

**BOOKS FOR
BOYS AND GIRLS**

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Books for Boys and Girls by Various

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**BOOKS FOR
BOYS AND GIRLS**

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THIS list has been prepared as a guide to the branches of the Brooklyn Public Library in selecting books for the children's rooms and to answer the demand of both children and adults who desire suggestions as to what next to read or to purchase. Lists of this sort published by any large library invariably have far more than a local circulation. Because of this and the growing belief in the importance of the library's work with children, it seems desirable here to say something of the principles determining the selection of titles for this list.

The children's department of the public library aims to be "a nursery of good citizenship." Every book placed on its shelves must be tested by its relation to this aim. Books which inspire patriotism and breadth of sympathy by thrilling accounts of a nation's heroic struggles, be that nation America or China, are of direct use in this work. So is a book suggesting occupations useful and amusing that will train a child's eye, hand and brain and help to make a vigorous body. So also are the poems that sing into young hearts enthusiasm for loyalty, courage, fidelity and purity, and which give a world of imagination, a grace of thought and vocabulary to offset the sordidness of life in the city streets.

The first test we apply to any book for children is that for moral tone. By this we do not mean the story of the drunkard-reforming child saint of Sunday School library books so edifyingly contrasted with the naughty boy who goes fishing on the Sabbath and comes to a bad end; nor the golden-curled, lace-collared, polite little prig who adorns the pages of scores of "little child shall lead them stories" of the present. Not pages slashed with cutlasses reeking with gore, not hairbreadth escapes and feats of superhuman daring does the children's librarian condemn, but heroes pre-eminent in lying and trickery, in smartness and swagger, in the loafer's reliance upon luck; books which subtly teach a lad to measure a man's value and success by his money-getting ability. If a book arouses in a child admiration for courage, honor, endurance, manliness or womanliness, faithfulness, pluck, gentleness, then that is a moral book, whether it be a story of pirates, as *Treasure Island*, of a schoolboy, as *Tom Brown's school days*,

of a mythical hero, as *The Story of Siegfried*, of a hero of song, as *Horatius*, or a girls' home story, as *Little Women*.

The problem of being of practical use to thousands of school children from every sort of home background necessitates placing some mediocre books on our shelves. Books in commonplace English are needed for children unable to read "hard words." Prosy information books must be used till better appear. There are degrees of mediocrity, however, and while admitting that this is not a list of choice books only, we believe that no title is here included that will not help somewhat toward our goal.

The testimony of experts has been secured when possible in estimating technical, scientific and historical books, but the worker with children must give the deciding vote sometimes against the specialist's judgment. The student may tell us that *Abbott's Hernando Cortez* is inaccurate, but when a man dates an absorbing interest in Mexican history from the reading of that little book in childhood one feels that the condemnation of the specialist is not alone sufficient reason for throwing out a "juvenile." The children's librarian having daily evidence of the excellent reading courses stimulated by trifling books must keep for the child some things which the critics would scorn when she knows that these books have in them the power to kindle such interest in a subject as will lead to reading corrective of inaccuracies of information.

Older people will miss stories beloved in their childhood. Many once popular books are now out of print; others are in too poor editions for hard library wear; more have been superseded by stories perhaps no better but now the fashion among children, so that the old ones have been removed from shelves too crowded to admit any but live books. The best of the old stories we are able to revive, especially as many beautiful editions are now available. These editions are noted in the Author List as well as the less expensive ones for ordinary use. The school text-book garb and style we avoid unless needed information is obtainable in no other form.

In arranging the books we have again considered the children first. To a child, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Ulysses*, *Æsop*, the *Siegfried of the Nibelungenlied* and of *Wagner's Ring*, *Aladdin*, and

the Little Jackal all are wonder stories which he expects to find side by side under the heading Fairy Tales. We have put Black Beauty with Animal Stories, and lives of artists, musicians and others with their subjects rather than under "Collective Biography."

There are about 1700 titles here listed, of which 200 of the best books are indicated by a *. No out-of-print books have been included except in cases where reprints are assured.

As this is a list for the average public school child of primary and grammar grades it is useless to sprinkle in titles of Scott and Dickens and label them juvenile books. Happily many boys and girls begin to read their Scott before high school days, and in our libraries, where "adult" shelves are open to children as soon as they choose to read the "adult" books, it seems wise to confine this list to stories distinctly juvenile in character.

In every class represented on this list, be it nursery jingle or picture book, myth or model aeroplanes, football or pirate story, on the search for the Pole or on collecting butterflies, there will be found something to inform, to entertain, to inspire, to broaden, to refine, in short something to furnish the minds and hearts of the city's children so as to make of them more wholesome, sturdy, honorable citizens.

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