

THE NEWEST BOOKS

Books for the Children's Christmas

From Nursery Rhymes to Adventure Stories in This Year's New Books for Children—Sir Malcolm Campbell Writes a Book for Boys—An American Mother's Travels

WHAT does the modern child want to read? Probably there is more than one adult pondering this question now that Father Christmas is on the scene again, promising gifts galore. "Give travel and adventure books to the children," is the recommendation offered on this page. The majority of children these days want true stories, something "really true, please," because they like to believe that the adventures about which they read might happen to them one day. Here are reviewed an assortment of some of the best books for girls and boys which have come to New Zealand this season, and which should prove to be "best-sellers." These books are for varying ages, and the reviews begin with juniors' books and appear in order of ages up to senior boys' books.

SOME people are inclined to say that beautifully-produced books are wasted on very young children. This should not be the case, as the fine texture of a book will appeal to the small mind and gradually mould an appreciation for not only good books, but articles of quality. Marjorie Hood has produced a book of real beauty in her "Nursery Rhymes," which she has collected and illustrated with 16 lovely colour plates. She carries into her painting a great deal of atmosphere and depth, combined with artistic and unusual colour harmony. A gift book fine enough for a little prince or princess.

"Nursery Rhymes," collected and illustrated by Marjorie Hood. Eyre and Spottiswoode. Our copy from the publishers.

NOTHING pleases children quite so much as to think they know what a pet is saying in animal language. Lorna Lewis must have realised this when she wrote a simple, but effective, gift book about a little French poodle who was longing for a friend. Toutou, this poodle, had pretty ribbon bows and caps to wear every day of the week. In addition to being able to speak French dog language, he could speak English, so when he ran into George, from England, who was on holiday in France, he was overjoyed, and the two of them packed up chocolates and biscuits in paper bags and trotted off for picnics together. They were also acquainted with an American, who was a bull terrier, and, although sophisticated, he was kindness itself. The owners of these friends were pigs and sheep, and the porters at the station were sea-lions. When George departed for England Toutou could not bear the separation, so, having no money, he tried to swim the Channel. What happened is shown in delightful coloured sketches by J. R. Monsell.

"The Adventures of Toutou," by Lorna Lewis. Constable and Co. Ltd. Our copy from the publishers.

THE name of Edith Howes on a children's book is really in itself sufficient recommendation, and the new edition of "The Sun Babies" will be wel-

comed by many who wish to find a suitable gift for a little girl at the "fairytale" age. Miss Howes, our famous New Zealand authoress, is known for her charming method of teaching young children some of the facts of nature, disguised in fairy form. The book under review contains 85 stories and rhymes, and has four exquisite colour plates by Frank Watkins.

"The Sun Babies," by Edith Howes. Cassell. Our copy from the publishers.

WHAT could be more natural than for a mother to write delightfully-chatty letters to her small son at home when she is making a world tour? That is what Mrs. Washburne did when she accompanied her husband, who is superintendent of a U.S.A. public school, on an extensive world tour. This book is composed of Mrs. Washburne's letters to her son, Channy, and his answers to her. The illustrations are many and varied, and as far as the contents of the letters are concerned it is impossible to convey any idea of the hordes of novel things which have been encountered. What boy or girl does not long to eat with chopsticks, watch monkeys in their natural surroundings, visit a foreign king, eat in a sheik's tent, and visit the holy places in Jerusalem? Mrs. Washburne certainly knows what is most likely to interest a child. The map of the world with novel additions is an excellent idea for the frontispiece, and the attractive travel jacket in orange, yellow, white and black makes this book distinctive and extremely desirable. Children will revel in it.

"Letters to Channy," by Helmut Washburne. Cassell. Our copy from the publishers.

PRESENTATION books of a religious nature are often difficult to choose. Quality, the style in which it is written and the 16 coloured plates from the famous Bible pictures painted by William Hole, R.S.A., R.E., during his first visit to the Holyland, make "The Prince of Peace" a book that can be thoroughly recommended. Apart from omissions and transpositions, and the insertion of two or three transitional words, printed in italics, the text is the same as appears in the Bible, which makes this book suitable for reading in Sunday schools. With its table of reference and notes on the geographical and historical background of the Bible, the story of the adventures which befel the Prince makes this fine book not only a "Sunday" book, but one that can be read and enjoyed at any time by either a child or an adult. It will never grow out of date.

"The Prince of Peace," edited by G. Waterhouse. Eyre and Spottiswoode. Our copy from the publishers.

BIBI, the little Danish girl, is the very antithesis of what most little girls want to be and do. Instead of just dreaming things, she does them. Her father is a stationmaster, and she has a railway pass all over Denmark. She

is a real little harum-scarum, and had her mother, who was a countess, not been dead she would not have run so wild, because half her wanderings and longings were to see her mother's grave and the castle where her mother lived as a girl. The writer of this distinctly original book has a keen perception of the child mind, and uses skilful touches to bring out the wistful beauty of some of the incidents. This is the kind of book that adults would need no persuasion to read aloud to children. It is now obtainable in a cheap edition, and will undoubtedly continue to be a best-seller, because, apart from its pert style and quaint humour, it is packed with interesting travel information.

"Bibi," by Karin Michaelis, translated by Rose Fyfe. Allen and Unwin. Our copy from the publishers.

WHEN you're scared, do what I used to do when I was scared of a fence. Spur your horse and thunder ahead," that was the advice given to the hero of Sir Malcolm Campbell's thriller, "Thunder Ahead," which is one of the most convincing books for boys and old boys on the market this Christmas. There are few who will not revel in this whirlwind of exciting events, during which a young lad fights for fame in the speed world. His appearances on the scenes of action, his toils with the mechanics in the pits behind the scenes, and the obstacles and jealousies with which he has to contend are all told in graphic style. The story revolves around the famous racing tracks on which Sir Malcolm has raced, and with the mention and description of the motor-cars used it is needless to say that there is not a dull moment when reading the book.

"Thunder Ahead," by Sir Malcolm Campbell. Cassell. Our copy from the publishers.

BOUND in the same type of "boys' blue" cover as the above book comes "Black Wings," by Captain Michael Cely, who during the war served in the Royal Air Force, flying nearly every type of machine and experiencing amazing adventures till he was invalided out. He writes a splendid yarn about a new type of aeroplane which set out to fly around the world in six days. On the way, its crew—a young and adventure-loving father, formerly of the Royal Air Force, his son, nephew and an engineer—discover a fleet of giant black-winged amphibian planes whose purpose is to terrorise the world by means of a deadly poison gas. How they are destroyed after an epic battle in the air, and other thrilling adventures of the world flight, is told in this book, which is mostly written in dialogue. It will interest readers when they find that New Zealand comes into the scheme of things. Excellent reading for boys and men of the adventure-loving type.

"Black Wings," by Captain Michael Cely. Cassell. Our copy from the publishers.