



Illustration by Leonard Weisgard for Clelia Delafeld's "Mrs. Mallard's Ducklings." (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, Inc.; \$2.)

Children's Books Bring Christmas Happiness

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CHRISTMAS and gay children's books have been associated in every one's mind since the days when a new Kate Greenaway, Walter Crane and Randolph Caldecott, printed in color by hand from wood blocks, were the features of each holiday season. This year the book world has been celebrating the 100th anniversary of both Greenaway and Caldecott. New editions of Greenaway's "Under the Window" and "Marigold Garden" are now adding their quaint grace to Christmas tables beside her dainty "Mother Goose." It was in the fall of 1878 when Edmund Evans, fascinated by the sketches and verses, risked an edition of 20,000 copies of "Under the Window." Although publishers ridiculed, the edition sold out promptly and continued to sell up to the 70,000 mark. Randolph Caldecott's humorous storytelling interpretations of nursery rhymes fortunately continued in print through the recent war years.

Picture Story Books

Are Childhood Favorites

HAMPERING conditions of the postwar period are nowhere more readily apparent than in the number and quality of picture books. However, Ingri and Edgar D'Aulaire have been able to bring out a new book, "Pocahontas." If it does not rival their "Ola," still it has merit and fills a real need. Rita Kassin has a tale of "Gramp's Desert Chick" with crayon sketches by Sari. Through its pages walk pack rats, coyotes, horned toads and lizards, as well as the chicken so surprisingly hatched. Knopf is publishing a new edition of Lovat Fraser's joyous, vital "Nursery Rhymes." It should not be missed by children though reproduction of the distinguished format and 18th century broadside color is disappointing. First published in 1919, this has long been a collector's item.

Tibor Gergely has made rollicking, original pictures for Nancy Byrd Turner's verses "When It Rained Cats and Dogs," which must have particularly caught his fancy. Leslie Wood paints a colorful countryside for Diana Ross' "Little Red Engine," greeted each morning by animals of the farms and fields. One can understand the farmer's wife in Dorothy and Nils Hogner's "Winky, King of the Garden" exclaiming, "Goodness! He looks so real he almost scares me." In Leonard Weisgard's fresh, clean color for Golden MacDonald's "Little Island" the winds blow and the birds fly; and Helen Sewell's lively line sketches for Louise Seaman's "Brave Bantam" fix perfectly the character of that small managing hen. Slight but skillful crayon drawings tell Albertine Deletaille's story "At the Top of the House."

For the Children Of Today's World

"The Little Fire Engine," by Louis Lenski, in which Fireman Small slides down the pole to answer an alarm, and Juniper Sage's "Man in the Manhole" will be any small child's favorites. Boys, yes, girls, too, are endlessly curious, and "How Big Is Big," by Herman and Nina Schneider, will be a boon to parents, second only to "Let's Find Out," their picture science

book for 7 and 8 year olds, published earlier in the season. Slight books, all, but enjoyable.

IF YOUR Christmas gleanings are to be for the boy or girl in the contemporary phase—and who does not pass through it—you will want to examine "The Avion My Uncle Flew." Cyrus Fisher has written a lively, exciting mystery, set in postwar France, with a young American boy as hero. Another vivid story of France, wartime France, is 14-year-old Martine Rouchard's "Time of Our Lives." From the title you will guess that being a refugee, living under the uncertainties, the strains of the occupation, foraging for each day's food had its light side for the zestful Martine and the young of her household. Her intimate chronicle was not written for publication, but was assigned a daily task by her journalist mother when schooling had to be abandoned. This is a unique glimpse into French child life at an historical period.

Dancing . . .

Young America of today, caught by the glamor of the ballet, will find "Gloria, Ballet Dancer," by Gladys Malvern, a good follow up for Noel Streatfield's "Ballet Shoes." It shows

the heroine with zeal for her art struggling through money troubles, hope and despair, achieving success in the ballet she has watched Douglas Gardiner and Uncle Dimitri originate in a gust of creative fervor.

Canoeing . . .

Canoeing, Canadian lakes and islands is the setting for "Silver Strains," by Katherine Pinkerton. Ann Jackman, her brother Philip and their friend, Jerry, put up a stiff fight when failure of the fox farming experiment seems inevitable.

In Ellen, of "The Wonderful Year," Nancy Barnes characterizes a very individual girl. Her experiences and emotions are those of a girl entering her teens.

Mystery . . .

Mystery turns up with "The Beginning Was a Dutchman," by Isla Mitchell. The Dutchman, a sailing boat bought as a surprise for Mark and his sister Bede, becomes the center of family vacation plans. It becomes also a center of international concern. Where did the former owner, a noted scientist, secret his formula for a new and deadly explosive? The period is 1938. Nazi Germany is interested.

Sports . . .

Boys passing through the sports story stage will find in Jackson

Scholz's "Batter Up" one of his best baseball stories. They also may enjoy Margery Miller's "Joe Louis, American" with its exciting account of the fight with Schmelling.

For horse and riding fans, Anne Mallory has done "Shooting Star Farm." The farm is an experimental riding school where love and devotion to horses is in the air. There are worries, but the children rise to responsibilities with initiative and friendliness.

Eleanor Brown's "Golden Lady" concerns itself with the hopes and struggles of Jean and her mother to make a winner of this second filly of Jean's registered American saddle horse. "Little Champion," by Ida Riggs, is for the somewhat younger reader. The setting is a cattle ranch in Arizona.

ADULT interest in biography has brought a wide array of titles into the field of children's books during the past few years. It remained for Esther Forbes and Lynn Ward to do the one sure to capture younger children. "America's Paul Revere," their colorful picture-biography, is a contribution.

Older boys and girls will turn to Frank and Cortelle Hutchins' Thomas Jefferson for their pic-

ture of early America. It reads like a story as Jefferson passes from his boyhood dreams to school years at Williamsburg, to entrance into the wider world of politics and social interests. Facts have been carefully documented.

"Sequoya," by Catherine Coblenz, is another excellent piece of research. The years in which Sequoya, caught by the power of the white man's "talking leaves," was absorbed in evolving an alphabet for his own nation, were years in which the Indian, resentful and bewildered, was being pushed steadily westward. Mrs. Coblenz pictures the situation from the Indian viewpoint. She has brought together widely scattered, colorful details of Cherokee history.

Presenting the Pastime-Hobbies

No Christmas review would be complete without mention of new pastime-hobby titles. The two most interesting this year are Otto Zoff's "Riddles Around the World," done in rebus form with outstanding pictures by Fritz Kredel and Opal Wheeler's adaptation of Gilbert and Sullivan's "H. M. S. Pinafore." Songs with music intersperse the story which is illustrated. Boys will enjoy Joseph Leeming's "Fun With Puzzles." It includes brain-twisters and puzzles for the mathematically minded. A perfect gift for the child fortunate enough to make visits to New York is Ruth Loud's "New York! New York!"

From such Christmas piles a few books each year join the ranks of permanent children's books. Lucky the child who finds these, too, under the Christmas tree.

The Bright Face Of Danger

LIVING dangerously is a phrase of today's coinage but not a new experience. Recapture of such moments from yesterday and today is the material for tales of action.

West Lathrop has written such a tale in "Black River Captive." The setting is New Hampshire in 1757. The hero, young Jethro, overconfident of Indian friendliness and determined to hunt down clues to his identity, is carried captive into the dangerous country north of Number 4.

"Madeline Takes Command," by Ethel Brill, tells the true and thrilling story of 14-year-old Madeline de Vercheres. With a garrison of only 7 she defended her home, a seignury on the upper St. Lawrence, from a Mohawk attack in 1692.

"Wild Waters," by Lewis Miner, is set on the Upper Mississippi of rough keelboat days. Sam Hawk's rousing adventures teach him self-reliance.

Miles Francis, schoolboy of St. Paul's in Elizabethan England, knows the danger and hardship as he falls into the rascally hands of a band of beggars in E. K. Seth-Smith's "Vagabonds All." Nat, Cris Marlowe's boy, and Miles' own passion for plays began it.

Merrill Allen's "Red Heritage" is a tale of New York State in the Revolution, of battling with Indians as well as Tories. Derrick, the young hero, filled with hatred and revenge after seeing his own family wiped out, joins the troops at the fort.

The Magic Of Laughter

It was the hardships of the frontier that bred tall tales. Grave or gay, nonsense comes a burst of fresh air through daily tensions. Much as boys and girls love bravery, they love laughter, too—and rightly so. Among the

(See CHILDREN'S BOOKS, Pg. 35.)



Illustration by Marjorie Thompson for Virginia Howell's "Who Likes the Dark." (Howell, Soskin; \$1.50.)