

**CHILDHOOD IN LITERATURE AND
ART: WITH SOME
OBSERVATIONS ON LITERATURE
FOR CHILDREN. A STUDY**

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Childhood in Literature and Art: With Some Observations on Literature for Children. A Study
by Horace E. Scudder

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HORACE E. SCUDDER

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CHILDHOOD
IN LITERATURE AND ART

*WITH SOME OBSERVATIONS ON
LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN*

A Study

BY

HORACE E. SCUDDER



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge
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WHO WAS A CHILD WHEN THIS BOOK
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I

INTRODUCTION

THERE was a time, just beyond the memory of men now living, when the Child was born in literature. At the same period books for children began to be written. There were children, indeed, in literature before Wordsworth created Alice Fell and Lucy Gray, or breathed the lines beginning,

"She was a phantom of delight,"

and there were books for the young before Mr. Day wrote Sandford and Merton; especially is it to be noted that Goldsmith, who was an *avant-courier* of Wordsworth, had a very delightful perception of the child, and amused himself with him in the Vicar of Wakefield, while he or his double entertained his little friends in real life with the Renowned History of Goody Two Shoes.

Nevertheless, there has been, since the day of Wordsworth, such a succession of childish figures in prose and verse that we are justified in believing childhood to have been discovered at the close of the last century. The child has now become so common that we scarcely consider how absent he is from the earlier literature. Men and women are there, lovers, maidens, and youth, but these are all with us still. The child has been added to the *dramatis personæ* of modern literature.

There is a correlation between childhood in literature and a literature for children, but it will best be understood when one has considered the meaning of the appearance and disappearance of the child in different epochs of literature and art; for while a hasty survey certainly assures one that the nineteenth century regards childhood far more intently than any previous age, it is impossible that so elemental a figure as the child should ever have been wholly lost to sight. A comparison of literatures with reference to this figure may disclose some of the fundamental differences which exist between this century and those which have preceded it; it may also disclose a still

deeper note of unity, struck by the essential spirit in childhood itself. It is not worth while in such a study to have much recourse to the minor masters ; if a theme so elemental and so universal in its relations is not to be illustrated from the great creative expositors of human nature, it cannot have the importance which we claim for it.