

**MODERN SHORT
STORIES: A BOOK
FOR HIGH SCHOOLS**

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Modern Short Stories: A Book for High Schools by Frederick Houk Law

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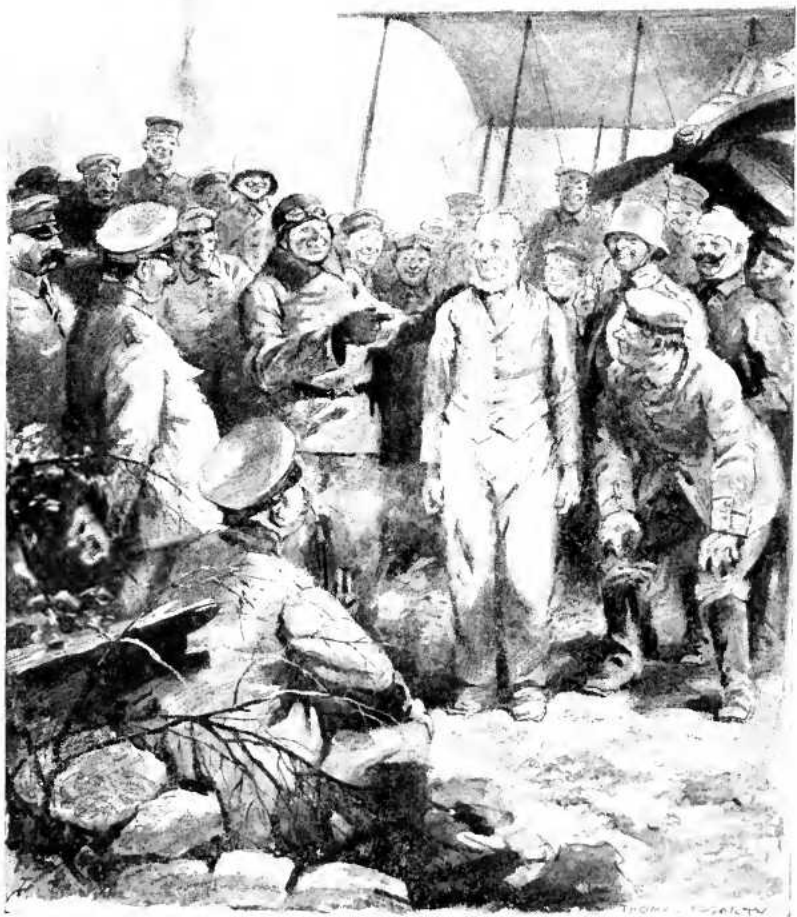
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FREDERICK HOUK LAW

**MODERN SHORT
STORIES: A BOOK
FOR HIGH SCHOOLS**

THEY ALL STOOD ROUND AND LAUGHED AT HIM



They all stood round and laughed at him

MODERN SHORT STORIES

A BOOK FOR HIGH SCHOOLS

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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PREFACE

For many years high school teachers have wished for books of short stories edited for high school use. They have known that most novels, however interesting, are too long to hold attention, and that too few novels can be read to give proper appreciation of form in narration. The essay, as seen in *The Sir Roger de Coverley Papers*, and in Irving's *Sketch Book*, has been a poor substitute for the short story. High school students have longed for action, for quickness, for life, for climax, for something new and modern. Instead, they have had hundreds of pages, long expositions, descriptions, leisurely treatment, and material drawn from the past. They have read such material because they must, and have turned, for relief, to short stories in the cheaper magazines.

The short story is to-day our most common literary product. It is read by everyone. Not every boy or girl will read novels after leaving school, but every boy or girl is certain to read short stories. It is important in the high school to guide taste and appreciation in short story reading, so that the reading of days when school life is over will be healthful and upbuilding. This important duty has been recognized in all the most recent suggestions for high school reading. The short story is just beginning to take its important place in the high school course. To make use of a book of short stories in high school work is to fall in line with the most modern developments in the teaching of literature in the high school.

Most collections of short stories that have been prepared, for school use, up to the present, are more or less alike in

drawing much of their material from the past. Authors and content alike are dead. Here is a collection that is entirely modern. The authors represented are among the leading authors of the day, the stories are principally stories of present-day life, the themes are themes of present-day thought. The students who read this book will be more awake to the present, and will be better citizens of to-day.

The great number of stories presented has given opportunity to illustrate different types of short story writing. What could not be done by the class study of many novels may be accomplished by the study of the different stories in this book. The student will gain a knowledge of types, of ways of construction, of style, that he could not gain otherwise except by long-continued study. Class study of the short story leads inevitably to keen appreciation of artistic effects in fiction.

The introductory material, biographies, explanations, and notes, have been made purely for high school students, in order to help those who may have read comparatively little, so that,—instead of being turned aside forever by a dry-as-dust treatment,—they may wish to proceed further in their study.

It is always pure delight to teach the short story to high school classes, but it is even more delightful when the material is especially fitted for high school work. This book, we hope, will aid both teachers and pupils to come upon many happy hours in the class room.

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	iii
INTRODUCTION	
I Our National Reading	vii
II The Definition	vii
III The Family Tree of the Short Story	ix
IV A Good Story	xi
V What Shall I Do with This Book?	xiii
VI Where to Find Some Good Short Stories	xv
VII Some Interesting Short Stories	xvi
VIII What to Read about the Short Story	xix
THE ADVENTURES OF SIMON AND SU- SANNA <i>Joel Chandler Harris</i>	3
From "Daddy Jake and the Runaways."	
THE CROW-CHILD <i>Mary Mapes Dodge</i>	9
From "The Land of Pluck."	
THE SOUL OF THE GREAT BELL . . . <i>Lafcadio Hearn</i>	17
From "Some Chinese Ghosts."	
THE TEN TRAILS <i>Ernest Thompson Seton</i>	22
From "Woodmyth and Fable."	
WHERE LOVE IS, THERE GOD IS ALSO <i>Count Leo Tolstoi</i>	23
From "Tales and Parables."	
WOOD-LADIES <i>Perceval Gibbon</i>	38
From "Scribner's Magazine."	
ON THE FEVER SHIP <i>Richard Harding Davis</i>	53
From "The Lion and the Unicorn."	

	PAGE
A SOURCE OF IRRITATION <i>Stacy Aumonier</i> From "The Century Magazine."	69
MOTI GUJ—MUTINEER <i>Rudyard Kipling</i> From "Plain Tales from the Hills."	84
GULLIVER THE GREAT <i>Walter A. Dyer</i> From "Gulliver the Great and Other Stories."	92
SONNY'S SCHOOLIN' <i>Ruth McEnery Stuart</i> From "Sonny, a Christmas Guest."	105
HER FIRST HORSE SHOW <i>David Gray</i> From "Gallops 2."	117
MY HUSBAND'S BOOK <i>James Matthew Barrie</i> From "Two of Them."	135
WAR <i>Jack London</i> From "The Night-Born."	141
THE BATTLE OF THE MONSTERS <i>Morgan Robertson</i> From "Where Angels Fear to Tread."	147
A DILEMMA <i>S. Weir Mitchell</i> From "Little Stories."	160
THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE <i>A. Conan Doyle</i> From "Adventures of Sherlock Holmes."	166
ONE HUNDRED IN THE DARK <i>Owen Johnson</i> From "Murder in Any Degree."	192
A RETRIEVED REFORMATION <i>O. Henry</i> From "Roads of Destiny."	212
BROTHER LEO <i>Phyllis Bottome</i> From "The Derelict and Other Stories."	221
A FIGHT WITH DEATH <i>Ian Maclaren</i> From "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush."	238
THE DAN-NAN-RON <i>Fiona Macleod</i> From "The Dominion of Dreams, Under the Dark Star."	248
NOTES AND COMMENTS	275
SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS FOR CLASS USE	296

INTRODUCTION

I

OUR NATIONAL READING

Is there anyone who has not read a short story? Is there anyone who has not stopped at a news-stand to buy a short-story magazine? Is there anyone who has not drawn a volume of short stories from the library, or bought one at the bookstore? Short stories are everywhere. There are bed-time stories and fairy stories for little children; athletic stories, adventure stories, and cheerful good-time stories for boys and girls; humorous stories for those who like to laugh, and serious stories for those who like to think. The World and his Wife still say, "Tell me a story," just as they did a thousand years ago. Our printing presses have fairly roared an answer, and, at this moment, are busy printing short stories. Even the newspapers, hardly able to find room for news and for advertisements, often give space to re-printing short stories. Our people are so fond of soda water that some one has laughingly called it our national drink. Our people of every class, young and old, are so fond of short stories that, with an equal degree of truth, we may call the short story our national reading.

II

THE DEFINITION

THE short story and the railroad are about equally old,—or, rather, equally new, for both were perfected in distinctly recent times. The railroad is the modern development of older ways of moving people and goods from one place to another,—of litters, carts, and wagons. The short story is the