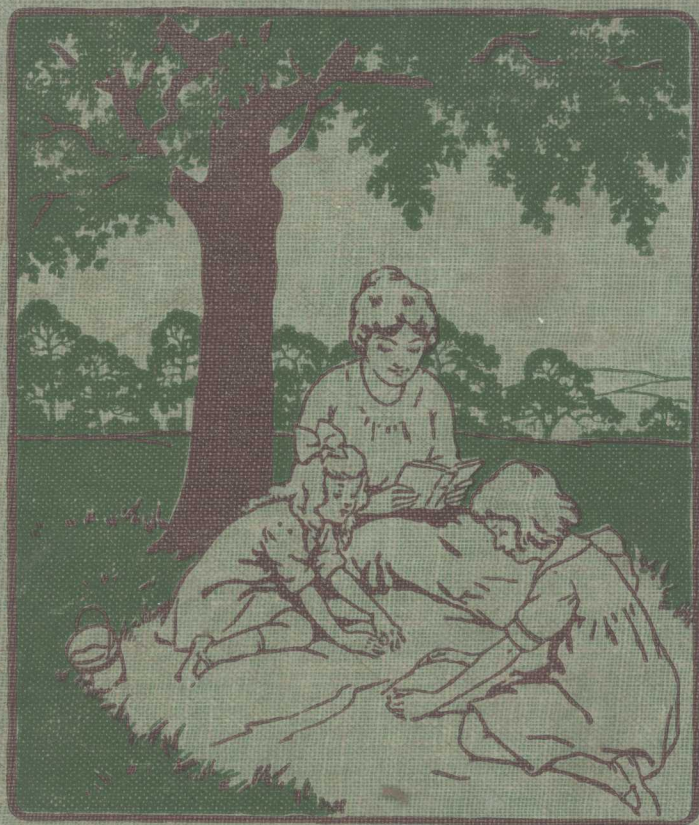


PLAY SCHOOL SERIES



EDUCATING BY  
STORY-TELLING

CATHER

*Play School Series*  
*Edited by Clark W. Hatherington*

# EDUCATING BY STORY-TELLING

SHOWING THE  
VALUE OF STORY-TELLING AS AN EDUCATIONAL  
TOOL FOR THE USE OF ALL WORKERS  
WITH CHILDREN

BY

**Katherine Dunlap Cather**

Author of "Boyhood Stories of Famous Men,"

"Pan and His Pipes and Other Stories."

"The Singing Clock"



*Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York*  
**WORLD BOOK COMPANY**

1920

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS book has grown out of years of experience with children of all ages and all classes, and with parents, teachers, librarians, and Sunday School, social center, and settlement workers. The material comprising it was first used in something like its present form in the University of California Summer Session, 1914, and since then has been the basis of courses given in that institution, as well as in private classes and lecture work. The author does not claim that it is the final word upon the subject of story-telling, or that it will render obsolete any one of the several excellent works already upon the market. But the response of children to the stories given and suggested, and the eagerness with which the principles herein advocated have been received by parents and teachers, have convinced her that the book contains certain features that are unique and valuable to those engaged in directing child thought.

Other works have shown in a general way how vast a field is the realm of the narrator, but they have not worked out a detailed plan that the busy mother or teacher can follow in her effort to establish standards, to lead her small charges to an appreciation of the beautiful in literature and art, and to endow them with knowledge that shall result in creating a higher code of thought and action. No claim is made that all the problems of the school and home are solved in the ensuing pages, and the title, "Educating by Story-Telling," makes no assumption that story-telling can accomplish everything. The author does

assume, however, that when used with wisdom and skill, the story is a powerful tool in the hands of the educator, and she attempts to indicate how, by this means, some portion of drudgery may be eliminated from the schoolroom, and a more pleasurable element be put into it. She undertakes to demonstrate how it is possible to intensify the child's interest in most of the subjects composing the curriculum, not by advancing an untried theory, but by traveling along a path that has been found to be a certain road to attainment, not only for the gifted creative teacher, but for the average ordinary one who is often baffled by the bigness of the problem she has to solve.

Grateful acknowledgment is made for permission to use copyrighted material as follows: to the Whitaker, Ray, Wiggin Company for the story entitled "The Search for the Seven Cities" (page 149); to Dr. David Starr Jordan and A. C. McClurg & Co. for "The Story of a Salmon" (page 255) and "The Story of a Stone" (page 331); to the David C. Cook Company for "The Pigeons of Venice" (page 263), "The Duty That Wasn't Paid" (page 278), "Wilhelmina's Wooden Shoes" (page 283), "The Luck Boy of Toy Valley" (page 302), and "The Pet Raven" (page 317); and to Henry Holt & Co. for "The Emperor's Vision" (page 306).

KATHERINE DUNLAP CATHER

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

THE story is a phase of communication — the instinctive tendency to signal and transmit feelings and ideas and to respond to such expressions — and communication is associated with the social complex of instincts and emotions as indicated by these responses. Through the power of social sympathy in this complex, curiosity and the imagination are brought under the sway of communication, especially in the story. Indeed, the psychology of the story reveals how deeply social sympathy influences the imagination and controls curiosity. The primitive side of this social sympathy is seen in the responses of social animals to the calls of their kind, in the rush of dogs and men to the cries of battle. Its power over the imagination is shown in the swaying of the spectator to the movements of the athlete, his ejaculations and his cries of distress or delight. Through sympathy in imagination the spectator enters the contest. Further, so socially minded are we, and so dependent upon social guidance, that curiosity is nowhere so keen, nor the imagination so active, as in the communication of a life situation. Any incident or accumulation of incidents that we call a plot in the experience of an individual or group of individuals, grips the mind. This explains the fascination of the story. Gossip and scandal are the less worthy forms. The novel is exalted gossip or scandal; the drama the same acted out. They all feed the tremendous hunger for insight into life. They unroll the curtain on the content of life, or some phase of life. Hence the story is the natural form for revealing life.

Communication, like life, may be either serious or frivolous; hence the story carries both functions. It pictures or expresses life in both phases. But the form of the story itself is pleasurable; and thus story-telling may degenerate into mere amusement. This possibly has led to both its abuse and its neglect.

The fact that the story is so enjoyable to children has led teachers and parents to use it merely as amusement, irrespective of content, or even of artistic form. This tendency has been met by publishers. As proof, note the books exhibited at Christmas time in any bookshop. They show the enormous amount of trash set up in book form for child consumption. This is a more serious danger than the trash read by adults, because they are food for hungry minds at the growing age. The importance is shown of selecting stories according to recognized criteria. While the child enjoys the story, he has no judgment of values in the story other than its pleasure-giving qualities. As judgment is a product of education, so judging values is an adult function; the adult must study all stories, but not tell all stories. The story-teller must analyze the story plot, criticize the values, select and adapt stories to age periods and to other child needs. This task Mrs. Cather has performed in her book.

The mere fact that the story amuses has caused a neglect of its larger functions in education. This is due to the traditional attitude toward the pleasurable in education. Education is life, and synonymous with the joys and griefs of life; but the traditions of the school when it was a place simply to master the three R's, and the traditions of intellectualism, monkish

asceticism, and Puritanism, have conspired to perpetuate the idea of education as a "hard" process. That it is "hard" is demonstrated by the vast number of children who dislike school and drop out of it before finishing the grades, and by the small number of those who go through its process and think of education and its discipline with delight. Yet this is what all normal, vigorous children should feel. There is probably no more profound or serious issue in education or democracy — and democracy depends on education — than this conflict between the advocates of a school process that is "hard" and the advocates of a process that is "pleasurable." The arguments exhibit the two extremes in all such controversies: the advocates of "discipline," "iron," "the bitter pill" on the one hand, and the advocates of "freedom" and "enjoyment," — really soft pedagogy and license, — on the other. The truth, as is usually the case, lies between the two schools. Both are right in part, and both are wrong in part. Both see an essential, and both fail to see the reverse side of what each advocates. There is no conflict between real discipline and real pleasure; they cannot be separated in child life. This being so, the story is bound to take a large place in the teaching of the future.

The story amuses, but its function is not merely to amuse. Pleasure is not the aim of life, nor even its sole guide; it is an index of life, especially in the young.

The point needs to be emphasized that the story is the carrier, always has been the carrier, and will remain the natural carrier of racial tradition or informa-



tion and ideals. The story in education has two functions: (1) it is the mold of ideals, and (2) it is the illuminator of facts.

(1) The highest and most difficult achievement in educational effort is the establishment of standards or ideals that function in judgment and behavior. The place of the story in moral education has been emphasized by many writers. Its place in developing an appreciation of artistic forms in language, in music, and in the graphic arts is splendidly illustrated in this book.

Appreciation is an emotional response, primarily instinctive, but developed through experience and according to high or low artistic standards by social approval or disapproval. In the emotional response lies interest and in the character of the emotional response lies the character of the interest. The interest may be crude, vulgar, or vicious, or it may be ideal, but in either case it is a product of developed emotional habits. In the life of the child this emotional response precedes the intellectual judgment of artistic values which comes later and only through contrast and comparison, and the former is vastly more important in social significance for the pleasure of the mass than the latter. This development of the artistic emotional response may be cleverly guided through the story, as Mrs. Cather shows, and she gives a wealth of suggestions for the use of the teacher.

But the story itself is a form of artistic expression and thus subject to the application of standardizing judgments. A good story must be judged by a double standard. It may be good in the sense that it is well



told — and well told means simply that the incident or plot is related in sequence, with such emphasis and form of language that it grips the human instinctive response to the dramatic; or it may be good in the sense that it carries a good content in meaning or ideal. These two standards may not, frequently do not, coincide. A story may be so told that it is most fascinating, and yet the content be mere rubbish or even vicious; or the content may be correct and the telling so poorly done that it kills interest.

Many stories are told because of their “beauty” of form, where the content is not true. Some such stories are valuable because of the standardizing sentiments they carry, but truth is as important at least as the æsthetic. The human intellect evolved to interpret meanings and progressively perfect behavior adjustments. Each age of racial experience brings on its new interpretations, and broadly, each age makes advances upon that which preceded. Old theories fall, new truths arise; but old theories hold sway over the imagination of the masses long after the leaders have accepted higher truths because the old is well told while the new lacks the poetic expression of the artist. Literature is well-told information, yet under the guise of literature goblins and superstitions and worn-out theories parade in the imagination and thus mold ideals and behavior.

The problem of the professional story-teller of the future is to tell the best information of the age in as fascinating a form as the old myths and fables are now told after years of repetition. Only in this way can contemporary popular opinion be kept

abreast of the scientific truth of the time, instead of dragging along in the superstitions of the past.

Some stories are told though untrue, because they "develop the imagination," but this by itself is a dangerous criterion. The function of the imagination is to reconstruct the world in mental terms which will guide behavior. The functioning of the imagination in any kind of images will develop "power," but the power may be detrimental individually and socially if the images cause crooked thinking. Straight thinking depends on the imagination — on the kind of emotionalized images which habitually arise in any thought situation or problem. Just so far as stories are untrue and without great moral value, yet are fascinatingly told, so far do they encourage untrue imagining and emotional attitudes, and therefore untrue thinking. And inasmuch as the emotional response to the single interpretative concept, the single vision of life, is vastly stronger through tradition than the interest in the discovery of complex relationships, — and truth comes finally only through the latter, — the emotionalized habits of imagination in interpretation are profoundly important for democracy.

Democracy cannot exist with a population of fuzzy thinkers. Story-telling, like all educational effort, must develop the imagination in mental terms that will function in life today.

(2) The story is an illuminator of facts. The child gets his information by activities in relation to the environment, by exploration, observation, experimentation, with the everlasting play of the interpretative processes, and by responding to and accepting or re-

jecting the communicated interpretations put upon phenomena by his social group. In this process of interpretation there is the immediate environment which can be sensed, but is understood only through its reconstruction in the imagination, largely in linguistic terms; and the remote environment which cannot be sensed and which can be understood only as it is built in the imagination as an extension of the reconstructed sensed environment. In these reconstructive processes the story is the most powerful correlating and illuminating educational force we have, as may be indicated by a brief analysis.

The activities of the school curriculum dealing with the environment have two natural foci of interest for the child. (a) The civic-geographical-historical complex (when rightly organized just one subject) and (b) the physical-biological complex, which is now coming to be called "general science." For the child these two groups of the environmental activities cover the whole of adult science, philosophy, and religion, and both require a tremendous reconstructive functioning of the imagination.

(a) The first group is a new coming correlation which naturally must carry with it organized communication or the larger share of language and literature. The investigation of the local social environment is the basis of all "civics," "geography," and "history." It expands as civics. When the child projects his interpretations of any human activity into another environment so that he is reconstructing in his imagination the life habits and customs of the people in relation to the physical and biological characteris-

tics of the country, he is studying geography. When he goes backward in time in this process, he is studying history.

In this concentric widening of the intellectual horizon concerning human life and its relationships to the environment, the imagination must reconstruct a world which it cannot sense. The facts may be gained from pictures, maps, descriptions, but to become functional in thought in any other than in a mere commercial sense, the reconstruction must touch the emotions so that the life and conditions of living of the people will be felt. When felt the life will be dwelt upon in imagination, and when dwelt upon in imagination it will function in the life activities of the child. Giving this vivid, felt insight into the life conditions of other people is the function of the story. Through the hunger to feel life the story reveals life.

(b) The story also functions for children in the interpretation of the physical-biological environment or "general science."

Between six and fourteen years of age is the neglected period for science, and it is the age when the story may function in the biggest way as a natural educational tool. Yet so absorbed are school men in the problem of drilling children in the dissected elements of the written language that they do not even understand one of the two chief characteristics of child nature at this age, — the rapidly expanding curiosity concerning nature. It is the age of the first crude control of the "scientific instinct," the tendency to experiment and explore. It is the age for fixing the questioning habit and building a common-sense confidence in and

familiarity with nature. These results follow from the logical processes involved in the activities, not from being presented with the formalized and logical results of adult science. The child will have none of this latter if he can help it; he wants to do his own experimenting. In this process again the story gives the larger insight. The child acquires facts by experimentation, observation, exploration, but the larger meanings and relationships require imaginative reconstruction. The child can observe the fish or the fly at different stages of their development, but the story of the life history of the fish or fly gives what observation cannot supply. It is as fascinating as any fairy tale when told with the same consideration for dramatic form, and the story is true besides. The child cannot understand evolution as presented by Darwin, or by the teacher of biology in the high schools; but the child even of eight revels in the stories that carry the facts of evolution, and thus he gains a right feeling towards the wonderful meaning of the progress of natural things, which makes later thinking true and easy. So strong is the response to the story that even the history of physical things when set in a natural story form, stimulates.

The fairy tales of the future will be well-told stories from our sciences or human life and nature, the two natural centers of interest in the environment, and we may expect as results in public opinion a broader common sense and a lessened gullibility. In this organization of science and modern thought in story form for its larger use in education the professional story-teller has still a great unfinished task to perform.

Its beginnings are in this book, and Mrs. Cather is already at work on a broader compilation of materials for a later volume. In this larger functioning of the story the old fairy tales and myths will take their place as historical data to give comparative insight into the beliefs of people in the past, a sympathetic understanding of their limitations in knowledge, and an appreciation of our privileges in civilization, due largely to the struggles of the past.

CLARK W. HETHERINGTON /

# CONTENTS

## PART ONE

### STORY-TELLING AND THE ARTS OF EXPRESSION — ESTABLISHING STANDARDS

	PAGE
AUTHOR'S PREFACE . . . . .	iii
EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION . . . . .	ix
CHAPTER	
I. THE PURPOSE AND AIM OF STORY-TELLING . . . . .	1
II. THE STORY INTERESTS OF CHILDHOOD — A. RHYTHMIC PERIOD . . . . .	12
Sources of Story Material for the Rhythmic Period . . . . .	19
III. THE STORY INTERESTS OF CHILDHOOD — B. IMAGINATIVE PERIOD . . . . .	20
Bibliography of Fairy Tales . . . . .	31
IV. THE STORY INTERESTS OF CHILDHOOD — C. HEROIC PERIOD . . . . .	32
Sources of Story Material for the Heroic Period . . . . .	41
V. THE STORY INTERESTS OF CHILDHOOD — D. ROMANTIC PERIOD . . . . .	42
Sources of Story Material for the Romantic Period . . . . .	51
VI. BUILDING THE STORY . . . . .	52
VII. TELLING THE STORY . . . . .	58
Books on Story-Telling . . . . .	68
VIII. STORY-TELLING TO LEAD TO AN APPRECIATION OF LITERATURE . . . . .	69
Some Authors and Selections That Can Be Presented through the Story-Telling Method . . . . .	81
Sources of Material to Lead to an Appreciation of Literature . . . . .	82
IX. STORY-TELLING TO AWAKEN AN APPRECIATION OF MUSIC . . . . .	83
Illustrative Story, "A Boy of Old Vienna" . . . . .	89
Sources of Material to Awaken an Appreciation of Music . . . . .	94
Pictures to Use in Telling Musical Stories . . . . .	94



CHAPTER	PAGE
X. STORY-TELLING TO AWAKEN AN APPRECIATION OF ART	95
Artists and Paintings That Can Be Presented to Young Children through the Story-Telling Method . . .	102
Artists and Paintings for Children of the Intermediate Period . . . . .	103
Artists and Paintings That Lead to Appreciation of the Beautiful and to Respect for Labor . . . . .	104
Artists and Paintings for the Heroic and Epic Periods .	105
Bibliography of Art Story Material . . . . .	105
Sources for Moderate-Priced Reproductions of Masterpieces . . . . .	106
XI. DRAMATIZATION . . . . .	107
Pictures Containing Subjects for Dramatization . .	116
Books and Stories for Use in Dramatic Work with Little Children . . . . .	116
Bibliography of Material for Dramatization . . .	117
XII. BIBLE STORIES . . . . .	118
Sources of Material for Bible Stories . . . . .	131
XIII. STORY-TELLING AND THE TEACHING OF ETHICS . .	132
Stories to Develop or Stamp out Certain Traits and Instincts . . . . .	137
Sources of Material to Use in the Teaching of Ethics .	140

## PART TWO

### THE USE OF STORY-TELLING TO ILLUMINATE SOME SCHOOLROOM SUBJECTS—STORIES FOR TELLING

XIV. STORY-TELLING TO INTENSIFY INTEREST IN HISTORY .	143
Illustrative Story, "The Search for the Seven Cities" .	149
XV. STORY-TELLING TO INTENSIFY INTEREST IN GEOGRAPHY .	168
Illustrative Story, "The God of the Thundering Water" .	174
Sources of Material to Use in History and Geography .	177
XVI. STORY-TELLING TO INTENSIFY INTEREST IN NATURE STUDY . . . . .	178
Illustrative Story, "The Wonderful Builders" . . .	188
Sources of Material for Science Stories . . . . .	191

# Contents

vii

CHAPTER	PAGE
XVII. STORY-TELLING IN DOMESTIC SCIENCE AND MANUAL TRAINING . . . . .	192
Illustrative Story, "The Dervish of Mocha" . . . . .	195
Sources of Material to Use in Domestic Science and Manual Training . . . . .	197
XVIII. DOES THE WORK OF THE STORY-TELLER PAY? . . . . .	198

## STORIES FOR TELLING

The Story of the Man in the Moon ( <i>Alsatian Folk Tale — Christmas Story — Ethics, teaching honesty</i> ) . . . . .	203
The Discontented Pig ( <i>Thuringian Folk Tale — Ethics, teaching contentment</i> ) . . . . .	204
The Bat and His Partners ( <i>Old Bavarian Folk Tale — Helpful in Nature Study</i> ) . . . . .	208
Brier Rose ( <i>Wonder Tale</i> ) . . . . .	209
The Coat of All Colors ( <i>Thuringian Wonder Tale</i> ) . . . . .	212
The Poor Man and the Rich Man ( <i>Folk Tale — Ethics, teaching kindness</i> ) . . . . .	218
The Silver Cones ( <i>Ethics — Geography</i> ) . . . . .	222
The Forget-Me-Not ( <i>Thuringian Folk Tale — Helpful in Nature Study</i> ) . . . . .	226
The Little Stepmother ( <i>Thuringian Folk Tale — Nature Study</i> ) . . . . .	227
The Rabbit and the Easter Eggs ( <i>Bavarian Folk Tale</i> ) . . . . .	228
The Easter Eggs ( <i>Ethics</i> ) . . . . .	229
Prince Unexpected ( <i>Slavic Wonder Tale</i> ) . . . . .	239
The Greedy Cobbler ( <i>Welsh Folk Tale — Ethics, teaching contentment</i> ) . . . . .	251
The Story of a Salmon ( <i>Science</i> ) . . . . .	255
The Pigeons of Venice ( <i>History</i> ) . . . . .	263
The Coming of the Wonder Tree ( <i>Geography — Nature Study</i> ) . . . . .	269
The Gift of the Gnomes ( <i>Geography — Ethics</i> ) . . . . .	274
The Duty That Wasn't Paid ( <i>Biography — Music — Ethics</i> ) . . . . .	278
Wilhelmina's Wooden Shoes ( <i>Biography — Art Teaching</i> ) . . . . .	283
The Lady of Stavoren ( <i>Geography — Ethics</i> ) . . . . .	289
The Luck Boat of Lake Geneva ( <i>Geography</i> ) . . . . .	295