

CHILDREN ASSIST IN CHOOSING BEST BOOKS

(Continued from page 30)

other books each received every possible rating at the hands of our experts. Because of the wide disagreement among experts as to the literary value of books, a book had to be rated "one" by at least three-fourths of the experts to be starred on our list and a book had to be rated "three" or "four" by at least three-fourths of the experts to be omitted from the list.

Name Rejected Books

On the basis of this rating about 100 books have not been included in the list because of their low literary quality or unsuitability of subject matter. "The Bobbsey Twins" (read by 900 girls and liked by 90 per cent of the girls who read them), the "Tom Swift" books (enjoyed by 500 children) and the "Little Maid" series are examples of those considered by children's librarians as unsuitable because of low literary quality.

Other books which were omitted, either because of their low literary value or subject content, are "The Circular Staircase," "Baree," "Freckles," "Her Father's Daughter," and "The Hound of the Baskervilles." While these books are omitted from "The Winnetka Graded Book List," a separate mimeographed list of them is available for anyone applying to Mr. Washburne.

Over a hundred books were considered excellent from a literary standpoint by at least three-fourths of the experts who voted on them. Such books are starred on the lists. Among the starred books are "Aesop's Fables," "Alice in Wonderland," "Black Arrow," "Child's Garden of Verses," "David Copperfield," "Ivanhoe," "The Jungle Book," "Story of Dr. Dolittle," "Kidnapped" and "Adventures of Tom Sawyer."

It has been interesting to notice that a large number of these highly recommended books are found among the most popular from the children's standpoint. Fifty per cent of the starred books fall within the top 20 per cent of books which are most widely read and enjoyed.

Select Best Comments

On each ballot the child was asked to write a comment telling why he liked the book or what part of the book he liked. One of the best comments on each book has been chosen to annotate the graded lists. These comments were chosen by members of the research staff, who tried to get stimulating, typical and well-expressed comments as far as possible. For example:

"The Peterkin Papers" is the book of stories about the Peterkin family. They have many foolish times over little mistakes, such as when one of them puts salt in the coffee instead of sugar, and the dumb waiter got caught between the diningroom and the kitchen. They had to call the carpenter to saw the dinner out. When he came, he just turned the rope and down came the dinner."

The following comment was chosen for "Peter and Wendy": "I like the book because there is so much about fairyland in it. I also like it because Peter Pan was always so lively and never grew old."

Many of the comments are amusing.

Below are a few examples:

An 11 year old boy from Mason City says of "Texan Star": "I like this book because it suits my taste. I have a wild taste."

A twelve year old boy from Gary writes about "East O' the Sun and West O' the Moon": "I like this book because it is easy to understand what it means. In other words it is easy to read. For instance, if you start to read there are no words that will stop you reading. I like books of that sort."

The Modern Viewpoint

A 14 year old boy from Quincy, Mass., says of "Evangeline": "It doesn't seem possible that a girl would walk so many miles for her beau, when now a girl wouldn't walk one mile to see him."

The comments which were chosen to annotate the "Winnetka List" are intended for the use of the children. Many people will want to put the list into the hands of the children themselves. We have tried to choose statements which have seemed most stimulating. Where the published comment is not particularly good the reason is that no really good ones were received for that particular book.

It has been interesting to compare the "Graded List of Books for Children" published by the American Library Association in 1922. That list was made by a committee of the National Educational association. It was based on opinion and experience rather than scientific investigation. Our study showed that most of the children who liked "The Dutch Twins" had a reading ability corresponding to fourth grade. In the 1922 list this book was placed in grades two and three. "The Little Lame Prince" falls on our fifth grade list, yet was considered third and fourth grade in the 1922 list. "Toby Tyler" falls on our seventh grade list, while it was graded four to six in the 1922 list. "Child's Garden of Verses" was found to be liked best by children of fourth grade ability, yet the 1922 list graded it second and third. "Black Beauty," on the other hand, falls on our fifth grade list and is graded fourth to sixth in the 1922 list. Similarly "Birds' Christmas Carol" is graded six on our list and four to seven on the other.

Is Comprehensive List

To sum up: While it would be interesting to know about more books than the 700 on which we had sufficient data for grading; while many excellent books may not have become sufficiently well known to have a place on our list; while there is bound to be disagreement about the literary merit of the many books on which even our experts could not agree; nevertheless we do now know, with reasonable accuracy, that certain books are widely read and enjoyed by children of certain ages and certain degrees of reading ability. We have eliminated books which experts agree are trashy or unsuitable and have

specially marked books which they agree are of high literary merit. We have published rather full data on every book of the 700, classified both by grade and by age, and fully indexed. We have annotated the "Winnetka Graded Book List" with typical reasons given by children for liking each book.

Surely such a list, based on 53,000 returns from 36,750 widely scattered children of known age and grade and accurately measured, reading ability, should be of material aid to parents, librarians and teachers in selecting suitable and interesting books for each individual child.

-1926-

Marmon Improvements
Double Fire Ignition
Chassis Lubrication
3 Way Oil Purifier

Marmon North Shore
Sales and Service

1008 Davis St. Greenleaf 1038
EVANSTON
Open until 9:30 P. M.

HOOVER VACUUM CLEANERS
TERMS

Patterson Bros.

816-818 Church Street, Evanston
Tel. Univ. 654 Wilmette 526
Open Tues., Thurs. & Sat. Evenings



INDU Beauty Shop

Phone
Winnetka
2176

Scalp Treatment

Our Scalp Treatments, in which we use the Thermo-Light, have the same scientific basis that applies to all our work and produces results that cannot be secured in any other manner.

Permanent Waving
Swedish Massage

ETHEL M. TAYLOR
MARIA A. LAGERQUIST
Props.

818 Elm Street
Winnetka, Ill.

Christmas Greeting Cards

We have the largest and most exclusive assortment of

HOLIDAY GREETING CARDS

that have ever been shown in Winnetka. On these cards you will perhaps find many of your own thoughts brought into expression with composer's pen and the artist's brush in so pleasing and touching a manner as to make their message synonymous of your inner-most conceptions.

Whether it is kin, friend or acquaintance that you will want to remember at this glad season, you will be pleased with our collection of beautiful cards.

G. L. ZICK & CO.

Meyer Bank Building
Winnetka, Illinois

COAL

PHONE
WINNETKA 12
E. C. Weissenberg

Chicago

Winnetka

A. W. Zengeler
CLEANER

Lake Forest

Highland Park