

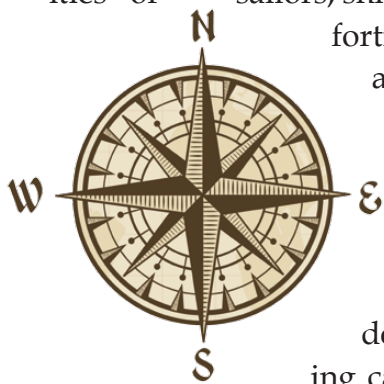
10 BOOKS THAT EVERY BOY SHOULD HAZARD



MR. MIDSHIPMAN EASY

by Frederick Marryat

Boys hold high esteem for books of high adventure on the high seas and *Mr. Midshipman Easy* by Capt. Frederick Marryat is preeminently one of these, bracing bright prose, a swashbuckling spirit, sharp humor, and a penetrating look into the humors of human nature. This naval novel is a rollicking comedy set on a British man-of-war in 1836. Mr. Midshipman Jack Easy, a young officer of nobility serving in the Royal Navy, is sent to sea to be righted of his social sophistries and navigates the brutal and beautiful realities of sailors, ships, and skirmishes with a philosophic



fortitude that is hilarious to behold as he always lands on his feet and claims the last laugh. *Mr. Midshipman Easy* has no shortage of exotic and exciting marvels: African curses, duels involving three, ships struck by lightning, musket balls and powder kegs, death-defying cruises, heart-pound-

ing campaigns, cloak-and-dagger villains, murderous mutinies, shark attacks, family feuds, and a thousand other delectable intrigues. As a satire, *Mr. Midshipman Easy* is magnificently silly and serious at the same time, embodied by the gentleman-rogue at the helm of this indomitable book teeming with laughs, lessons, and life.



RECOMMENDED AGE: 14 - 16

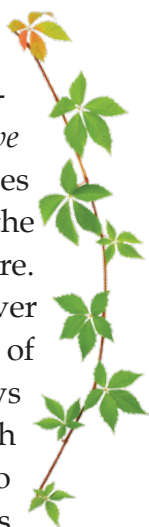
RECOMMENDED EDITION: HEART OF OAK SEA CLASSICS



WILD ANIMALS I HAVE KNOWN

by Ernest Thompson Seton

The natural historian Ernest Thompson Seton was a master of bush-craft, a pioneer of the Boy Scouts of America, and an excellent story teller. Of the many wonderful books chronicling his outdoor knowledge and experiences, *Wild Animals I Have Known* is one of the best. In it, Seton tells the histories of such characters as Silverspot the crow, Raggylug the cottontail rabbit, Redruff the partridge and many more. Seton possesses the keen eye of the seasoned observer of nature and his writings open doors of wonder for the reader as he follows the train of Seton's thought through his observations. Seton was also an accomplished artist and his books are liberally sprinkled with his own charming illustrations. On one level, this book is a collection of delightful and beautifully written stories. But to stop there would be to sell the author short. The writings of Ernest Thompson Seton are steeped with every true scientist's first love: this fascinating world created by God. The more a boy becomes in tune with this "book of nature" the more he will be receptive to the truths of reality and its divine Author.



RECOMMENDED AGE: 10 - 14

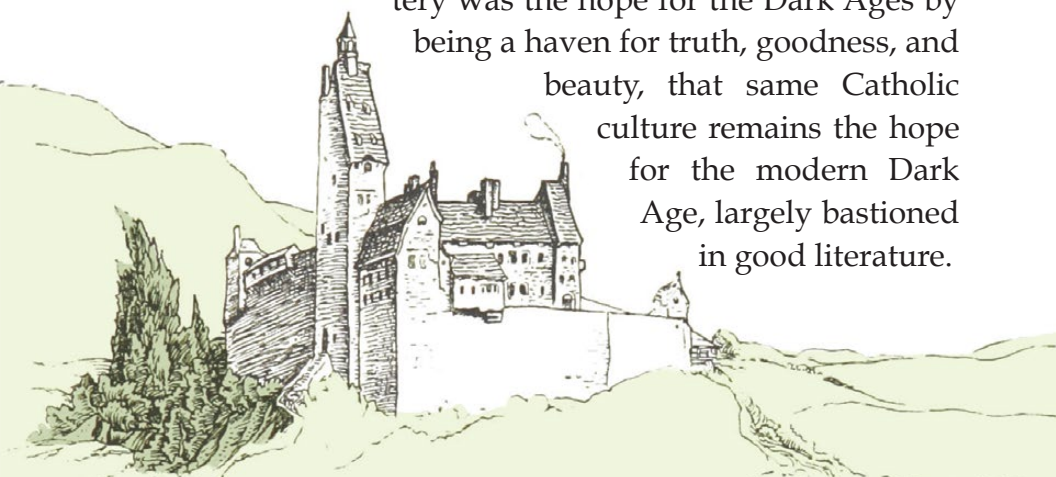
RECOMMENDED EDITION: DOVER PUBLICATIONS

OTTO OF THE SILVER HAND

by Howard Pyle

Howard Pyle's *Otto of the Silver Hand* challenges young readers to face the darker regions of history and humanity. The book follows a young German boy living in the Dark Ages who "saw both the good and the bad of men," as Pyle removes the sheen that chivalry usually boasts and allows the cruelty that chivalry must face to show its face. Boys, like knights, must confront hardship, fear, and pain. Otherwise, they will never be able to conquer them. The whole point of children's literature is not to force any design upon children, but to allow them to encounter things as they are and on their own. *Otto of the Silver Hand* presents an honest and unrestrained representation of the holy and the horrible, providing both the glorious and gritty elements so children might decide for themselves what is desirable and what is not without preaching to them for a moment. Just as the monas-

tery was the hope for the Dark Ages by being a haven for truth, goodness, and beauty, that same Catholic culture remains the hope for the modern Dark Age, largely bastioned in good literature.



RECOMMENDED AGE: 13 - 15

RECOMMENDED EDITION: DOVER PUBLICATIONS

THE CHIMES

by Charles Dickens

There is no better tale to ring an old year out and a new year in than Charles Dickens' goblin story, *The Chimes*. This little drama by the great storyteller deals with the temptation of Toby Veck to look back on the tragedies of a year gone by with dejection and very little hope for mankind. Suddenly, Toby finds that he has died and that he is high up among the bells in the belfry he has listened to all his life; and the bells are issuing not just chimes, but Goblins. Goblins that scatter through the world, lulling people to sleep, flogging others with whips, loading others with chains. Goblins that soar and sail through the habitations and businesses of man. Goblins that impose their impish devices mercifully and mercilessly as the Chimes ring. Dickens whisks his readers along a wild adventure as Toby is reprimanded for his loss of faith in humanity. This book rings out a tremendous moral for all who live surrounded by suffering. *The Chimes* is a reminder that, though the world is plagued with misfortune, ugliness, and tragedy, it remains the duty of every man to improve and advance with spirits unconquered.



RECOMMENDED AGE: 15 - 17

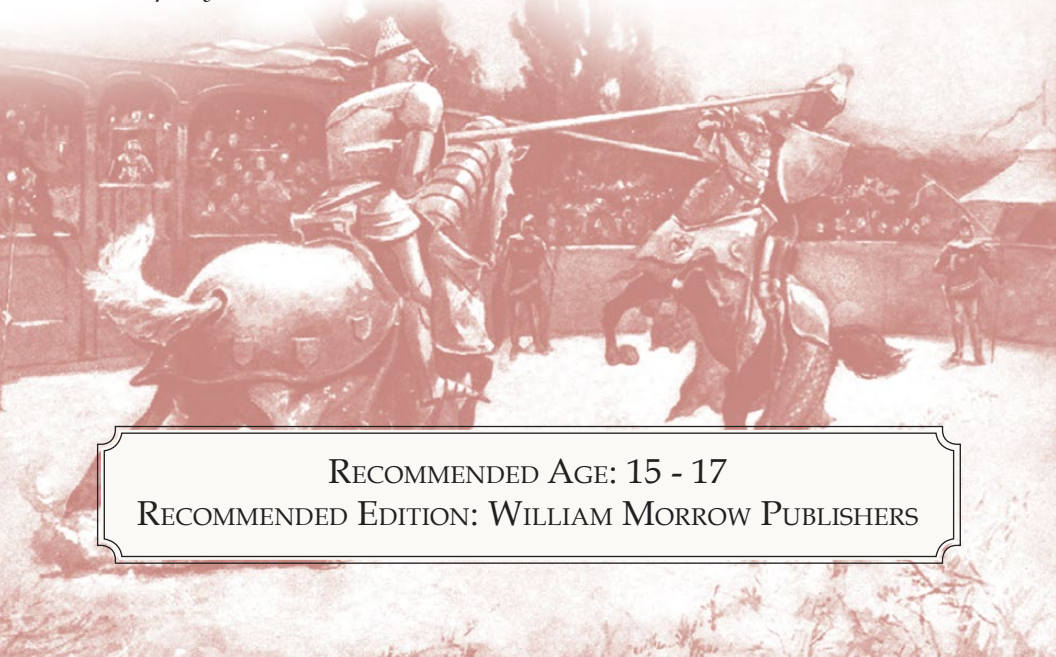
RECOMMENDED EDITION: EASTON PRESS



THE WHITE COMPANY

by Arthur Conan Doyle

Though best known as the creator of Sherlock Holmes, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's true passion lay in creating romances of historical fiction. His greatest achievement in this realm is *The White Company*, a high-spirited tale of friendship and bravery set during the Hundred Years' War in 1366 as the Prince of Wales campaigns against Spain and France to restore his control over the Kingdom of Castille. In a wayside English inn, two very different young men are recruited to join the White Company, a group of mercenary archers preparing for the impending clash of nations. As these two friends make their way to the rendezvous point with many a rollicking adventure with lovely ladies, wicked lords, bloodthirsty pirates, and whatnot, Conan Doyle gives readers a vivid vision of the past. The tale finds intense culmination as the White Company is attacked in a narrow ravine by the French and Spanish forces. Though disaster abounds, it is not enough to stop *The White Company* from a victorious conclusion.



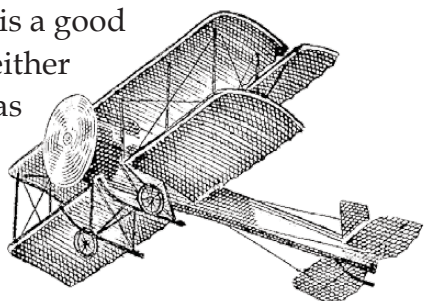
RECOMMENDED AGE: 15 - 17

RECOMMENDED EDITION: WILLIAM MORROW PUBLISHERS

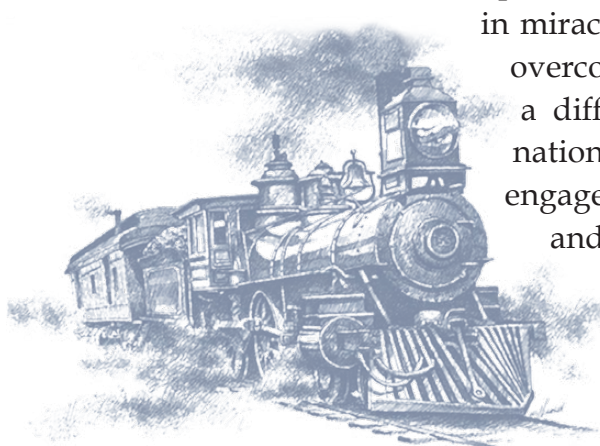
THE THIRTY-NINE STEPS

by John Buchan

Buchan's *The Thirty-Nine Steps* is a good book for boys because it is neither plausible nor credible. He was a connoisseur of the dime-novel thriller—or “the shocker,” as he fondly called it—and, in 1915, Buchan fashioned what would become the cast of a genre: *The Thirty-Nine Steps*. This spy novel is a breakneck race against all odds at a breathtaking pace, featuring the archetypal man-on-the-run with faceless foes of alarming power and precision on his tail. *The Thirty-Nine Steps* is a delight because it attaches more importance to pure emotion and plot motion than to plausibility. It is the type of story that is immensely pleasing to boys as it delves into the charm of the impossible. There is a very real need to believe in the impossible these days—to believe



in miracles, where one man can overcome all odds and make a difference in the fate of a nation. *The Thirty-Nine Steps* engages and enacts this dream, and thereby serves to keep alive the hope that the impossible may, in fact, be possible.



RECOMMENDED AGE: 14 - 16

RECOMMENDED EDITION: DOVER PUBLICATIONS

THE OTHER WISE MAN

by Henry van Dyke

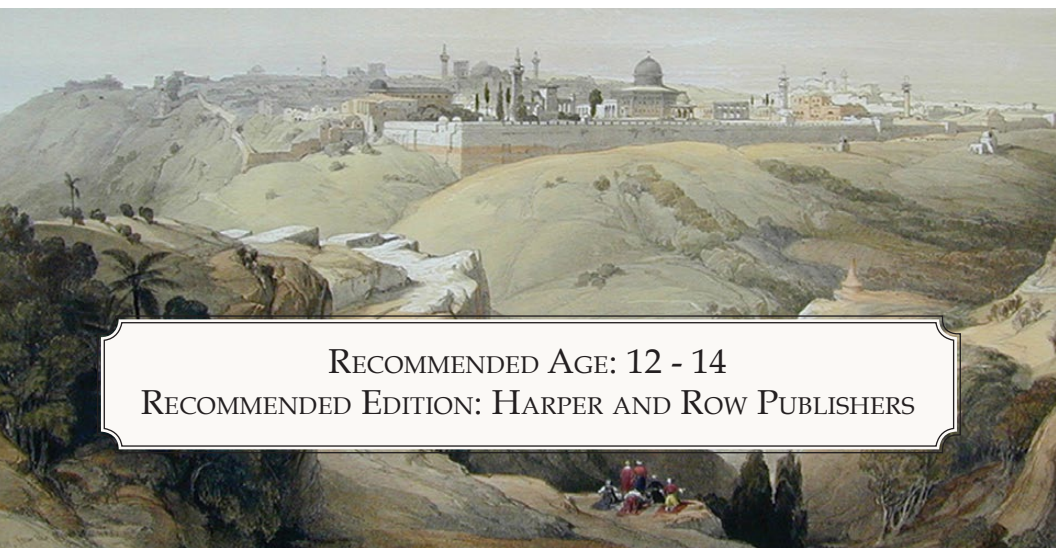
In this engaging story of long ago, Henry van Dyke tells of the Magi, the Three Wise Men who came at Christmas, in a way both new and refreshing. Artaban, the other Wise Man, was accidentally left behind when the famous three set out and then spent the rest of his days seeking the new King

whose birth the stars foretold. Artaban carries his gifts for the Child under his cloak:

a sapphire, a ruby, and a pearl. Over the course of the story he finds himself in difficult situations and his gifts provide the

means required to remedy them. Artaban

parts with his gifts to save a sick stranger, a threatened child, and a friendless woman. He must part even with his pearl, pointedly called the pearl of great price in the chapter title. Artaban, like the man in the parable, sold all his possessions to buy these gems for the King; to obtain the Kingdom of Heaven. This was the expectation of faith. What he did not expect was that he would have to give these gifts to others out of love. The Kingdom is gained through the giving of it.



RECOMMENDED AGE: 12 - 14

RECOMMENDED EDITION: HARPER AND ROW PUBLISHERS



THE BLACK ARROW: A TALE OF THE TWO ROSES

by Robert Louis Stevenson

Robert Louis Stevenson was a master of action and adventure stories for boys, and *The Black Arrow: A Tale of the Two Roses* delivers vigorously on every expectation. It follows a young knight, Richard Shelton, during the 15th century's Wars of the Roses over the throne of



England. As Richard investigates the murder of his father, he learns more about the outlaw band of the Black Arrow and the possible treachery of his own uncle. His suspicions force

him to flee his wrathful uncle and join the outlaws against him in a mighty struggle for justice. *The Black Arrow* is a lively medieval story with themes and fantasies and plots that appeal



highly to the adolescent imagination. Its drama gives boys an understanding of what true intrigue is, true appeal, true gravitas, and a true moral universe. Boys suffer nowadays from an insular existence. More than ever, there is need for the old romance because it is remedial, because it is real. Books



like *The Black Arrow* do not ponder through virtual reality, but challenge boys to encounter actual reality in its most vivid and livid colors.

RECOMMENDED AGE: 14 - 16

RECOMMENDED EDITION: SCRIBNER'S SONS ILL. CLASSICS

THE PRISONER OF ZENDA

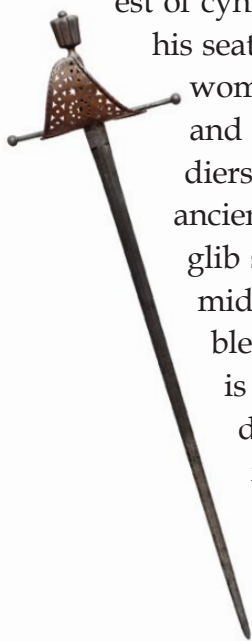
by Anthony Hope

There are in existence a few books that can cure the sickness of cynicism. These books remind men of the glory and grandeur of man and the glories and grandeurs that give meaning to mankind.

The Prisoner of Zenda, written in 1894 by Anthony Hope, is one of these. This gallant book is a remedy to the heavy seriousness of cynicism because it is lighthearted. It is a fairy tale infused with the optimism of escapism, the thrill of romance, and the



charm of the dashing, debonair, gentleman hero. Even the gravest of cynics must smile, chuckle, and inch to the edge of his seat in appreciation of men bristling with weapons, women swooning in their lovers' arms, guns firing and combatants laughing, swords flashing and soldiers of fortune. Thus it runs with blazing revolvers, ancient castles, woefully grim councils, wonderfully glib speeches, daring souls pulling at brandy flasks, midnight marauding, and one of the most memorable villains of Victorian fiction. *The Prisoner of Zenda* is quite simply irresistible, making it a balm for this dour day and age, and worthy of its reputation for being the finest adventure story ever written, in which the struggle between good and evil is a great game and nothing seems so serious as keeping the serious at bay.



RECOMMENDED AGE: 14 - 16

RECOMMENDED EDITION: PENGUIN CLASSICS

THE PERSIAN EXPEDITION

by Xenophon

Shortly after the close of the Peloponnesian War, a force of ten thousand Greek hoplites found themselves in a very awkward position. They were in the heart of the Persian Empire, while the army they were hired to assist had fled or deserted to the enemy. The Greek generals and captains had been treacherously slaughtered by the Persians who had summoned them to a friendly meeting. Facing their

doom, Xenophon, a common Greek soldier, took command and led what is considered the most fantastic military retreat

in history. *The Persian Expedition* is Xenophon's firsthand account of this march of the Greeks back home against all odds. This book is more than an interesting historical work. It is a manual for leadership. Xenophon

not only exemplifies strong leadership, but he also discusses the differing leadership

strategies of several of the Greek generals and of the Persian prince, Cyrus, thus demonstrating much of what made the Greek civilization so great. The story highlights the Greek characteristics in contrast with their more barbaric neighbors and serves as a striking example of the Greek attitude that was both fiercely independent yet also willing to submit to a well-ordered whole.



RECOMMENDED AGE: 15 - 17

RECOMMENDED EDITION: PENGUIN CLASSICS



10 BOOKS THAT EVERY BOY SHOULD HAZARD

Thanks to the adulterators of children's literature, the natural anticipations when approaching forgotten classics have been skewed. Everyone expects that everything will be picturesque, nice, and most importantly, safe. For reality is far too dangerous, far too harsh a thing, and children must be protected from it at all costs. Real stories for real boys, however, refuse to deliver saccharine platitudes.

Good books are composed of the uncanny, unforeseeable, and unimaginable. They present a reality that is often harsh, terrible, and so far from the idyllic it is free to become adventure. The books every boy should hazard are constantly on the brink of disaster, but still bear the distant but firm promise of final resolution; deftly navigating the fine line between realism and romance—requiring caution.

If you would like to follow the continuing adventures of Gregory the Great Academy, subscribe to our newsletter, *The Minstrel*. Visit: www.gregorythegreatacademy.org/minstrel



621 NORTH BROMLEY AVENUE, SCRANTON, PA, 18504
571.295.6244 • WWW.GREGORYTHEGREATACADEMY.ORG