Scott, Foresman Company, 1927.
- Gunderson, Agnes G. "What Seven Year Olds Like in Books," Elementary English. (March, 1953), XXX, 163-166.

- Huffard, Grace T., and Carlisle, Laura M. (eds.). My Poetry Book. Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1956.
- Larrick, Nancy. A Parents' Guide to Children's Reading. Garden City: Doubleday Company, 1958.
- McKee, Paul. Reading and Literature in the Elementary School. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948.
- Setty, Vivian. "Choosing Children's Books," Grade Teacher. (February, 1948), LXV, 24ff.
- Snider, John D. I Love Books. Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald, 1944.
- Sumner, Clarence. The Birthright of Babyhood. New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1936.
- Terman, Lewis, and Lima, Margaret. Children's Reading. New York: D. Appleton Company, 1926.
- Turner, Mary C. (ed.). A Catalog of 3300 of the Best Books for Children. New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1960 edition.
- Untermeyer, Louis (ed.). The Golden Treasury of Poetry. New York: Golden Press, Inc., 1959.
- Weekes, Blanche E. Literature and the Child. New York: Silver, Burdett Company, 1935.
- World Book Encyclopedia. Chicago: Field Enterprises, Inc., X, 4509.