



“The Thousand Good Books” by John Senior

Senior’s Incomplete Life-Long Reading List

THE NURSERY (Ages 2 – 7)

Literary experience begins for very young children with someone reading aloud while they look at the pictures. But they can begin to read the simplest stories which they already love at an early age.

- Aesop. *Aesop’s Fables* (The translation by Robert L’Estrange is the classic).
- Andersen, Hans Christian. *Fairy Tales. Arabian Nights*. There are two classic translations, one expurgated for children by Andrew Lang, the other complete by Richard Burton.
- Belloc, Hilaire. *The Bad Child’s Book of Beasts; Cautionary Tales*.
- Caldecott, Randolph. *Picture Books, 16 little volumes* (published by Frederick Warne).
- Carroll, Lewis. *Alice in Wonderland; Through the Looking Glass*. Illustrated by Tenniel.
- Collodi, Carlo. *Pinocchio*.
- de la Mare, Walter. *Come Hither; Songs of Childhood*.
- Edgeworth, Maria. *The Parent’s Assistant; Moral Tales*.
- Ewing, Juliana. *Jackanapes. Gesta Romanorum*. Translated by Swann (scholarly facsimiles).
- Grahame, Kenneth. *Wind in the Willows* (illustrated by Ernest Shepherd).
- Greenaway, Kate. *Apple Pie; Birthday Book; Marigold Garden; Mother Goose; Under the Window; The Language of Flowers* (Frederick Warne).
- Grimm. *Household Stories*. Illustrated by Walter Crane (Dover facsimiles).
- Harris, Joel Chandler. *Uncle Remus*.
- Kingsley, Charles. *Water Babies*.
- Kipling, Rudyard. *Just So Stories; Jungle Book*.
- Lamb, Charles. *Beauty and the Beast; Tales from Shakespeare*.
- Lang, Andrew. *Blue Book of Fairies and other colors; five volumes; best illustrated by H.J. Ford* (Dover facsimile).
- Lear, Edward. *Nonsense Omnibus; The Owl and the Pussycat*. Illustrated by Lear (Warne).
- Lofting, Hugh. *Dr. Doolittle’s Circus* and others in the series.
- Milne, A.A.. *Winnie the Pooh* and others in the series. *Mother Goose* (Dover facsimiles – illustrated by Rackham; Viking Press).
- Perrault, Charles. *Fairy Tales*. Illustrated by Dore (Dover).
- Potter, Beatrix. *Peter Rabbit* and 23 little volumes; some available in French, Spanish and Latin. All illustrated by Potter (an important feature of these books is their small size, designed for a young child. Buy the individual books, not all of them collected in one big volume).
- Stevenson, Robert Louis. *A Child’s Garden of Verses* (Scribners).

SCHOOL DAYS (Ages 7 – 12)

- Adams, Andy. *Log of a Cowboy*. Illustrated by N.C. Wyeth.
- Alcott, Louisa May. *Little Women; Little Men; others*.
- Aldrich, Thomas Bailey. *Story of a Bad Boy*.

Burroughs, Edgar Rice. *Tarzan* series.

Browning, Robert. *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*. Illustrated by Kate Greenaway (Warne).

Burnett, Francis Hodgson. *The Secret Garden*; *Little Lord Fauntleroy*.

Collins, William. *John Gilpin's Ride*. Illustrated by Caldecott (Warne).

Cooper, James Fenimore. *Deerslayer* and many others.

Dana, Richard Henry. *Two Years Before the Mast*.

Dickens, Charles. *Christmas Carol*; *Cricket on the Hearth*; *David Copperfield*; *Oliver Twist* (These last may be reserved for adolescents or re-read.)

Dodge, Mary Mapes. *Hans Brinker*.

Defoe, Daniel. *Robinson Crusoe*.

Garland, Hamlin. *Son of the Middle Border* and others.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *Tanglewood Tales*.

Henty, George William. A hundred "Boys Books"

Irving, Washington. *Sketch Book*.

James, Will. *Smoky*; *Lone Cowboy*; *Book of Cowboys* Illustrated by James.

Kingsley, Charles. *Westward Ho*, others

Kipling, Rudyard. *Captains Courageous*; *Stalky and Co*. Illustrated by Millar.

Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth. *Hiawatha*; *Evangeline*.

Marryat, Frederick, *Midshipman Easy*; *Masterman Ready*, and others.

Masefield, John. *Jim Davis*.

Porter, Gene Stratton. *Freckles* and others.

Pyle, Howard. *Robin Hood* and others. Illustrated by Pyle.

Sewell, Anna. *Black Beauty*.

Shakespeare. *Comedy of Errors*.

Spyri, Johanna. *Heidi*.

Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Treasure Island*; *Kidnapped*, and others. Illustrated by N.C. Wyeth

Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Tarkington, Booth. *Penrod* and others in the series *Til Eulenspiegel* translated by Mackenzie.

Twain, Mark. *Tom Sawyer*; *Huckleberry Finn*; *The Prince and the Pauper* – but not Connecticut Yankee and later novels.

Verne, Jules. *Around the World in Eighty Days*; and many others.

Wilder, Laura Ingalls. *Little House on the Prairie*; and others.

Wyss, Johann. *Swiss Family Robinson*.

ADOLESCENCE (Ages 12 – 16)

Bronte, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*.

Collins, Wilkie. *Moonstone* and others.

Dampier, William. *A Voyage Round the World*.

Daudet, Alphonse. *Tartarin, Fromont Jeune*.

Dickens, Charles. *Barnaby Rudge*; *Nicholas Nickleby*; *Old Curiosity Shop*.

Doyle, Arthur Conan. *Sherlock Holmes* series; *White Company*.

Du Maurier, George. *Trilby*.

Dumas, Alexander. *Three Musketeers*; others.

Eggleston, Edward. *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*.

Eliot, George. *Romola*; *Adam Bede*; *Mill on the Floss*.

Fabre, Henri. Selections from *Souvenirs entymologique*.

Hughes, Thomas. *Tom Brown's School Days; Tom Brown at Oxford*.
Hugo, Victor. *Quatre-vingt-treize; Les Miserables; Hunchback of Notre-Dame*.
Ibanez, Blasco. *Blood and Sand; Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*.
Le Sage, Alain. *Gil Blas*.
Park, Mungo. *Travels in Africa*.
Parkman, Francis. *Oregon Trail*.
Poe, Edgar Allen. *Tales; and poems*.
Polo, Marco. *Travels*.
Reade, Charles. *The Cloister and the Hearth*.
Rhodes, Eugene. *Best Novels and Stories* (edited by Dobie).
Scott, Walter. *Ivanhoe; Rob Roy; many others*.
Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*.
Shakespeare. *Midsummer Night's Dream; Romeo and Juliet; Merchant of Venice*.
Sienkiewicz, Henryk. *Quo Vadis; With Fire and Sword*.
Swift, Jonathan. *Gulliver's Travels*.
Wallace, Edgar. *Four Just Men; Sanders of the River; others*.
Wells, H.G.. *The Time Machine; The Invisible Man; others*.
Wister, Owen. *The Virginian*.

YOUTH (Ages 16 – 20)

Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice; and others*.
Balzac, Honore. *Pere Goriot; and many others*.
Bellamy, Edward. *Looking Backward*.
Bernanos, Georges. *Diary of a Country Priest*.
Blackmore, Richard. *Lorna Doone; and others*.
Borrow, George. *Romany Rye; and others*.
Bronte, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*.
Buchanan, John. *The Thirty Nine Steps; and many others*.
Butler, Samuel. *The Way of all Flesh; Erewhon*.
Cabell, James Branch. *Jurgen; and others*.
Cable, George Washington. *Old Creole Days; and others*.
Cather, Willa. *My Antonia; Death Comes for the Archbishop; and others*.
Chekhov, Anton. *Stories; and plays*.
Chesterton, G.K.. *Father Brown series; Everlasting Man; A Man Called Thursday*.
Columbus, Christopher. *Four Voyages to the New World*.
Conrad, Joseph. *Lord Jim; and many others*.
Cook, James. *Captain Cook's Explorations*.
De Maupassant, Guy. *Stories*.
Dickens, Charles. *Bleak House; Our Mutual Friend; Martin Chuzzlewit*.
Dostoyevsky, Feodor. *Crime and Punishment; Brothers Karamazov*.
Doughty, Charles. *Travels in Arabia Desert*.
Fielding, Henry. *Tom Jones; Jonathan Wilde*.
Hakluyt, Richard. *Voyages to the New World*.
Hawkins, Anthony Hope. *The Prisoner of Zenda*.
Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *Scarlet Letter; and others*.
Irving, Washington. *Life of Columbus; Conquest of Granada; Life of George Washington Jackson,*

Helen Hunt. *Ramona*.
Lagerof, Selma. *Jerusalem; Gosta Berling*; and others.
Loti, Pierre. *Iceland Fisherman*; and others.
Manzoni, Alessandro. *The Betrothed*.
Melville, Herman. *Moby Dick; Billy Budd*; and others.
Moore, Tom. *Lalla Rookh*.
Morris, William. *News from Nowhere*.
Scott, Robert. *Scott's Last Expedition*
Shakespeare. *Macbeth; Hamlet; Taming of the Shrew; As You Like It*.
Stendahl. *The Red and the Black; The Charterhouse of Parma*.
Stanley, Henry Morton. *How I Found Livingstone*.
Thackeray, William Makepeace. *Vanity Fair; Henry Esmond*; and others.
Tolstoy, Leo. *War and Peace*; and others.
Trollope, Anthony. *Barchester series*
Turgenev, Ivan. *Fathers and Sons; A Nest of Gentlefolk*; and others.
Undset, Sigrid. *Kristin Lavransdatter*; and others.
Verga, Giovanni. *The House by the Medlar Tree*; and others (translated by D.H. Lawrence)
Washington, Booker T. *Up from Slavery*.

MUSIC

Avoiding extremes of difficult and light—neither Bach nor Debussy—the distinction between “great” and good is blurred. The student should listen to one work only for at least a week, going over and over the separate movements or acts until the repeated themes are recognized as they recur. It is better to know a very few works very well than to run over vast amounts. The following is a good order for neophytes:

Beethoven. *Violin Concerto*.
Beethoven. *Pastoral Symphony*.
Verdi. *Rigoletto*.

With an opera, read the entire libretto in English, then take only a single scene and play it through several times trying to follow the words in Italian (or French or German) with an understanding of their meaning. Having gone through the whole opera scene by scene, pick out great moments – arias, duets, etc. It is good to have two recordings, one of the complete work, another of the highlights.

Puccini. *La Boheme*
Mozart. *Clarinet Concerto or Oboe Concerto; Jupiter Symphony*;
Piano music (especially as played by Gieserking)
Beethoven. *Seventh Symphony*.
Brahms. *Fourth Symphony*.
Chopin: *Selections*.
(Most important: Students should attend live concerts).

ART

The Kenneth Clark series Civilization. Clark published a book with illustrations and the text of the series. And most important, visits to museums and galleries.