FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

JOHN NEWBERY -- FATHER OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

By

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INTRODUCTION

Today, when we see the gay and attractive books for children that crowd the shelves of book shops and libraries, we realize that this is, indeed, a golden age of children's literature. The best of contemporary writers and illustrators are giving their thought and effort to the creating of these books. The range is wide as to content, and new methods of treatment are constantly appearing. Attempts are now made to understand the child, to recognize his individuality, and to provide him as large a measure of enjoyment as possible.

This wealth of material has come to us gradually for children's literature, as such, has existed for only a short period of time. There were books for children before the time of the Norman Conquest but the children's books of those early days hardly coincide with our modern definition of literature for children. They were chiefly lesson books, used for instruction in the monastery schools, religious in purpose and didactic in form. After the Norman Conquest the books for children contained lessons in manners as well as morals. Books on behavior, and they are numerous, were prepared for young pages who were later to become knights. It is probable that these treatises reached only a limited class, for book making at this time was too costly for any but the members of
the higher class to own books. With the advent of printing, books became more numerous but children were not expected to own or handle these books freely.

The first bright spot in the development of a special literature for children appeared in 1697 when Charles Perrault, a French Academician, published a small volume of fairy tales. This collection was called Tales of My Mother Goose and contained some of the tales that are loved by children today, such as, Sleeping Beauty, Red Riding Hood, and Puss-in-Boots.¹

The rise of Protestantism in the seventeenth century was responsible for a deep gloom in the scanty literature which was produced for children during that period. Children were given instruction concerning religion and preparedness for death. But then, as now, children appropriated adult books that interested them. It is pleasant to remember that children at this time found enjoyment in three books not intended for them: Robinson Crusoe,² Gulliver’s Travels,³ and Pilgrim’s Progress.⁴


⁴Arbuthnot, op. cit., p.15.
It was into this scene that John Newbery came -- he who was destined to be called The Father of Children's Literature. Publisher and writer of about two hundred children's books, he was the first man to realize that children had no stories of their own and to attempt to remedy that deficiency. Newbery brought to children pleasure and happiness in books that had been almost entirely lacking before his time and his contribution marks a milestone in the development of a special literature for children.

In the following chapters an attempt has been made to draw together information concerning the life, character, and works of this unusual man and to evaluate his contribution to children's literature.
CHAPTER I

LIFE AND PERSONALITY

Two and one half centuries have passed since John Newbery began writing and publishing literature for children, but a prophet without too much honor, he received little biographical attention in his own age. Generations of seekers in subsequent ages have been trying, as a result, to piece together the fragmentary bits of data regarding him and develop a picture of this shrewd, yet kindly man.

It is known that for generations the Newbery families resided in a quaint little village at Waltham St. Lawrence, Berkshire, England. According to Charles Welsh who wrote the only known biography of John Newbery,

It was in this same parish of Waltham St. Lawrence that John Newbery first saw light. He was the youngest son of Robert Newbery, a small farmer in the village, and was born in the year 1713 -- the parish Registers containing the entry of his baptism on the 19th day of July in that year.5

It was in this quiet little village that John Newbery, afterwards the active, bustling, and energetic London publisher, passed his boyhood, and here received

5 Charles Welsh, A Bookseller of the Last Century. (London: Griffith, Farran, Okeden, and Welsh, 1885) p.3.
the ordinary education of a farmer's son, which could not,
in those days, have been very extensive or complete. How­
ever, we learn from an autobiography of his son, Francis
Newbery, that he, "by his talents and industry, and a
great love of books, had rendered himself a very good
English scholar. His mind was too excursive to allow him
to devote his life to the occupation of agriculture."6

There is little doubt that Newbery's father would
have preferred for his youngest son to have followed the
calling of his farmer father, but, showing no inclination
toward the life of a tiller of the soil, the boy, at about
the age of sixteen years entered the shop of a merchant in
Reading, as an apprentice. If "bookish tastes" could be
inherited, perhaps John Newbery inherited his tastes from
an ancestor, Ralph, or Rafe Newbery, who had been a great
publisher of the sixteenth century.

We are not positive that the merchant under whom
John Newbery served his apprenticeship was William Carnan,
but we conclude that it must have been Mr. Carnan, the
printer, proprietor, and editor of one of the earliest
newspapers, The Reading Mercury and Oxford Gazette.7
The records at Somerset House show that William Carnan, a
printer of Reading, died in 1737, and that he left all of
his property and business to his brother Charles, and to
John Newbery, whom he appointed as executors of his estate.

6 Ibid., p.5.
7 Ibid., p.6.
Thus we see that Mr. Newbery at the youthful age of twenty-four years inherited a printing business. He, no doubt, during the eight years that he had served as an apprentice had become familiar with the entire routine of the printing office, but, working toward a more solid position in the effects of Mr. Carnan, he promptly married his widow, who was six years Newbery's senior. He assumed the responsibility for three small step-children, and in due course of time, three children were born to the Newberys. We shall here again quote his son Francis,

His love of books and acquirements had peculiarly fitted him for conducting such a concern as the newspaper and printing business at Reading, and rendered him doubly acceptable to the object of his affections, who was indeed a most amiable and worthy woman.

He speedily became thoroughly master of the business, which was carried on for three or four years longer, when he opened a house in London, for the more ready disposal of a variety of publications which were printed at Reading, and of which he was either the author or the compiler. 8

While Newbery had many interests and dabbled in many things, he seems to have been happiest when writing and publishing books for children.

"He was", says his son Francis, "in full employment of his talents in writing and publishing books of amusement and instruction for children. The call for them was immense, an edition of many thousands being sometimes exhausted during the Christmas holidays." 9

8 Ibid., p.8.
9 Ibid., pp.22,23.
Up to this time, the literature provided for children was of the scantiest nature and we owe a debt of gratitude to John Newbery for realizing the importance of the child as a consumer of books.

Before making the move to London Newbery decided to make a sight-seeing tour of England, during the months of July and August, in the year of 1740. He traveled by stage coach to London, then to St. Albans, then east and north to Bedford, Leicester, Melton, Mowbray, Grantham, Lincoln, Hull, and York. Then he traveled west to Lancaster and started back by the way of Dorchester, Sheffield, Nottingham, Derby, Chester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester, Banbury, Dedington, Woodstock, and back to Reading. He kept an account of his trip in his Private Memorandum Book, in which he listed the number of miles that he traveled, the inns at which he stopped, the notable sights that he saw, and the chief manufactures, products and characteristics of the various towns.

This same book contained notes of things to be done, purchases and inquiries that he wanted to make on his journey, various other private and business records, suggestions and memoranda. Many of these show the varied nature of the enterprises in which he was engaged, while others seem to give us a slight glimpse of the personality of this busy and energetic man.

10 Ibid., p.8.
Very early in the book we find the following notes, which show the true business instinct:

At my return advertise all sorts of the haberdashery and cutlery goods that I keep to be sold wholesale as cheap as in the country where made, only paying 2½ percent. commission, and write on door, goods sold by commission from the makers per John Newbery and Co., for ready money only, and so excuse one's self from trusting.

Get a note in the following manner to secure Mr. Collier's debt, viz., let Mr. Collier give a promissory note of his hand to Mr. Morsham, then Mr. Morsham indorse it to Mrs. Blackhead, and Mrs. Blackhead indorse it to me. This is better than any joint note, because all ye indorsers are liable.

Here is another scheme let Mr. Micklewright print a Reading Mercury and advertise once a fortnight, and J. Carnan print a Reading Mercury and Weekly Post once a fortnight, and by that means save duty of advertising. Note, let the titles be The Reading Mercury and The Reading Courant.

Newbery's shop at Reading must have contained a miscellaneous assortment of goods. He seemed to have bought or listed prices of anything and everything he thought he could sell. Wherever he went his mind appeared to have been constantly on his business.

To us Newbery's most interesting notes are his literary notes and memoranda of books to be published, and books to be read for his self improvement:

Print (Price 6d.)
A collection of curious mottoes from Greek, Latin, French, and English Authors, for use of Poets and Puppets, by Lawrence Liklihood, Esq., also

The Norfolk Dumplins.

\[11\text{Ibid., pp.12,13.}\]
To put Mr. Walker on Printing an Abridgement of ye History of the World (but not call it an abridgement), and get a patent for it, to which add the present state of all Nations, from Salmon;

Likewise

A Body of Divinity, compiled from Usher Fiddes and Stockhouse's Bodys of Divinity.


Put Mr. Walker on Printing

The Duty of man in all sizes; also,

Salmon's abridgement of State Tryal and

Admiral Norris's Ship the Victory.

To read Blackwell's Sacred Classics, 2 vols, and Rollin's Ancient and Modern History and Roman History, with his Arts and Sciences, 8 vols.12

It is hard to imagine a man of John Newbery's literary and printing ability dabbling in patent medicines, but in the year of 1743, he, with three others, entered into an agreement with John Hooper of Reading, for the better, selling and disposing of "female pills". They paid him one hundred pounds for the right to sell them for fourteen years. The Newbery descendants still have in their possession the original document which was signed at Three Tuns, Reading.13

From "female pills" Newbery turned to "fever powder" and is no doubt better known for his sale of Dr. James' Fever Powder than any of his other patent medicines. This powder was discovered in 1743, though it was not patented until November, 1746. Dr. James was a poor apothecary

13 Ibid., p.18.
when he invented the famous Fever Powder. He was introduced to Mr. Newbery as a good prospect to sell his medicine for him, but, being the business man that he was, Newbery had no time to discuss the matter during his working hours at his shop, so they, therefore, agreed to meet on Sunday.

As Dr. James was traveling to Mr. Newbery's country house at Vauxhall, he found a horse shoe as he passed over Westminster Bridge. Then, as now, to find a horse shoe was considered good luck by superstitious persons. Dr. James put the horse shoe into his pocket, and, as long as he lived, he attributed his successful deal with Mr. Newbery, and the success of his fever powder, to the finding of a horse shoe.

As Newbery was a shrewd man, he became Dr. James' agent for the sale of the fever powder. They entered into an agreement on February 23, 1756.

For twenty-one years Dr. James was to make his pills for gout, rheumatism, king's evil, scurvy, and leprosy, and to sell them to J. Newbery for 8 d. per box, each box containing 2 pills -- 1 pill a dose, and his fever powder at 8 d. per box, each box containing 2 doses. Newbery had the sole sale, and the doctor was to prescribe the same medicine, but under another form, for his private patients, agreeing not to undersell Newbery. The Doctor was to pay Newbery a royalty on the medicines sold abroad. Newbery was not to make them or disclose the secret, but the recipe was to be sealed for the use of his executors. This agreement is endorsed in a bond of L 10,000 to observe its provisions, and bears other endorsements as to the extension of the period, etc. These are witnessed by Newbery's son-in-law, Thomas Carnan. A phial of the powder prepared by Dr. James himself is still in existence.14

14 Ibid., pp. 21, 22.
Goldsmith in a paper on "Quacks Ridiculed" (Public Ledger, 1760), brought Newbery to some extent under his lash, for at this time he was advertising at least a dozen patent medicines a day. And when the old house at the corner of St. Paul's Churchyard was pulled down and rebuilt, a panel was discovered over the fireplace in the shop with the inscription, "Newbery's Medicinal Warehouse", and a list of over thirty nostrums, among which, it is curious to note the following:

Dr. James' Fever Powder
Dr. Steer's Oil for Convulsions
Dr. Hooper's Female Pills
Glass' Magnesia
Stomachic Lozenges
Hill's Balsam of Honey
English Coffee
Kennedy's Corn Plaster
Hemet's Detrifice (etc.)

Turning now from his ventures in medicine back to his publishing business, we find that in the year of 1764 Newbery, along with T. Greenough, an apothecary, of Ludgate Street, and T. Fryer, a linen draper, of Bishopgate, took out a patent for a machine of new construction for "printing, staining, colouring silk stuffs, linens, cottons, leather, and paper by means of engraved copper cylinders, on which colours are laid by smaller cylinders, the whole work of filling in, cleaning off, and stamping the impressions performed by the joynt assistance of sundry springs, and the intermediums of coggs and rings."  

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15 Ibid., p.22
16 Ibid., p.69.
His success in these endeavours attest the fact that Newbery was an excellent business man. The title of "honest John Newbery" which so often has been applied to him, seems to have been in every way well merited, for it appears that he was cautious in all of his dealings, and he possessed the splendid quality of being able to make a good bargain, while at the same time making friends of those with whom he bargained. Thus, Newbery is pictured as a pleasant, likable, bustling figure, with a shrewd business sense, a man who brought to his business a taste for good books, imagination and sympathy, originality and foresight.

In order to get a better description of Mr. Newbery as a man, it is of advantage to see what his friends and co-workers had to say of him as well as what his son, Francis, thought of his father. From the son's description few men had ever died who were more generally or sincerely lamented. All the newspapers of that time burst forth in expressions of commendation of his character, and of regret at his untimely death at the age of fifty-four. The papers complimented him for his active and cheerful disposition, his natural humor, and his most benevolent heart, which carried him into excess at times. He was most indiscriminate in his charities, and is supposed never to have passed a beggar without giving him alms.17

17Ibid., p. 72.
In his speech he was polite and in his manner and conversation, always agreeable, courteous and amiable. It seems that he always had a pen or book in his hand, and his mind was always occupied for some good purpose. With such qualities he could not fail to be loved by all who knew him.

The number of businesses in which Mr. Newbery was engaged have already been mentioned. With so many types of business to occupy his mind, it is easy to imagine that he was apt to be forgetful of his engagements. Newbery's good friend, Dr. Johnson, made him the subject of ridicule in his essay *The Idler* describing him as the humorous character of *Jack Whirlar*. The representation was, it may be supposed, more a caricature than a portrait, but no doubt, much of it was just and appropriate. So descriptive is it that the entire short essay is herewith cited:

*The Idler*, No. 19. Saturday, August 19, 1758.

Among the principle names of this moderate set is that great philosopher, Jack Whirlar, whose business keeps him in perpetual motion, and whose motion always eludes his business; who is always to do what he never does, who cannot stand still because he is wanted in another place, and who is wanted in many places because he stays in none. Jack has more business than he can conveniently transact in one house, he has therefore one habitation near Bow Church and another about a mile distant. By this ingenious distribution of himself between two houses, Jack has contrived to be found at neither. Jack's trade is extensive, and he has many dealers; his conversation is sprightly and he has many companions; his disposition is kind, and he has many friends. Jack neither forbears pleasure for business nor omits business for pleasure, but is equally invisible to his friends and to his customers; to him that comes with an invitation to a club and to him that
waits to settle an account. When you call at his house, his clerk tells you that Mr. Whirler has just stepped out, but will be home exactly at two; you wait at a coffee house till two, and then you find that he had been at home, and is gone out again, but left word that he should be at the Half-Moon Tavern at seven, where he hopes to meet you.

At seven you go to the tavern. At eight in comes Mr. Whirler to tell you that he is glad to see you, and only begs leave to run for a few minutes to a gentleman that lives near the Exchange, from whom he will return before supper can be ready. Away he runs to the Exchange to tell those who are waiting for him that he must beg them to defer the business till tomorrow, because his time is come at the Half-Moon.

Jack's cheerfulness and civility rank him among those whose presence never gives pain, and whom all receive with fondness and caresses. He calls often on his friends to tell them he will come again tomorrow; on the morrow he comes again to tell them how an unexpected summons hurries him away. When he enters a house his first declaration is that he cannot sit down; and so short are his visits that he seldom appears to have come for other reason but to say that he must go.

The dogs of Egypt, when thirst brings them to the Nile, are said to run as they drink, for fear of crocodiles. Jack Whirler always dines at full speed. He enters, finds the family at the table, sits familiarly down, and fills his plate; but while the first morsel is in his mouth hears the clock strike and rises; then goes to another house, sits down again, recollects another engagement, has only time to taste the soup, makes a short excuse to the company, and continues through another street his desultory dinner.

But overwhelmed as he is with business, his chief desire is to have more. Every new proposal takes possession of his thoughts, he soon balances probabilities, engages in the project, brings it almost to completion, and then forsakes it for another, which he catches with the same alacrity, urges with the same vehemence and abandons with the same coldness.

Every man may be observed to have a certain strain of lamentation, some peculiar theme of complaint on which he dwells in his moments of dejection. Jack's topic of sorrow is the want of time. Many an excellent design languishes in empty theory for want of time.
For the omission of any civilities, want of time is his plea for others; for the neglect of any affairs, want of time is his excuse for himself. That he wants time he sincerely believes, for he once pined away many months with a lingering distemper for want of time to attend to his health.

Thus Jack Whirler lives in perpetual fatigue, without proportionate advantage, because he does not consider that no man can see all with his own eyes or do all with his own hands; that whoever is engaged in multiplicity of business must transact much by substitution and leave something to hazard, and that he who attempts to do all will waste his life in doing little.¹⁸

In case, however, the over-fond partiality of the son Francis should place his father in too rosy a light, or the good-humored ridicule of Dr. Johnson be not quite truthful, Goldsmith's often quoted description from the Vicar of Wakefield is probably more objective and less biased. In it Goldsmith portrays the good Dr. Primrose on his errand of reclaiming a lost child to virtue. He stopped at a little ale house by the roadside where he became ill and was forced to stay for nearly three weeks. When he recovered he did not have enough money to cover his expenses. He was afraid that the anxiety from this last circumstance alone might have brought on a relapse, had he not been supplied by a traveler who had stopped to take a hasty sort of refreshment. This person was none other than Newbery, whom he described as

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 72, 76.
the philanthropic bookseller in St. Paul's Churchyard, who has written so many little books for children. He called himself their friend, but he was a friend of all mankind. He was no sooner alighted but he was in haste to be gone; for he was ever on business of the utmost importance, and was at the time actually compiling materials for the history of one Mr. Thomas Trip. I immediately recalled this good natured man's red pimpled face; for he had published for me against the Deuterogamists of the age; and from him I borrowed a few pieces, to be paid at my return. 19

Goldsmith is also supposed to have written the following tribute to Newbery:

What we say of a thing that has just come in fashion
And that which we do with the dead
Is the name of the honestest man in the nation
What more of a man can be said? 20

Washington Irving wrote of him:

Newbery was a worthy, intelligent, kind-hearted man, and a reasonable though cautious friend to authors, relieving them with small loans when in pecuniary difficulties, though always taking care to be well repaid by the labor of their pains. 21

To use modern day terminology, we would describe Newbery as "a character", but the term "jack of all trades, but a master of none", could not be applied to him, as he appeared to have made a success in every business venture which he undertook.

21Ibid., p.14.
CHAPTER II

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

It took a typical eighteenth century business man, namely John Newbery, a farmer's son, an accountant, a merchant's assistant, a patent medicine dealer, a printer, and a publisher to see the possibilities and openings in the writings of children's books. He began to publish at Reading in 1740, but we have no record of any children's books being printed until after he moved to London in 1744. During his first year in the metropolis, he published his first book for children, The Little Pretty Pocket Book.

The book itself was miniature in size, about two inches by four inches, and was bound in Newbery's special binding of embossed gilt paper covers. The sixty-five little illustrations at the top of its pages were numerous enough to afford pleasure to any eighteenth century child, although they were crude in execution and lacked true perspective.22

We find the best description of this book in Forgotten Books of the American Nursery:

The first chapter after the "Address to Parents" and to other people mentioned on the title-page gives letters to Master Tommy and Miss Polly. First, Tommy is congratulated upon the good character that his Nurse has given him, and instructed as to the use of the "Pocket Book", "which will teach you to play at all those innocent games that good Boys and Girls divert themselves with." The boy reader is next advised to mark his good and bad actions with a pin upon a red and black ball. Little Polly is then given similar congratulations and instructions, except that in her case a pincushion is to be substituted for a ball. Then follow thirty pages devoted to "alphabetically digested" games, from "The Great a Play" and "The Little a Play" to "The Great and Little Rs", when plays, or the author's imagination, give out and rhymes begin the alphabet anew. Next in order are four fables (written in the guise of letters.)

In 1760, Newbery brought out a collection of songs and nursery rhymes called Mother Goose's Melody or Sonnets for the Cradle. This is the first known collection of Mother Goose rhymes. Mothers today who see their small children wear their favorite Mother Goose to shreds can well understand why no copies of the Newbery edition exists. However, we do know that being a Newbery book it was "strongly bound and gilt," and that it was unlike the chapbooks which were merely "folded, not stitched" in pamphlet style. At the top of each page was a picture that illustrated the rhyme; the rhyme followed, and at the bottom of each page was included a "moral".

In 1765 The History of Little Goody Two Shoes appeared from the Newbery press. This was a small juvenile

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23 Ibid., p.48.
24 Ibid., p.110,111.
novel, the first of its kind to be written expressly for children.  

The authorship of this book is disputed, some scholars attributing its authorship to Oliver Goldsmith, some, to Griffith Jones.

We learn the theme of Goody Two Shoes from Arbuthnot:

Goody Two Shoes is the story of a virtuous and clever child, Margery Meanwell. At the opening of the book, Margery's father suffers "the wicked persecutions of Sir Timothy Gripe and Farmer Graspall," who manage to ruin him and turn the whole family out of house and lands. The parents quickly die (evidently no Dr. James' Fever Powders available), leaving Margery and her brother Tommy destitute. Tommy goes to sea and Margery is rescued by charitable Clergyman Smith and his wife. When they buy her two shoes, the child is so overcome with pleasure that she keeps crying out, "Two shoes, Madam, see my two shoes" -- hence her name.

This happiness is short-lived, for Gripe forces Smith to turn her out of the house. Back to the hedge-rows once more, Margery teaches herself to read with remarkable ease by studying the schoolbooks of more fortunate children. Soon she knows more than any of them and decides to advance their learning. She makes up an alphabet of wooden blocks or "rattle traps" with both small and large letters, puts them into a basket, and goes from house to house helping children to read. The methods of the Trotting Tutoress apparently work like charm, for all her young pupils respond immediately with never a "retarded reader" in the whole countryside. They also learn such "Lessons for the Conduct of Life" as "He that will thrive, must rise at five; Honey catches more flies than vinegar; Fair words butter no parsnips".

Such pedagogical talent is bound to carry Mrs. Margery far, and soon she is made the head of a flourishing school. She meets admirable Sir Charles Jones, whose love is won by "her virtue, good sense and prudent behavior." As she is standing at the

25 Arbuthnot, op. cit., p.18.
26 Halsey, op. cit., p.18.
27 Welsh, op. cit., p.96.
altar with this titled gentleman, who should come dashing in but Tommy, richly dressed, just in time to give his sister a handsome marriage settlement. After that, the Lady Margery lives happily and dies respected and beloved by all. "Her life was the greatest blessing and her death the greatest calamity that ever was felt in the neighborhood." 28

The Renowned History of Giles Gingerbread was written in 1769. Giles Gingerbread, a little boy who lived upon learning, was taught his letters by means of an alphabet made of gingerbread. As soon as he learned a letter he was allowed to eat it. A pleasant way to learn to read! 29

Another interesting book was An Important Pocket Book or The Valentine Ledger. This small volume Mr. Newbery bound in brown leather. In this book the child was supposed to record his good and bad behavior. Some of the children of the eighteenth century actually kept these moral accounts, as is evidenced by the fact that one with entries made by a little girl is still in existence. 30

In 1745, Newbery's Circle of the Sciences, the most important of his useful knowledge books, appeared in ten volumes. It is claimed that Newbery compiled them with great pains, attempting to make "familiar and easy" such subjects as arithmetic, rhetoric, poetry, and logic. These little books, constructed on the "question and answer"

28 Arbuthnot, op. cit., p.18.
29 Welsh, op. cit., p.225.
30 Alice Dalgleish, "In Mr. Newbery's Bookshop," Horn Book, July 1940. p.279.
principle, proved so popular that they went through several editions and were kept in print for half a century.31

The religious themes were not neglected either, for Newbery wrote and published The Holy Bible Abridged, or the History of the Old and New Testaments, illustrated with notes, and adorned with cuts for the use of children,32 and A Pretty Little Plaything in five volumes. These were books for children of all denominations. The first was the alphabet in verse; the second the alphabet in prose; a third, Tom Noddy and His Sister Sue was a Lilliputian story; a fourth had to do with the sounds of letters explained on visible objects; and a fifth was the Cuz's Chorus, set to music, to be sung by children to teach them to join the letters in syllables and pronounce them properly.33

We shall merely name several of Newbery's other interesting books for children. They are: The Amusing Instructor, or Tales in Prose and Verse, for the improvement of youth, with useful and pleasing remarks on different branches of Science;34 The History of the Enchanted Castle, or, The Prettiest Book for Children;35 Food for the Mind.

32 Ibid., p.173.
33 Ibid., p.292.
34 Ibid., p.169.
or, A New Riddle Book;36 The Lilliputian Magazine, or, The Young Gentlemen and Ladies Golden Library;37 Little Lottery Book;38 Nurse Truelove’s New Year’s Gift;39 Pretty Book for Children, written as an easy guide to the English tongue, and designed for the instruction of those who could not read as well as for the entertainment of those who could read;40 Pretty Book of Pictures for the Little Masters and Misses, or, Tommy Trip’s History of Birds and Beasts;41 Pretty Poems,42 and many others.

The children's books of John Newbery proved to be such a lucrative commercial enterprise that they were imitated by many dealers and the vogue for Juvenile Libraries spread over England and Scotland and crossed the ocean to America. J. Harris of London, T. Saint of Newcastle, Kendrew of York, Davison of Alnwick, Lumsden of Glasgow, all tried their hands at publishing books for children. Isaiah Thomas, a prominent dealer in children's books in America, is often called the "American Newbery" for he made reprints of nearly all of the "flowery and gilt" volumes associated with Newbery.

36 Ibld. , p.221.
37 Ibld. , p.255-56.
38 Ibld. , p.256.
39 Ibld. , p.278.
40 Ibld. , p.290.
41 Ibld. , p.291-92.
42 Ibld. , p.294.
Before the middle of the eighteenth century publishers had not awakened to the fact that children were "folks" and that books written and published particularly for them would find a ready market. Even then, what the children demanded, the parents bought. The so-called children's books which were printed during the sixteenth centuries could come more nearly being classified as books of torture, instead of books for pure delight.

In making these books for children, Mr. Newbery seemed to have spared no pains, and to have done his best with the materials of the day. Paper, printing, and binding alike were of the first quality procurable, and some of the small sixpenny volumes are better printed than many of the more pretentious books of modern times.

In Newbery's advertisements he constantly referred to his "flowery and gilt" bindings. This binding, however, which added so largely to the attractiveness of his publications, became a lost art. Nearly a hundred years ago in an attempt to discover the source and type of paper used, it was found to be "a Dutch paper", a variety made both in Holland and in Germany. But the method of production was lost in that, when the demand for it had ceased, both the stamp and presses used in its manufacture had been destroyed.

Other novelties and improvements in binding were introduced, or adopted by John Newbery. One of these was
the binding "in the vellum manner". The books were half bound with an open back in green vellum and green paper, and on the inside of the cover was pasted this notice:

The Purchaser of Books bound in the Vellum manner are desired to observe that they are sewed much better than the Books which are bound in Leather; open easier at the Back, and are not so liable to warp in being read. If by any Accident the Covers should be stained or rubbed, they may be new covered for a Penny, an advantage that cannot be remedied in Leather; so that this method of binding is not only cheaper, but it is presumed will be found more useful.

The only Motive for trying this Experiment was to adopt a Substitute for Leather which was greatly enhanced in its price, either by an increased Consumption, or of Monopoly; must be submitted to the Determination of the Reader.\[43\]

We find that many of the volumes were bound in vellum, standard for generations, but eventually superseded by modern cloth binding.

Newbery showed imagination in both the size and bindings of his juvenile books. He issued about two hundred titles, nearly all of which were only about four inches or slightly taller. These offered a definite and shrewd appeal to the small hands which were to hold them. Sewed strongly, and, as already mentioned, bound in gorgeous "flowery and gilt" paper, they offered an irresistible allure to both child and parents.

The following is a sample of a title page:

\[\[43\]Ibid., p.117.\]
A Little Pretty Pocket Book
Intended for the Instruction and Amusement of Little Master Tommy and Pretty Miss Polly With Two Letters from Jack the Giant-Killer As also A Ball and a Pincushion The Use of which will infallibly make Tommy a good boy and Polly a good Girl. To which is added, A Little Song-Book, Being A New Attempt to teach Children the Use of the English Alphabet, by Way of Diversion.4

The method of writing a simple title page undoubtedly never entered Newbery's mind; he did for the children's books exactly what he had been accustomed to doing for his adult books. Of course, the habit of spreading the entire contents of the page was not without value, as it gave the purchaser

4Arbuthnot, *op. cit.* , p.18.
no excuse for not knowing what was to be found within the
covers of the book. This was of real value in the days when
books were a luxury and literary reviews non-existent, as it
enabled the country trade to make a better choice.\textsuperscript{45}

Newbery's books for children were the first departure
from the crude and often vulgar chapbooks of his period. His
books had attractive titles; they were well illustrated and
they contained stories, which were eagerly received, moral
lessons and all, by the children of that day.

Although Newbery's fame as a publisher is founded
mainly on the books for children which he produced, if we
glance at a catalogue of his books, we shall see that he
left no field of literature untried. His books for adults
were on such subjects as theology, fiction, prose and poetry,
scientific and educational works, and even music.

A formal kindergarten was then undreamed of, but
Newbery provided what would now be known in the public elementary
schools as a varied occupation for infants in the shape of A
sett of fifty-six squares.\textsuperscript{46} He included directions for play-
ing with the squares, and he intended for the child with very
little assistance to learn to spell, read, write, make figures,
and add any common sum in arithmetic before he was old enough
to be sent to school.

We see from two quotations in The Little Pretty Pocket
Book that Newbery incorporated even in his writings for children

\textsuperscript{45}Halsey, op. cit., p.48.
\textsuperscript{46}Welsh, op. cit., p.219.
the two prevailing interests of the day, namely, education and landscape-gardening. The first was from Dryden:

Children, like tender Osiers, take the Bow,
And as they first are fashioned always grow.

the second from Pope:

Just as the Twig is bent, the Tree's inclined,
'Tis Education forms the vulgar mind. 57

There is nothing more remarkable in Mr. Newbery's little books than the originality of their style. There were many attempts made to approach the simplicity of his little books, but no author succeeded. Sir Walter Scott in The Tales of a Grandfather made a most complete failure in trying to appeal to the childish intellect. 48

The characteristics of Newbery's books are very marked. They contained a great variety of subjects, but they were thoroughly alive in every way. There was real personality behind them. The English was plain and respectable, and the coarseness of the earlier, and even some later, productions is almost absent. There was a strong vein of honest rigor running through his works.

We find in selections from Goody Two Shoes that Newbery's characters are types rather than individuals, and the sly humor is often more adult than childlike. Many adults, notably Charles Lamb, recalled the pleasure it gave him and his sister when they read it as children. 49

48 Welsh, op. cit., p. 93.
49 Arbuthnot, op. cit., p. 19.
Mr. Foster in his life of Oliver Goldsmith says, "I believe that to Newbery himself the great merit is due of having first sought to reform in some material points the moral of these books. He did not thrust all naughty boys into the jaws of the dragon, nor did he elevate all good boys to ride in King Peppin's coach. Goldsmith said that he had a hankering to write for children; and if he had realized his intention of composing the fable in which little fishes and other creatures should talk, our children's libraries would have had one rich possession the more." 50

These little books in the Juvenile Library were written by different persons, none of whom signed their names to their stories. We know that there were many fortunate friendships between Newbery and the London literary men of his time and we feel sure that he pressed into service such men as Tobias George Smollett, Christopher Smart, and the great Dr. Samuel Johnson himself. It was through Dr. Johnson that Newbery met Oliver Goldsmith, in 1759. Between these two men there started a friendship about which we should be pleased to know more. Griffith and Giles Jones have been given credit as authors or compilers of several of the books; Goldsmith is thought to have written some; and Newbery himself was probably the author of many of the little books.

One cannot leave the subject of Newbery's books without mentioning his gift of high-powered salesmanship. His ingenious advertisements had much to do with the widespread

50 Welsh, op. cit., pp. 94, 95.
success of his books and he showed no little skill in concocting them. Each new book was likely to call attention to others in the Juvenile Library, not on the fly-leaf or book jacket as do the "blurbs" of today, but within the body of the book itself. When Tommy Truelove received his reward of virtue and industry, he implored that it might be a little book which could be bought at the Book Shop at Bow Lane. Newbery had the small characters in his books always turning aside to read or to buy one of Mr. Newbery's little books, or they would pull one of Mr. Newbery's "nice gilded library" out of their pockets.51 Thus, we see that the reader in Newbery's day could not read more than a page or two in one of his publications without being reminded that the good, kind, thoughtful gentleman who had printed that book had plenty others to sell, and that he persistently advertised in his juvenile books his other wares.

As early as June 18, 1744, we find Newbery's advertisement of his Little Pretty Pocket Book appeared in the Penny Morning Post:

According to the Act of Parliament (neatly bound and gild) a Little Pretty Pocket Book intended for the instruction and amusement of little Master Tommy and pretty Miss Polly; with an agreeable letter to each from Jack the Giant Killer; as also a Ball and Pincushion. The use of which will infallibly make Tommy a good boy and Polly a good little girl. Printed for J. Newbery at the Bible and Crown, near Devereaux Court without Temple Bar. Price of the book 6 d; with a Ball and Pincushion 8 d.52

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We find from the above advertisement that Mr. Newbery included the same information that he published on the title page (sample page 25) of his *Little Pretty Pocket Book*.

As Mr. Welsh states, "He was almost as great in the art of puffing his wares as the immortal Puff himself, and he employed the puff of every kind; 'the puff direct, the puff preliminary, the puff collateral, the puff collusive, and the puff oblique, or puff by implication," were all used in their turn, and no little skill was used in their concoction."53

Christopher Smart was said to have been a master of the art of "puffing" and probably worked with Newbery on his clever advertisements.54

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54 *Ibid.*, p.31
CHAPTER III

CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Just why is the Juvenile Library of John Newbery considered such a landmark in the history of children's literature? Why has he been called "The Father of Children's Literature"? To the modern child these little books give no pleasure; he finds Goody Two Shoes and A Little Pretty Pocket Book old-fashioned and drab. However, to those who love the history of children of the past, they are interesting for many reasons. In them, he portrayed something of the life of the eighteenth century child; and by them the century's difference, in point of view as to the constituents of a story book, can be gauged. Moreover, all of Mr. Newbery's stories were prepared very carefully, a characteristic which later stories sadly lacked.

Newbery was the first publisher who introduced the regular system of a juvenile library and gave children books in a more permanent form than the chapbooks of the period. The books published by Newbery were more durable than the chapbooks for most of the latter were simply folded and not stitched. His were "strongly bound and gilt", as seen from his advertisements.
As for the content of the books, a new note was struck and a new field opened for the culture and development of the child. Newbery's stories were written mainly for amusement and, although the moral feature was never omitted nor the combination of instruction with amusement, they were written with a certain art and children were entertained by them.

One remarkable feature of these books was the originality of style. Great authors have tried their hands at imitating its clever adaptation to the childish intellect; but they have failed to catch the homeliness and simplicity of Newbery's little stories. They were stories about children written expressly for children and though the didactic and tiresome style of the writers of that day is evident at times, they were far more attractive than anything that had been done before along this line. Newbery infused into his little books something of imagination and heroic adventure.

John Newbery may be termed rightly as a benefactor to childhood for he was the first publisher to understand children's tastes and interests and provide for them suitable reading. His name has been revived in this generation by the establishment of the John Newbery Medal. This award is presented annually by the American Library Association to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American

55Ibid., p.93.
literature for children. It is just and proper that this award should bear the name of John Newbery, "The Father of Children's Literature."


