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So that he might in anger slay  
The little lambs that skip and play,  
Pounce down upon their placid dams  
And make dam's flesh to pad his hams.

So that he might  
Appal the night  
With crunching bones  
And awful moans  
Of antelope and buffalo.  
And the unwary hunter, whose Hallo  
Tells us his life is over here below,  
There's none to help him fear inspired  
Who shouts because his gun's misfired.

All this the lion sees and pants  
Because he knows the hot sun slants  
Between the rancid jungle grass  
Which never more shall part to let him pass  
Down to the jungle drinking hole  
Whither the zebra comes with his sleek foal.

The sun by day is hot and has his swink,  
And sops up sleepy lions' and tigers' stink.

But not this lion's stink poor carnivore,  
He's on the shady shelf for ever more.

His claws are blunt, his teeth fall out,  
No victim's flesh consoles his snout.

And that is why his eyes are red  
Considering his talents are misused.

#### FEMININE CHARM

O NEVER girl beneath the skies of Italy,  
Or maiden singing in the vales of Sicily,  
Or matron carding wool in Thessaly,  
Or skivvy washing up in Beverly,  
Gave man such joy as Bessie, Bessie Leigh,  
Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Leigh.

STEVIE SMITH

#### THE YOUNG ZOOPHILIST

- Babar's Travels.** By JEAN DE BRUNHOFF. *Methuen.* 6s.  
**Tommy Apple.** By JAMES LAVER and HENRY ROX. *Cape.* 5s.  
**Mr. Tootleoo and Co.** By BERNARD and ELINOR DARWIN.  
*Faber and Faber.* 5s.  
**Adventures of Mr. Horace Hedgehog.** By PATRICIA B.  
ARDLEY and E. C. ARDLEY. *Collins.* 5s.  
**This Little Pig.** By HELEN and ALF EVERS. *Ward.* 2s. 6d.  
**Peter and Judy in Bunny Land.** By ALISON UTTLEY. *Collins.*  
5s.  
**Wise Owl's Story.** By ALISON UTTLEY. *Collins.* 2s. 6d.  
**The Golden Touch, Mickey Mouse in Pigmy Land, Walt  
Disney's Nursery Stories.** By WALT DISNEY. *Collins.*  
2s. 6d. each.  
**The Tail of a Guinea Pig.** By CICELY ENGLEFIELD. *Murray.*  
2s.  
**The Oxford Annual for Baby.** *Oxford University Press.*  
3s. 6d.  
**My Little Farm Friends.** By GILBERT COUSLAND. *Collins.*  
3s. 6d.

If there is an animal not yet depicted in books for children I would gladly hear of it. Everything—penguins, mice, squirrels, guinea-pigs, pigs ordinary, owls, owlets, hedgehogs, pelicans, elephants, dormice, march-hares, armadillos, every omnivorous and carnivorous species imaginable, arctic and equatorial, native and mythical—seems to have been exploited. The game even spreads, as games for children will, to grown-ups. So that even brewers make nonsense rhymes with toucans.

Hats off, therefore, to M. Jean de Brunhoff and Messrs. James Laver and Henry Rox. To the first for daring to take so old a favourite as the elephant and incidentally to make a classic out of him. To Messrs. Laver and Rox for forsaking the animal world for the vegetable, and making a hero out of an apple and a heroine out of a pear. If Babar sets a fashion, as I hope and think he will, and shows Mickey where he gets off, another Christmas may bring us a rhino roaring round the world in a Comet, just as Babar now sails serenely round it, spy-glass in trunk, in the most charming balloon that ever was. And if Tommy Apple gets famous, as he ought, we may yet have *Mixed Fruit Symphonies*, in colour and, Heaven knows, taste too perhaps, featuring Polly Pineapple and the Strawberry Sisters and the Ogre Onion, with mouth-curdling effects, and realistic raspberries rudely blown.

But homage first, and above all, to Jean de Brunhoff, for Babar. To those who already know *The Story of Babar*, published last Christmas, this serene, dignified, debonair elephant, bowler-hatted, green-suited, pink-shirted, needs no introduction. Nor will those who remember *Yacki*, to whom I took off many reverent hats last Christmas, be surprised to hear that Babar is French, as French as Yacki, but as universal as *Alice in Wonderland*. To those who are unfortunate enough not to know Babar I urge them, hand on parental heart, to buy, order, or make a note of, at once, at whatever cost, both last year's volume and *Babar's Travels*, this year's. And then, if that gets them worked up, of the already promised next year's, *Babar the King*. For Babar is, without any kind of doubt at all, a masterpiece, a knock-out. He goes one better, it seems to me, than Yacki. And, as I hope to show in a moment, he goes many better than Mickey, at least a Mickey on paper. Last year Babar was young, tender, tearful. He won us by helplessness, by youth, by the charm of his first green pantaloons. This year he is not only grown up, but married. He has advanced, broadened. A deeper student of the world's mysteries, ships, circuses, taxis, balloons, desert islands, cannibals, skis, aeroplanes, he has become more droll and more dignified, full of a captivating elephantine self-possession. See him in the balloon, with Celeste, honeymooning; on the desert island, washing his pants; in the circus, tragic, most pitiful, playing a diabolical cornet; in bed with Celeste at the old lady's, in a typically French bed, having early morning tea; and perhaps best of all as a general, leading his people against the infidel rhinos, doing a master-stroke of tactics by painting the backsides of many elephants to resemble the cannibals to whom he once almost fell a victim himself. All of it is masterly. The gay, vivid, sometimes slightly satirical details—since the book is clearly for others besides children—are perfectly done. And lest this should seem like the empty praise of a mere parent, let me add superlative effective too.

If Tommy Apple, or indeed Mr. Tootleoo, or Horace Hedgehog seem slightly tame after this it is only by comparison. Babar stands quite alone; world heavy-weight champion of the nurseries. Beside him the rest, however good, seem like fly-weight novices. But if Tommy Apple fails to prove a champion it will not be the fault of Messrs. Laver and Rox, who have turned him out in the pink of proper condition. To Mr. Rox, especially, many bouquets are due. Take a look at Pineapple, the horse, Sun Son, Prince of the Blood; King Orange sitting on a throne of bananas; Lady Leek, Mr. Tomato, and Tommy himself, trying on his crown, defending the walls of the city. All these are something quite new in the child's world of books; and not only new but, it must be confessed, extremely refreshing in their fruitiness after a too liberal dose of animal pie.

So with Mr. Tootleoo, an old salt and also an old favourite. There may be a million rabbits, but only one Tootleoo: only one pig-tail like that strange jaunty comma of his, only one such belly, like some gigantic red-striped melon, only one purveyor of such nautical naughtiness. Tootleoo, as an able-bodied seaman, would stand about as much chance in the rigging as Babar would in the jungle of reality. All of which brings us to the question of the unreal in children's books, to the necessity of their being fantastic. There used to be an old teaser, designed to catch the ignorant and proud: "Do you read for pleasure or for profit?" It may be applied, though not put, to children. And there is only one answer. What shall it profit a child to be told that mice do not play pianos, but are rodents merely, that the elephant never rides in balloons, but is simply the largest non-marine mammal and that the difference between the African and Indian species is distinct but baffling, or that hedgehogs are never named Horace, but are simply medium-sized insectivores, nocturnal, rolling themselves up into spiky balls against attack? The man who tried to put this kind of thing over would be howled down. And rightly so.

Thus Mr. Tootleoo, so pot-bellied that he would sink a boat if he sat in one end of it, always providing he wasn't too pot-bellied to get into it, is a hero. He belongs to that classic gallery of comics in which Weary Willie, Tired Tim and Pop-Eye are predominant: a gallery of disreputable outcasts who would be clapped into the nearest gaol if they existed in real life. But the child does not ask for real life. It asks for absurdity, improbability: Mickey playing the giddy goat, Babar in a balloon, or Helen and Alf Ewer's tale of a little pig who had a curly tail and longed and prayed and schemed for it to be straight, and at last was rewarded, with the result that nobody loved the straight tail, everybody hated it. Except the little pig: who simply loved it. Or another tail: Miss Englefield's *Tail of a Guinea Pig*. Whoever heard of a guinea pig that had a tail? Whoever, in the language of the Black Crows, heard of that? Or a guinea-pig with a banjo, or a rabbit on roller-skates? Impossible—delightful. At half a crown and two shillings this little pig and these guinea pigs are dirt cheap. The pig has no name; he is the eternal little pig of the eternal rhyme. The guinea pigs have: and Clara and Charles are quite as good as their names.

Miss Uttley's two books succeed in the same way. The wise owl who is a bibliophile, the rabbits in yellow breeches and scarlet aprons and torquise coats, are figures of absurd delight. I take off a third hat also to Miss Young for her illustrations to *Peter and Judy*. No half tones here, or shades belonging more to Victorian antimacassars than books, but a liberal splashing on of spring colour, gay as enamel, with one picture, the rabbits' circus, that in its small way rivals Babar. Miss Young should, with all respect to Miss Urtley, dissolve partnership, and produce her own book, telling the tale by her own gay pictures.

For, again with all respect to those who are responsible for the words of all the books in this list, what goes straight to the child's heart is not the print but the colour. To the child print is a secondary thing—often a boring thing—until it can read for itself. Disney sees this, and makes his symphonies coloured now, and has colour daubed all over *The Golden Touch* and *Nursery Rhymes* and *Mickey in Pigny Land*. But all, sadly, without avail. For—heresy though it may be, even for a Disney fan—Mickey on paper is a colossal flop. All the colour and print in the world

will not atone for the loss of movement. A static Mickey, as he appears here, is a Mickey as good as dead in a trap. What child, seeing Mickey here on paper for the first time, would weep to be taken to a bookseller as one child once wept to be taken to the pictures, its distracted parent holding trap-caught mouse in hand, saying to the box-office girl: "One and a half, please. In the trap this morning. I've got to convince him it isn't Mickey!" Similarly *The Golden Touch* has lost both its gold and its touch, leaving us only an emptiness of cheap print and paper. I hate to say it: but life subscriptions to zoological societies would seem better presents than Disney on paper.

Finally, after the solid, untearable Oxford annual—now, I imagine, frowned upon by psychologists—Mr. Gilbert Cousland. After the fantastic, the photographic—the best possible pictures of real animals and real life, good beyond all hope of criticism. The calves, the dairy, the small boy with his rabbits, the black pigs at the swill-trough, the horses; the perfection of them all conceals and reveals endless patience, sympathy, understanding and love. In the realm of reality Mr. Gilbert Cousland stands just about as high as Babar in the realm of fantasy. And if there were a higher compliment than that I would gladly pay it. Hats off, then, and finally, to Mr. Cousland  
H. E. BATES

### THE CHRISTMAS CRUSH

**The Green Island.** By KARIN MICHAELIS. Translated by ROSE FYLEMAN. *Allen and Unwin*. 7s. 6d.

**Mary Poppins Comes Back.** By P. L. TRAVERS. *Lovat Dickson*. 5s.

**The Untidy Gnome.** By STELLA GIBBONS. *Longmans*. 7s. 6d.

**The Unexpected Adventure.** By T. F. W. HICKEY. *Heinemann*. 6s.

**Bill of the Black Hand.** By WOLF DURIAN. Translated by MARIE L. BARKER. *Cape*. 5s.

**Picture Tales from Many Lands.** By VALERY CARRICK. *Blackwell*. 5s.

**Fowl and Fishy Rhymes.** By K. A. STANLEY. Illustrated by D. FREEMAN. *Dent*. 5s.

"Keep close! Don't get lost in the crowd! And make up