

# A rare collection in British Columbia

Sheila A. Egoff\*

The collection of early and rare children's books at the University of British Columbia now numbers some 4,000 titles and is housed in the Special Collections Division of the University Library. This means that the books do not circulate, but they are all listed in the public catalogue and are freely available for examination and study, carrell space being provided when necessary.

The collection began in 1963 with the purchase of 200 duplicates from the famous Rosenbach Collection of the Free Library of Philadelphia. These were all early American children's books and included, for example, a set of *The Juvenile Miscellany*, 1826-1834, one issue of which contains the first publication of "Mary had a little lamb".

The next major addition, two years later, was the *Alice in Wonderland* collection, the gift of the U.B.C. graduating class of 1925. Its 450 items are listed in *Alice One Hundred; a Catalogue in Celebration of the 100th Birthday of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* published by the Adelphi Book Shop in Victoria in 1966. Here are early editions of *Alice*, both English and American, *Alice* in translations, *Alice* by 80 different illustrators, *Alice* by various publishers, *Alice* parodied and perhaps most interestingly, *Alice* imitated in such works as Edward A. Parry's *Butterscotia* (1896) and G.E. Farrow's *The Wallypug of Why* (1896). Important additions include the Salvadore Dali *Alice*.

But we did not become avid pursuers of early children's books until 1976 when Dr. Stanley Arkley and his wife, Rose, donated their collection of some 1,000 choice books to the School of Librarianship. Along with the books came money for future purchases and seed money to begin the preparation of a catalogue. Although there are significant children's books scattered in other special collections in the Special Collections Division, and although we have other and important donors, our total holdings are referred to easily, comfortably and properly as "The Arkley Collection".

The Arkleys had a broad conception of children's literature. Both American and British books were within their purview and they purchased key books in both cultures. But they were also interested in everything that children read. Therefore, as well as first editions of such standards as Thomas Day's *Sandford and Merton* and *Little Jack*, George MacDonald's *The Princess and Curdie*, Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer*, and so on, they provided such popular literature as Margaret Sidney's *Five little Peppers and how they grew*, Jean Webster's

*Daddy-Longlegs*, Eleanor H. Porter's *Pollyanna*, World War I books, such as *The boy allies*, and *Aunt Jane's nieces in the Red Cross* by Edith Van Dyne (a pseudonym of L. Frank Baum) up to the first appearance in print of Walt Disney's *Mickey Mouse*. While the bulk of the collection stems from Victorian times, we are attempting to buy in this latter period (1900-1935) since it is one that has not been studied seriously in children's literature. If it is not rich in classics, it is of considerable social significance; even the differences between American, British and Canadian books of this era are worthy of research attention. The strong and positive image of American girls shown in many of the series books such as Margaret Penrose's *The radio girls on Station Island*, Van Dyne's *Mary Louise and the Liberty Girls*, Alice B. Emerson's *Ruth Fielding in the Red Cross* are worthy of query and study.

For the last few years we have also concentrated, as much as our small budget will allow, on purchases of early Canadian children's books and Canadian-related material such as Susannah Strickland's *The soldier's orphan*, written before she emigrated to Canada, and *The Canadian brothers*, an English story about Canadian frontier life published around 1847. Such recent acquisitions, combined with the Canadian children's books already available in the "Howay-Reid Collection of Canadiana" show the wide range of our holdings and the equally wide range of our collections policy.

The Arkley Collection in no way has the rarities and the number of first editions shown in the catalogues of the famous Osborne collection. We have been more concerned with breadth and content than with first editions, unless there has been a change in the text. A later printing of Maria Charlesworth's *Ministering children* serves us quite well (especially for teaching purposes), whereas we have been positively purring with delight over a recent gift of the second edition of Mrs. Sherwood's *The Fairchild family* (1818) with the famous "gibbet passage" that was deleted from later editions. We probably would not buy more chapbooks, since we have enough diversity in titles, types and places of publication to show their spread and development. Similarly with the publications of the Religious Tract Society, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the American Tract Society and the American Sunday School Union — we have a wide representation of such Sunday-school offerings, including prize books. We would, of course welcome gifts in this area as in all others.

"To him who hath shall be given". The initial gift of the Arkleys has, as they hoped, sparked other gifts and publicity. Two special ones deserve mention here. The Stephen Borden Memorial Fund (Dr. Borden was a faculty member at the University of British Columbia) was presented by his wife, Carol Ann Borden for the purchase of books in his memory. This gift enabled us, in particular, to buy the first American edition of John Newbery's *A little pretty pocket book* published in Worcester in 1787 by Isaiah Thomas who was as important in the publishing of early American children's books as Newbery for English. Sveva Caetani de Sermoneta, a few years ago, donated the books of her

childhood, all of them in perfect condition, many in first, deluxe and autographed editions and many illustrated by Edmund Dulac, Arthur Rackham, Willy Pogany and W. Russell Flint. Among them was the second, illustrated, Italian edition of *Pinocchio* a far more elaborate production than any ever seen in English. Miss Caetani continues to add to her gifts.

Aside from our Victorian books that have been mentioned and our holdings from 1900 to 1935, what can the Arkley Collection offer the serious student or research worker in children's literature?

Our holdings of eighteenth century books are not wide, but they are representative of the period showing the typical thrust of education and religion. An example is *Pity's gift; a collection of tales to excite the compassion of youth for the animal creation* printed in 1798 and illustrated with Bewick woodcuts. We have only one book printed by John Newbery which is Volume I of *A compendious history of the world . . . compiled for the use of young gentlemen and ladies by their old friend Mr. Newbery*, 1763. However, we have two books by his printing successors: the famous *The history of Little Goody Two-Shoes* printed for T. Carnan and F. Newbery, 1780 and *The Bible in miniature* printed by another family member, E. Newbery, in 1780. The standard writers of the century are present such as John Aikin, Lucy Aikin, Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Arnaud Berquin, and others.

For those wishing to study the works of one author we have a substantial (not complete) number of titles for Maria Edgeworth, Samuel Griswold Goodridge (*Peter Parley*), both his acknowledged and spurious works, Juliana Horatia Ewing, Frances Hodgson Burnett, L.M. Montgomery and such minor writers as G. E. Farrow.

Our collection stresses the pictorial. From it, it would be possible to trace the whole development of children's book illustration from the crude, anonymous woodcuts of the early chapbooks, to the accurate and animated woodcuts of Thomas Bewick, through the charming but static school of illustration of the early Victorian period up to Randolph Caldecott, Kate Greenaway, Walter Crane and their engraver, Edmund Evans. We have numerous examples of the work of Edmund Dulac and Arthur Rackham, but twentieth century illustration can also be studied through Kay Nielsen, Maxfield Parrish, Lucie Attwell, William Denslow, John Neill and a host of other illustrators.

Again our periodical collection, although not blessed with complete runs of any one magazine is representative or prevailing types of periodicals for children, British, American and Canadian. And we do have substantial runs of *Aunt Judy's Magazine*, *St. Nicholas*, *Chatterbox*, *Boy's Own Paper*, *Girl's Own Paper*, *Peter Parley's Magazine* and many more.

Aside from the children's books that are in special collections such as Howay-Reid and Colbeck (which contains many first editions of nineteenth century children's books), the Arkley Collection itself is arranged chronologically. This has some disadvantages, but the arrangement shows, quite easily, the major

trends in writing, illustrating and publishing for children in any given period. The date used is that on the title-page or that established for the book in hand, and so an indication of what was being republished in any period as well as published for the first time.

Except for recent gifts and purchases all the early children's books in the Special Collection Division have been bibliographically described as well as catalogued. Our hope is eventually (when the economic climate is more favourable) to produce a catalogue of our holdings, probably in microfiche. The main entry is in the following format:

1. Title-page transcription Half-title, added title-page, etc.
2. Copyright date, printer, and other production information
3. Collation, paging, size in millimetres
4. Illustrations
5. Advertisements and series notes
6. Binding
7. Binders' and booksellers' labels
8. Provenance
9. Dates, dating information and authority for dating
10. Notes

The indexes, now in card form, are available for use by researchers. These include: authors, titles and series; publishers and printers; illustrators and engravers. Since every book has also been listed under its publisher, this particular index would be a fruitful area of research for anyone wishing to study the output of one particular publisher, i.e. John Harris, the Religious Tract Society, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (who published a great many of Mrs. Ewing's books), etc. We also intend to compile a special list of our Canadian holdings.

In a different category, but definitely part of our special collections of children's literature, are our early Canadian textbooks in English and French. Originally they were part of an acquisition of Canadiana made in the late 1950s, and have been increased from time to time by gifts from attics and basements. Most of the titles date from the nineteenth century and approximately 90 per cent of them are Canadian in origin. We have divided them roughly into Readers, Spellers, Grammars, Arithmetics, etc. Titles vary from the short and snappy, *Lessons on common things*, to the ponderous, *A catechism of geography; being an easy introduction to the knowledge of the world, and its inhabitants, the whole of which may be committed to memory of an early age*.

Along with the other considerable background resources of the University of British Columbia Library and our circulating collection of some children's 25,000 children's books, U.B.C. would be a fruitful source for anyone wishing to investigate most aspects of American, British, and Canadian children's literature.

SAMPLE ENTRIES

No.

1846

SPENSER, Edmund, 1552?-1599.

1. *The Home Treasury.* / [wavy rule] / TALES FROM SPENCER'S FAERIE QUEEN. / The Legend of the Knight of the *Red Cross.* / The Legend of *Sir Guyon.* / The Legend of *Sir Arthegall.* / The Legend / of *Sir Calidore.* / [Felix Summerly's monogram] / published in *Felix Summerly's Home Treasury* by / *Joseph Cundall,* at 12, *Old Bond Street,* / in the City of *Westminster.* / cI I ccxlvii. /
2. Pr. C. Whittingham, Chiswick.
3. [A]<sup>2</sup>, B-M<sup>4</sup>, N<sup>2</sup> [i-iv], 1-89 [90-92] pp. Pl. front. + 3 pl. 161 × 117 mm.
4. Adverts. on p[91] lists the illustrator as Townshend i.e. Henry Jones Townshend, also spelt Townsend.
5. Pp. [91-92], adverts. for *Felix Summerly's Home Treasury of Books* and *Gammer Gurton's Story-Books.*
6. Red morocco cloth. Front board bears title stamped in gold within an ornamental border and border in blind; back has similar borders; spine bears "Tales from Spenser" between ornaments, all stamped in gold. All edges marbled. Pink endpapers.
7. Bone & Son, 76, Flat Street, London.
8. Ethel B. Wheeler.
9. First pub. by Cundall in 1846 (McLean)
10. Although Felix Summerly is the recognized pseudonym of Sir Henry Cole, the preface is signed Charles Cole. "In 1841 he [Sir Henry Cole] began the issue of 'Felix Summerly's Home Treasury'. (DNB) Cole, like Lamb and Dickens, deplored the utilitarian motive in children's books and came out on the side of the fairies, a side which he described as "anti-Peter Parleyism". (McLean, p. 4)

NO.

1847

1. THE/CANADIAN BROTHERS. / [rule] / A Tale of the Western World. / [rule] / LONDON:/ DARTON & Co., HOLBORN HILL/ [rule] / 1847. /
2. Pr. Richard Barrett, 13, Mark Lane.
3. 1-24 pp. Pl. front. 158 x 122 mm.
4. Col. front. signed with monogram AH?
5. Green's Fireside Stories.
6. Light blue stiff wrappers. Front bears series title, title and publisher within a decorative oval, all within borders  
and ornamental borders; part of the cover is embossed in dark blue and gold. Back cover bears ornament printed in dark blue; spine of blue cloth.
8. Mast. W.C. Hasted, a Christmas gift from dear Grandpa, 1847.
10. A moralizing travelogue for English children about Canada. Bears are described as cowardly. They choose to attack "women and children, whom

they appear to know are much weaker, and less able to defend themselves”  
[than men].

NO.

1875

JERROLD, Alice, Mrs. Adolphe Smith, 1849-1872.

1. A CRUISE/ IN/ THE ACORN [decorative T and A]/ BY/ ALICE JERROLD/ (MRS. ADOLPHE SMITH)/ WITH SIX ILLUSTRATIONS, IN GOLD AND COLORS/ “Acorns which the winds have scattered/ Future navies may provide!”/ [publisher’s device]/ London:/ MARCUS WARD & CO., 67 & 68, CHANDO STREET, STRAND/ AND ROYAL ULSTER WORKS, BELFAST/ 1875/ [all within a double line border with ornaments at each corner]  
Half-title
3. [A]<sup>4</sup>, B-S<sup>4</sup> 1-140+1-4 pp. 208 x 162 mm.
4. Col. front. + 5 full-page illus. (pasted on the pages within an ornamental border) attributed to Kate Greenaway. Each illus. contains a poem.
5. The Chromograph Series. Pp. 1-4 at end adverts.
6. Wine sand-grain cloth. Front board bears title stamped in gold, col. flowered onlay on the left, ornaments stamped in black, all within a triple border stamped in black and gold; back bears borders stamped in blind; spine bears title, publisher, rules & ornaments stamped in gold possibly faded, ornaments and rules in black. Bevelled edges.
9. First pub. 1875 (BM); 1874 (EC)  
See Thomson no. 114
10. The illus. are identical to the set of six “Floral oval vignettes” printed in *Hobbies*, March 1953, p. 21 and which are described as Kate Greenaway valentines. However the verses are different, those in *A cruise in the acorn* being by such poets as Longfellow and Donne. This edition is probably later than 1875 since two of the books listed in the adverts. as “New Books” are dated by the BM as 1876.

*Sheila A. Egoff, Professor of Library Science at the University of British Columbia, is the author of The Republic of Childhood.*