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# CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

## Books and Manuscripts

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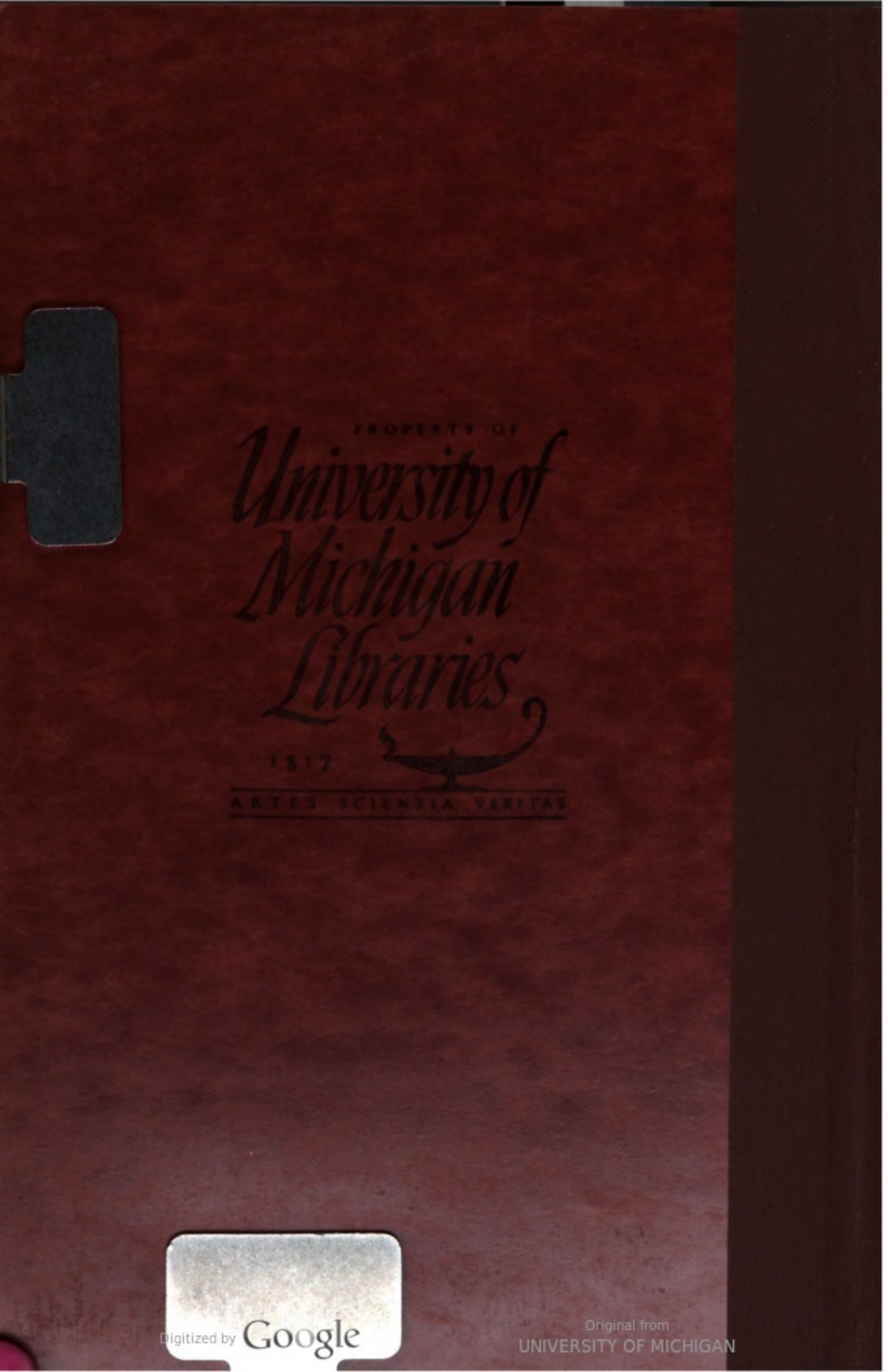

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*Perrault. Contes de ma Mère L'Oye. Frontispiece. 87*

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# Education

A selection of the school books of several centuries, from A B C's through history texts, together with Bibles and other religious works for children and a group of etiquette manuals.

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**1** [A PRIMER OR LESSON BOOK FOR CHILDREN]. English manuscript on vellum. Fifteenth Century

The manuscript begins with the alphabet and continues with the customary Lord's Prayer, Credo, Ten Commandments and other religious texts. Few primers of this period have come down to us. Formerly in the library of Lord Amherst of Hackney, and reproduced in facsimile in George A. Plimpton's *The Education of Chaucer*, London and New York, 1935, pp. 19–33.

*(Columbia University Library)*

**2** TABVLÆ ABCDARIÆ PVERILES. [Leipzig: Valentin Babst, c.1544]

The fortunate discovery of a number of these broadsides in Germany about thirty years ago revealed what is probably the oldest ABC instruction sheet to have survived. The ornamental border which surrounds the three alphabets and text made possible, by typographical comparisons, the identification of the printer.

Gumuchian 1. *(Mr. Edgar S. Oppenheimer)*

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# *Fables and Fairy Tales*

From Aesop to Thurber with an extensive collection of the editions of Perrault's *Tales of Mother Goose*

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**68** AESOP. Life and Fables. In Greek. South Italy. Tenth-eleventh Centuries

The earliest known illustrated manuscript of Aesop's famous life and fables. The pen drawings show seven scenes from the life of the Greek fabulist, who lived about 620–560 B.C., and depict him, in the traditional manner, as a deformed slave.

The Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 397.

**69** AESOP. Gantz neuw gemacht und in Reimen gefasst. [Edited and translated by] Burkard Waldis. Franckfurt am Mayn: Georg Raben und Weygand Hanen Erben, 1565

The German poet and follower of Luther, Burkard Waldis (c.1490–1556), made this free translation a vehicle of religious satire. He also stated in the dedication that the collection was designed for the use of young boys and girls, probably the first vernacular translation to be so designated. This is the fourth edition; the first edition was published in 1548. *(Mr. Edgar S. Oppenheimer)*

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# The Perraults

YEARS of controversy have not settled to the satisfaction of all concerned the question of the authorship of Perrault's *Histoires ou Contes du temps passé*. The most tenable theory, one which is supported by considerable evidence, is that the tales were written by young Pierre Perrault-Darmancour (1678–1700), a son of the academician, Charles Perrault (1628–1703), with the assistance of his father. The amount and type of this assistance will probably always be open to question, although it seems quite certain that the elder Perrault wrote the moralities in verse and added some finishing touches. It has also been suggested that a third person may have had a hand in the writing of the tales.

There is no doubt whatever that the stories of the *Histoires ou Contes du temps passé* have a solid basis in folklore; many of them, particularly those recorded by Straparola, were well-known in French printed versions in the latter seventeenth century. The term "Conte de la Mère L'Oye" in French literature also goes back before the period of the young Perrault-Darmancour, and it too has many bases in folklore. The frequently repeated and just as frequently refuted story of the American origin of Mother Goose may safely be ignored. The term, Mother Goose, actually gained popularity through the publications of Newbery and Col-

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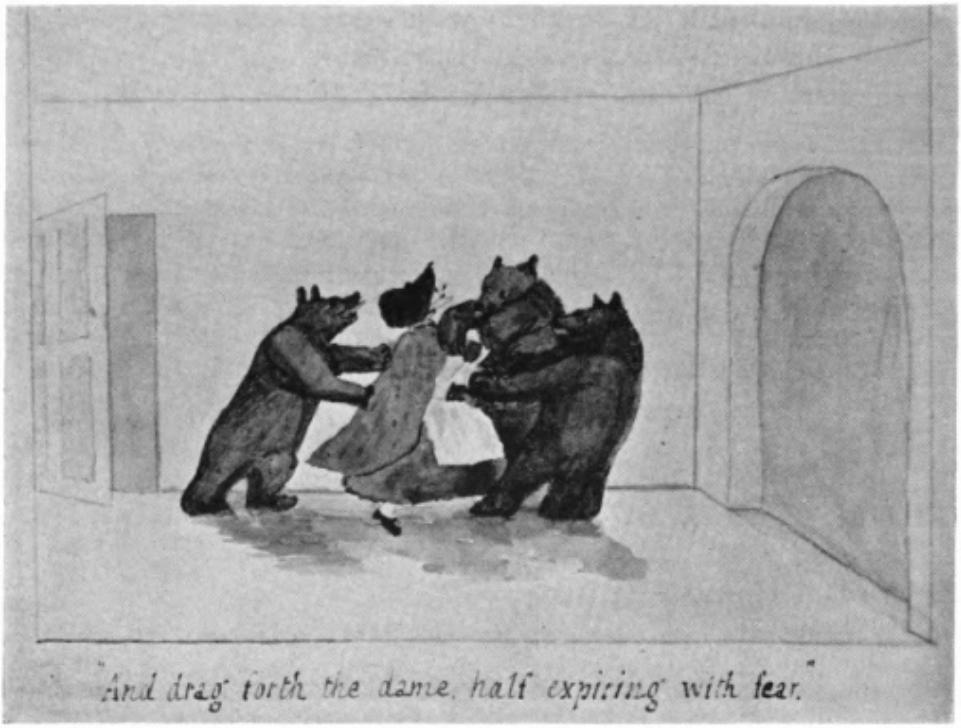


**124** THE STORY OF THE THREE BEARS metrically related, with Illustrations locating it at Cecil Lodge in September 1831 by Eleanor Mure. Manuscript

The dedication leaf reads: "The celebrated nursery tale of The Three Bears put into verse and embellished with drawings for a birthday present to Horace Broke Sept: 26: 1831." This delightful manuscript of thirteen water colors and very clever verses is the earliest appearance by six years of this popular story. "The Three Bears" was formerly credited to Robert Southey (see No. 125). This manuscript proves that Southey was not the author and implies by "celebrated nursery tale" a period of existence prior to 1831. The present version has a different ending from Southey's; the manuscript shows the definite influence of the children's books of Harris, which were popular at the time.

Muir, p. 124 *(The Toronto Public Library)*

**125** [SOUTHEY, ROBERT], 1774–1843. The Doctor &c. Vol. IV. London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green and Longman, 1837

"The Story of the Three Bears" first appears in print on pages 318–326, although the manuscript version by Eleanor Mure (No. 124) proves that the story was not original with Southey. Southey, however, had never claimed the story as an original work. As in the Mure version, the heroine is an old woman—Goldilocks has not yet made her appearance.

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# *Nursery Rhymes and Poetry for Children*

Including the poetical Mother Goose and a host of her predecessors and descendants

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**140** TYL EULENSPIEGEL. Noctuae Speculum. Omnes res memorabiles . . . Tyli Saxonici . . . nunc primum ex idiomate Germanico Latinitate donatum . . . authore Aegidio Periandro. Frankfurt-am-Main: [Corvinus, Feyrabendt, & Huter], 1567

An edition in Latin verse of the tricks and jokes of the semi-legendary Tyl Eulenspiegel or Owlglass. The real Tyl actually lived in Germany in the early

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# The Moral Tale to Mickey Mouse

A category which includes a variety of items such as fantasy, adventure, animal stories, girls' books and boys' books, and features some of the greatest books and manuscripts in the field of children's literature.

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**191** [FIELDING, SARAH], 1710–1768. The Governess; or, Little Female Academy. Being the History of Mrs. Teachum, and her nine Girls . . . London: Printed for the Author; and sold by A. Millar, 1749

The first edition of one of the earliest of moral tales. The moral content of *The Governess* increased considerably when Mrs. Mary Sherwood rewrote it in 1820, removing portions (particularly the fables) which she considered objectionable. Sarah was the sister of Henry Fielding and *The Governess* was published the same year as his *Tom Jones.*

*(Mr. Edgar S. Oppenheimer)*

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*Struwwelpeter. No. 206*

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