

THE HEAVENLY TWINS and something of their constellation: starlets, asteroids, and nutty slack

1905 [A preliminary]: Herbert Strang *Kobo: a tale of the Russo-Japanese war* illus. by William Rainey R.I. London, Glasgow etc. Blackie & Son

Picture-book species:

[1909] *A Friend for Little Children...*[hymns]. Here in a later HN ed. as is a vol. in the same series format:-

Mabel A.Marsh *My Very First Book; a picture alphabet for little folks*

[1909] *The Tale of Tom Thumb* (The Tom Thumb Picture Books series)

[1910] Chloë Preston *The Peek-a-Boos* (Peek-a-Boo series)

[1914] Helen van Cleve Blankmeyer *The Three Goats Gruff; an old time story now told in verse* illus. E. [?] Holden

[1916] Robin A.Hood [? Ernest Aris] *Wise Benjy Brown*

1925 *Aesop's Fables* with designs by Phyllis A.Trery

[ca. 1925] *Bellflowers Blue* illus. [frontis. only] M.M.Rudge, with a companion vol.: *Mother-o'- Pearl* and a work in similar format *Birds, Beasts & Fish* [poems] illus. [frontis. only] E.[?] Holden.
These three vols. not found in the BL catalogue.

1927 G.M. Faulding [verses] *Flower Children; a flower book for little folks* Pictures by Eleanor S. March

1928 Herbert Asquith *Pillicock Hill* set to music by Alec Rowley, with illuss. by A.H.Watson [a picture book with music drawn from the verse book of the same title published by Heinemann in 1926].

1938 Mrs Herbert Strang ed. *ABC and 123* [a miscellany with various illuss. mostly unsigned]

Novelties and ephemera

1913 on *Postcards for the Little Ones* series: a project that eventuated in no fewer than seventy-two sets of (mostly) six coloured postcards each. See the extensive information in Cope *Postcards* pp.54-55 and 283-4.

[1919] *Little Miss Muffet* [cover title]. A 6-page "chapbook"

[ca. 1920] *My Own Play Book* (Mrs Strang's Play Books). A board panorama, and in the same series: *Picture and Play*. A board book.

1929 *Little Red Riding Hood and other fairy stories* illus. Grace Lodge (The Teeny Weeny Books series ed. Mrs Herbert Strang. A miniature book.

1933 *The Big Book of Mother Goose* illus. Grace Lodge. Volvelle in top board

1933 "Dolly's Pretty Play Box" A cardboard box with drop-down flap, containing eight volumes in the "Henny-Penny Books for Little Chicks" series, ed. (inevitably) by Mrs Herbert Strang. At least two other such boxed sets were published: "Baby Bunting's Box of Books" with eight vols. from the "Tippenny-Tuppeny" series (1933) and "My Own Box of Books" with six vols. from the "Teeny-Weeny Books" series (1934).

"Little Big Books" and associated series

1926 Mrs Herbert Strang ed. *Little Stories for Little People* illus. E.Dorothy Rees

1931 Margaret Baker *A Little Book of Happy Games*
This and the preceding title both in the "Little Big Books" series but with slightly different dimensions, the former 140x110 overall, the latter 151x120. Forty-two titles in the series are listed on the front endpapers of the 1931 vol. Twelve books in the series were published in a boxed set by McLoughlin Brothers, Inc., Springfield, MA (Loc.: de Grummond Coll., U. of Southern Mississippi)
Very similar in presentation are the following:-

1927 Herbert Strang *The Story of Daniel* Illus. D.Newsme (Little Books of the Bible series)

[ca.1930] *Grimm's Fairy Stories* illus. L.Govey, Grace Lodge et al. (Little Golden Books [sic] series). Cut flush board binding.

1934 Mrs H S ed. *Little Mother Molly* illus, various, (Little Giant Books series)
Thirty-three further titles in the series are listed on the front endpaper,

To-ing and fro-ing among uncountable works of fiction

1909 Talbot Baines Reed *The Willoughby Captains* illus. with frontis. and four col. plates by Harold Earnshaw. (The New 3/6 series of Boys' Books).
A very much later printing from stereotype plates in 1935 uses only one of the illuss. as a frontis.

[ca.1912] Charles Kingsley *Westward Ho!* (Herbert Strang's Library)

1936 Juliana Horatia Ewing *Daddy Darwin's Dovecot and other stories* (do.)
A list of sixty-one (mostly classic) titles occurs on the tp. verso. It would seem variously designated series of "Oxford Books for Boys" and "Girls" developed alongside the Library with a strong emphasis on school stories for both sexes.

1936 Capt. W.E.Johns *Biggles in Africa* Illus. Howard Leigh and Alfred Sindall (Oxford Air Books)

Omnibus books

The stereotyping of texts made it possible for the favourite authors in the above

popular series to have several of their stories bound together in hefty compendia:-

1935 *The Ewing Omnibus* [eight complete stories over 510 pages, including "Daddy Darwin" printed from the plates of the above-noted ed.]

1932 Dorita Fairlie Bruce *The Dimsie Omnibus* [three novels, 812 pages]

and some books gave promise of Oxford's later, classier reputation:-

1927 W.Macneile Dixon *Cinderella's Garden* illus. George Morrow

1927 H.R.Millar *The Dreamland Express* illus. author

1928 H.B.Cresswell *Marytary* illus. George Morrow

1930 S.G.Hulme Beaman *Ernest the Policeman* illus. author
[Beaman's "Toytown" was one of the outstanding successes of the BBC's "Children's Hour", but Oxford published some of his early books before that occurred, including a charming box of Toytown booklets. The above item is shown in its American Junior Literary Guild ed (ex Jackson, Mississippi Municipal Library!), probably English sheets.]

1935 Jack Lindsay *Runaway* illus. J.Morton Sale

1938 Flora Shaw *Castle Blair; a story of youthful days* With a preface by Mrs Creighton; illus. M.D.Johnston
Revival of a classic (which found much favour in the United States) first published in 1878.

1938 W.W.Tarn *The Treasure of the Isle of Mist; a tale of the Isle of Skye* illus. photographs
A 1950 ed. was one of the first books to be illus. by Margery Gill, while an earlier US ed. was illus. by Robert Lawson

Prestige editions of classic titles

1913 *Grimm's Fairy Tales* illus. Noel Pocock

1920 Charles Kingsley *The Water-Babies* illus. Charles Jackson (mounted plates)

1921 *Hans Andersen's Fairy Tales* illus. Rie Cramer & L.A.Govey (do.)
Represented here by an ed. for a cheaper reprint series with unmounted plates

1929 Robert Louis Stevenson *Treasure Island* illus. by Rowland Hilder (with slip-case). Perhaps Oxford's most distinguished children's book in the period.

Annuals and bumper books

Nothing can be done about this monstrous enterprise save to list in no sort of order what are thought to be the most regularly published titles:-

HS's Annual for Boys / Mrs S's Annual for Children followed by *Girls / Tiny Folks /*

and *Baby* // *The Big Book for Boys* followed by *Children / Girls / Tinies* and then *The Big Books of Adventure Stories / Aeroplanes / Animal Stories / Bedtime do. / Fairy do. / Fun / Happy Games / Motors / Mother Goose / Nursery Tales / Railways / School Stories for Boys / do, for Girls / the Bible / the Farm / the Zoo /* and then a similar sort of run under the rubric *The Great Book for or of...Boys / Girls / Fairy Tales / Schools Stories etc.* Very frequently material in these bumper books would reappear in other volumes, such as spin-off story collections (*In the Spring Time etc.*)

Educational books

Detailed research needs to be done on this branch of operations, said by Clare to be largely in the hands of George Herbert Ely. Many "readers" graded according to the school-class standards prevalent in elementary and other schools (*Penny Books; New Steps for Tiny Folk; Herbert Strang's Readers etc.*) have so far received no analysis.

The New York connection

During the 1930s the development of OUP children's book publishing in the New York office took a decidedly different course from that in London. Something of this may be seen in books coming into the London list from across the Atlantic (eg. Margery Williams Bianco's *The Hurdy-Gurdy Man* illus. Robert Lawson). Not only books came either, for Grace Allen, an assistant in the children's editorial office, married an English member of staff in the New York division and became Grace Hogarth, the greatest children's book editor in post-war Britain.

Some references

Hilary Clare. "Mrs Herbert Strang" *Newsletter of the Children's Books History Society* no.77 (November 2003) pp.13-18

Dawn & Peter Cope. *Postcards from the Nursery; the illustrators of children's books and postcards 1900-1950*. London: New Cavendish Books, 2000

Mary Hillier. *Chloë Preston and the Peek-a-Boos*. Shepton Beauchamp, Som.: Richard Dennis, 1998

Peter Sutcliffe. *The Oxford University Press; an informal history*. Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1978