

Do You Know What Your Children Read?

WHAT thought do we ever give the children in the public library other than to observe, "What a cute little room! Bless their dear little hearts!" as we peek into the nursery-like juvenile department; or perhaps to smother a desire to spank them when they noisily invade the grown-up precincts?

To be sure, every now and again some thoughtful editor publishes a list of "Books a Boy Would Like." A list probably beginning with Victor Hugo, Scott, and Dickens, Charles Reade, Washington Irving, Kingsley, Halevy, Shakespeare, and Charles Lamb. It includes something of Drummond, Ruskin, Emerson, Maeterlinck, Stevenson, Wordsworth, and Longfellow, Rider Haggard and George Ebers, Tennyson and Lew Wallace; Homer, Vergil, Dante, and Goethe in good English translations; Oliver Goldsmith and Conan Doyle. Mark Twain, O. Henry, Hawthorne, and Poe are there, too, along with Barrie, Jack London, and John Fiske. Something on creative chemistry and the world's food resources, with perhaps Well's "Outline of History" complete the list. Its author (in this case I quote Frank Crane) explains that "it does not pretend to be anything else than books a boy will read, books that will make him a lover of books, and books that will do him no harm. They will not give him an 'education' nor make him religious, nor in any way supply the need for other serious study. Just books that I, now over fifty, would want were I eleven."

So may the lads now eleven agree when they, too, are become thoughtful, gray, and fifty.

But in the meantime what ARE they choosing from the open shelves of the public libraries? What are they reading at the rate of two or three books a week till you wonder they have time for any constructive, original thought or work or play?

They Like "Story Books"

IN MOST cities one needs only to be a resident nine years old or over to become a card-holder or "member" of the public library, and each card-holder is entitled to borrow two books at a time; one fiction or "story book" as the youngsters call it, and one non-fiction book. Non-fiction being everything else—art, music, literature, myths or fairy tales, poetry, religion, science, history, biography, travel, sports.

Now a parent in the children's department is a rarity. Usually even the smallest children choose their books unaided, for children are much less dependent on the librarian than the average grown-up. They consult with each other. The leader of the gang doubtless has more influence on the other boys' choice of reading than parent, teacher and librarian combined.

Nine youngsters out of every ten will first try to take two "story books." Failing that (for the librarian is usually alert enough to detect them even in the busiest hours), somewhat bored by such rules, they will turn to the non-fiction shelves. Just how enthusiastically these are read is another matter. They are seldom sticky and worn.

A hasty glance through this section will suffice to show you what is most read here. The smaller Americans and the little foreigners of all sizes, especially the Chinese and Japanese, are very fond of fairy tales. The foreigners take biography and history, which most young native Americans overlook. Books on aircraft, electricity, any kind of engineering, inventions, carpentry, and, most of all, wireless, appeal to the American lad. Girls are not very fond of handicraft books, though such books as "How Boys and Girls Make Money" have wide circulation. Works on music, art, literature and poetry seldom move save for occasional school work. Ernest Seton-Thompson, C. G. D. Roberts, and Maeterlinck enjoy a limited popularity, but as a rule children prefer their natural history in story form with the animal doing the talking. Titles such as, "The Book of Battles," "Pirate Explorations," "Daring Deeds in the Dark Forest" always attract the boy. Translations of the Odyssey and the Iliad are fairly popular, for Ulysses or "Useless," as the boys are prone to call him, is a "pretty good guy." Camping, recreation and sports are eagerly read.

Travel Books in Demand

TRAVEL books the wee folk like best are "Peeps at Many Lands," "Our Little Foreign Cousins," and the "Twins" series. The older boys especially like Paul du Chaillu and Thomas Knox' travel works, while their history is preferably American and French. But they like their "larnin'" best in story form. "Too much facts" is a frequent youthful criticism.

The youngest children adore stories of Brownies and of Pinocchio the Marionette. The children's librarian in the San Francisco library calls the Baum stories of the land of "Oz" the most universally popular fiction in the library. Says she: "The Mammals and Daddies frankly enjoy them with the small tots, who scramble to get them; the older boys sheepishly slip out with them, while the girls quite shamelessly read them." Animal stories of the Thornton Burgess type (Bailey, Paine, Trick, and Potter write similarly) are close seconds in popularity. If you are not acquainted with these tales, a few titles will tell you much: "Adventures of Grandfather Frog," "Jimmy Skunk," "Poor Mrs. Quack," "Prickly Porky," "Tale of Cuffy Bear," "Solomon Owl," "Jemima Puddleduck." These are always "out" in circulation, seldom ever reaching the shelves, for as one child returns one, another stands waiting to take it. "Heidi," "Cornelli," and the half dozen others of Frau Johanna Spyri are great favorites of the small folk, as are Sophie May's "Dotty Dimple" and Amy Brooks' "Dorothy Dainty" series.

One librarian in discussing girls' books said: "On the whole the girls are better off than the boys, for they have their own stuff and the boys' books, too." Of course, no boy would deign to read a girl's book! Only

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occasionally, as in the case of Augusta Howell Seaman's mystery stories, are the boys "taken in." "Slipper Point Mystery," "Three Sides of Paradise Green," "Boarded Up House" and "The Sapphire Signet" are always in demand, for the most oft-repeated request is for "something exciting, please." Still a boy can't seem to help an expression of disgust and mortification when he finds he's actually enjoyed a story written by a woman for girls!

A bit of romance is wild adventure for the girls. They're never too young for a love affair. A fairly brief list will acquaint you with the girls at school, and in the social whirl, who are the favorite heroines of today. Of course "Little Men" and "Little Women" (Alcott) are still beloved. "The Little Colonel" (Johnston) and "Patty" (Wells) are probably the two most popular girls in juvenile fiction. "The Five Little Peppers" (Sidney) and "Pollyana" (Porter) fill a place of their very own. "Isabel Carlton" (Ashmun), "Sylvia Arden" (Piper) and "Betty Wales" (Warde) each star in a series of high school and college stories. "Co-ed Stories" (Lee) are similar. Other books and authors quite as popular are: "Loyal Blue and Royal Scarlet," "Beth Stories" (Taggart); "Marion's Vacation," "Nora's Twin Sister" (Rhoades); "Responsibilities of Buddy," "Janet at Odds" (Ray); "Glenlock Girls" (Remick); "Another Flock of Girls" (Perry); "From Sioux to Susan," "Gentle Indifference of Bab" (Daulton); "Anne of Avonlea" (Montgomery). "Campfire Girls of Brightwood" (Blanchard) and "Mrs. Manning's Wards," "A Popular Girl" (Baldwin) are English stories well liked.

Given good illustrations and a boy for a hero—say a boy with a dog and a gun off to war or a gold rush; in search of buried treasure or on a marvelous engineering feat; winning fame in the athletic world or at college (Annapolis and West Point preferred); given also the appealing title, and you simply couldn't stop the popularity of that book with the boys. Glance through this list of war stories, the great World War being most interesting just now: "On Secret Service" (Gillon); "Tommy of the Tanks," "Knights of the Air" (Lynn); "Fix Bay'nets" (Fenn); "Forest of Swords," "Hosts of the Air" (Altsheiler); "In the Trenches" (Botsford); "Winning His Wings" (Westerman); "Sergeant Ted Cole, Marine," "Scouting with General Pershing" (Tomlinson); "Wonder of the War" series (Rolt-Wheeler).

Children's Tastes Differ

HENTY? Yes, indeed, his stories of nearly every land and its wars are read enthusiastically. Here, though, is a specific instance of the difference in literary tastes of boys in different sections of the same city—which makes us wonder just how the boys of the East or South differ from these far western lads of whom I speak. At San Francisco's main library, located on the edge of the down-town business section, the Henty books are exceedingly popular. At a large branch library in a pleasant residence section, they seldom move from the shelves. Why? Who knows, when

Australia Torn by Cash Gift to Premier

SHOULD the head of a government accept a reward of value from the citizens he serves, or from any group of them?

The question is raging in Australia, just as it raged in England some years ago over the famous Turnerelli wreath. William Morris Hughes, premier of the Commonwealth, has accepted a check for \$125,000 for distinguished patriotic services during the war period. No one questions that he performed the services. The question is whether as prime minister he should accept a public subscription.

Mr. Hughes entered politics a poor man and has remained one. Like all Australia's prime ministers Mr. Hughes has never attempted to make use of his office to secure advantages which could be construed as personal benefits; he has used it in the accepted way for party political advantage. The real point is whether a man will or will not be deflected unconsciously from his public duty by the remembrance of substantial monetary favors.

This question is of particular importance in Australia where the government's administration affects every trivial interest. Mr. Hughes, when he accepted the gift, confessed his poverty and recalled that years ago, before he entered politics, he was forced to sleep several successive nights in a public park. It is a fact, also, that most of Australia's leaders have left office impoverished, and none has asked or cared what happened to them afterward.

Years ago an attempt was made to raise a public subscription to Sir Henry Parkes, premier of New South Wales, at once one of the most powerful and one of the very poorest financially of Australia's public men. He declined the gift, saying there would be inevitably the imputation that he might not forget, in his legislation, the men who had been good to him.

No one ever has been quite sure what motives decided Lord Beaconsfield in refusing the Turnerelli wreath. Edward Tracy Turnerelli, a sculptor's son and himself a sculptor, as well as a writer of topical verse and pamphlets, was a student of foreign affairs, and especially of Russia, where he spent much time. He opposed the Crimean War, as did John Bright. And he won attention by his steadfast pre-

so small a thing as shelf location may be accountable? Top shelves the least bit high, bottom shelves the least bit low, and about all the attention the books there get is dusting. The tiniest, limberest child will not stoop way down.

Boy adventure stories cover so wide a range of subject there seems little left unwritten. The love for "Treasure Island" (Stevenson) and Jules Verne's tales never wanes.

"Schultz lived with the Indians and his stories are true," a lad will inconsistently explain when borrowing "The Great Apache Forest," "The Gold Cache" or "On the War Path." Just another example of "facts" cunningly presented as "fiction."

Gold rush and western stories are numerous. These are some the boys most approve: "Buffalo Bill and the Overland Trail," "Gold Seekers of 49," "Bar B Boys," "Cowpunchers"; "Lost With Lt. Pike" (Sabin); "Ross Grant" series, as a tenderfoot, on the trail, in a miner's camp (Garland); "Buried Treasure" (McNeil); "Young Alaskan" series (Hough); "Connie Morgan" in the lumber camps and with "the mounted" (Hendryx); "The Steam Shovel Man" of the Panama Canal (Paine).

"Blackbeard's Island" (Holland) and "Billy Top-sail & Co." (Duncan) are of sea adventures. "Jack Heaton," oil prospector and wireless operator, (Collins); "Boy Electricians" series (Houston); "Camp Brady Wireless Boys" and "The Hidden Aerial" (Theiss) inspire every boy to own an outfit. "Boys of the Otter Patrol" (LeBreton) is the kind of Boy Scout story that attracts.

You can't preach much, either; the boys will ignore you. Yet Trowbridge in his many war and adventure stories offers a mild form of preaching so well sugar-coated that they swallow it whole. See "Doing His Best," "Drummer Boy," "Fast Friends."

Youthful newgatherers, too, are splendid heroes; for instance, "Mark Tidd, Editor" (Kelland); "The Cub Reporter" (Wooley); "Under Orders" (Monroe).

This group of authors has written a little of everything, all popular: Monroe—"Dory Mates," of fishing; "Fur Seal's Tooth," Alaskan; "Cab and Caboose," railroading; "Derrick Sterling," mining.

Otis—"Raising the Pearl," ship stories; "Aeroplane of Silver Fox Farm," series; "Minute Boys," historical series; "The Lifesavers," of the U. S. Life Saving Service.

Stoddard—"Chumley's Post," of the Pawnee trail; "Lost Gold of the Montezumas"; "The Farm that Jack Built." This last one is surprisingly popular with the little city boys.

Last, but by no means least on my list of what boys DO read, come the stories of school life and sports. There's "Ice Boat Number One," "Freshman Dorn, Pitcher" (Quirk); "Winning His Y," "Fullback Foster" (Barbour); "The Half-Miler" (Dudley); "Catcher Craig," "Pitcher Pollock," "Second Base Sloan" (Christy Mathewson). "T. Haviland Hicks" (Elderdice) as a freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior spends four thrilling years at college. "Army Boy Series" (Capt. Kilbourne) are West Point stories, so popular they're often stolen. "Roger Paulding" and "Ralph Osborne" (Commander Beach) are Annapolis lads winning their way to official rank. "U. S. Midshipman" series (Com. Sterling) are the same type. How the boys do esteem the author with the military or naval title!

diction that Kronstadt was impregnable, a prediction amply verified later.

He conceived the idea that the Conservative workmen of Britain should subscribe each a penny (two cents) to present Lord Beaconsfield with a gold laurel wreath. It was to be "The People's Tribute" and was in particular recognition of Disraeli's work at the Berlin Congress.

Fully 52,000 workmen subscribed their pennies for the wreath, each leaf of which Turnerelli estimated would cost \$25. The wreath still exists and is on view in England. Each leaf is of gold, and under each one is inscribed the name of a town where a committee collected the pennies. The "tie" bears the inscription "Tracy Turnerelli, chairman."

The wreath became the subject of hundreds of jests and lampoons, London amusing itself highly with the subject. Suddenly, the workmen having subscribed their pennies, the wreath being completed, and exhibited for some time, Beaconsfield announced he would not accept the gift, and poor Turnerelli was left with the wreath on his hands, and unable, of course, to return the pennies of the subscribers.

Turnerelli himself took the matter much to heart. He explained the refusal by saying that a "high legal functionary" had warned Beaconsfield that the wreath was a typical "Imperial diadem" which could only be loyally offered to a sovereign. The adviser added that the promoter of such a presentation would have been consigned in previous reigns to the Tower.

However that may be, the fact remains that Disraeli did not repudiate the gift, although its preparation was given wide publicity from the start, until it was too late for Turnerelli to do anything but sell the wreath or bestow it, as a curio. His remonstrance seems a little tardy.

In his will Turnerelli wrote: "I leave the gold laurel wreath to the nation, provided my generous friends, the Conservatives, will help me to cover the hundred and fifty pounds or thereabouts I have personally expended upon it."

The discouraged sculptor designed his own tombstone, which is surmounted by an imitation in stone of the famous rejected wreath. He died in Leamington, England, in 1896, in his eighty-fifth year.