

### CHILDREN ASSIST IN CHOOSING BEST BOOKS

#### Local School Leaders Evolve Scientific Plan for Selection of Reading Material

Editor's Note: The accompanying article is the third and last of a brief series relative to the Scientifically Graded Book List for Children worked out by Superintendent of Schools Washburne and his research assistants. The Winnetka Graded Book List is a scientific study of children's tastes in reading, including a list of 700 books which boys and girls have read and enjoyed, annotated with the children's own comments, and based on the opinions of 36,500 children in 34 cities and towns. It is to be published in December by the American Library association.

By MABLE VOGEL

(Research assistant, Winnetka public schools)

(Continued from last week)

Out of the 800 books on which we had enough ballots to grade for our list, there were some of course which would not be approved by experts in children's literature. Books of low literary value probably should not be included in a graded list which will be used by teachers, librarians and parents in selecting books for children. Since we know of no way to determine literary merit objectively, we had to enlist the help of literary experts. Thirteen children's librarians named by the Headquarters Staff of the A. L. A. as unusually expert in judging children's literature checked over our list of titles in order to help us eliminate unsuitable books. They were asked to rate each book according to one of four statements: No. 1, indicating that the book was of unquestionable literary merit; No. 2, indicating that the book was valuable for the list although not of high literary quality; No. 3, indicating that it should not be recommended because of low literary value; and No. 4, that it dealt with subjects unsuitable for children.

Out of the 800 books there were only 100 on which all our experts agreed. Out of these 100 only 35 were rated of

unquestionable literary merit. On the remaining 700 there was disagreement. The votes on several of the books actually ranged all the way from 1 to 4. For instance "Huckleberry Finn" was considered of unquestionable literary merit by eight experts, valuable for the list although not of high literary quality by two, not recommended because of low literary value by one, while still another expert said it should not be recommended because it dealt with subjects unsuitable for children. "Helen's Babies," "Nobody's Boy," "Penrod," "Seventeen," and several

(Continued on page 36)



"We may live without poetry,  
music and art;  
We may live without con-  
science,  
We may live without heart,  
We may live without books.  
What is knowledge but griev-  
ing?  
We may live without hope.  
What is hope but deceiving?  
We may live without love.  
What is passion but pining?  
But where is the man that can  
live without dining?"

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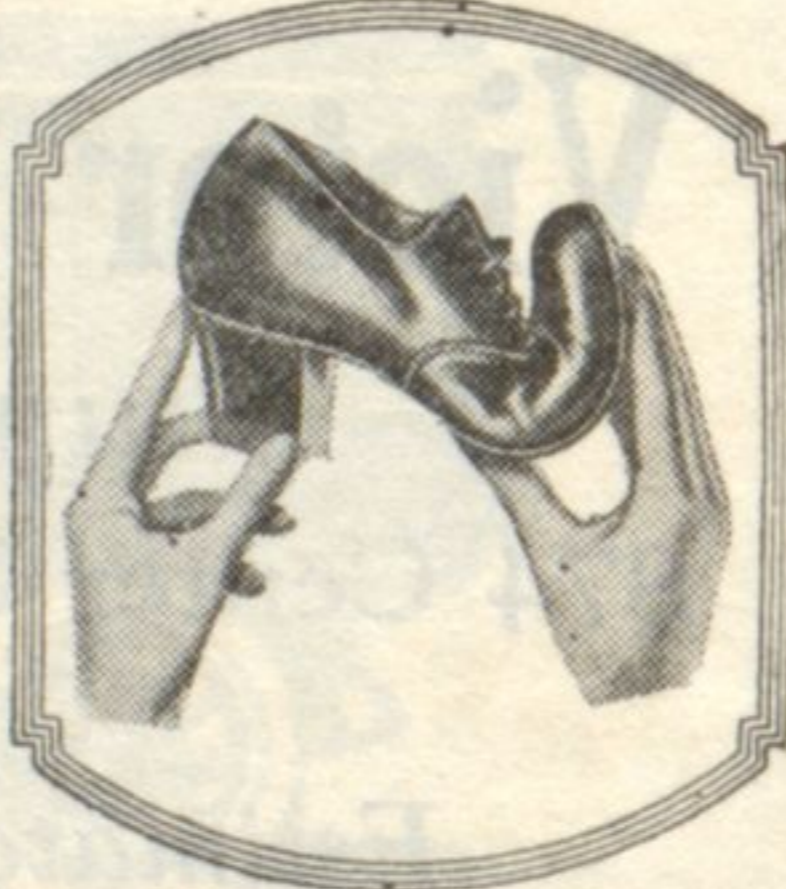
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