

ONE OF JACK B. YEATS'S BOOKS  
FOR CHILDREN.



# A LITTLE FLEET

*PRICE ONE SHILLING NET,*

or, Coloured by the Author, with an Original Sketch  
in Colours, price 5s. net.

PUBLISHED BY  
ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET,  
NIGH THE ALBANY, LONDON.











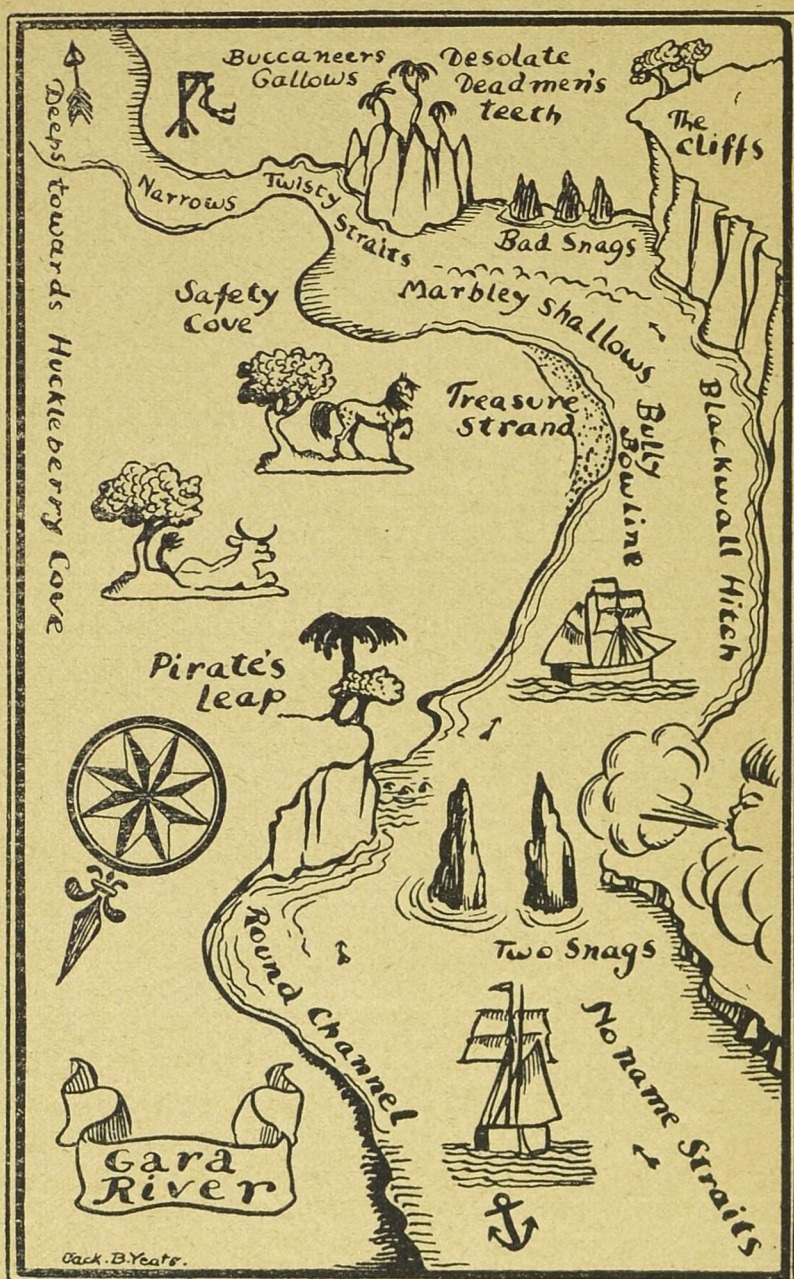
# A LITTLE FLEET

BY

JACK B. YEATS

PUBLISHED BY

ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET,  
NIGH THE ALBANY, LONDON.





## A LITTLE FLEET

The following account of the Fleet, and of the various histories of the voyages of the vessels which compose it, has been written out by me at the request of the owners. I have also made for them the drawings and the chart which illustrate the account.

The owners of this small merchant fleet had nowhere else handy to float their vessels in than the small and winding Gara river and a very small pond; the vessels when upon the river drove along with the stream, their sails, when they had any, only being of use to get them out of bad places, except occasionally when the current ran slowly; then, with a fair wind, the "Pasear" and the "Monte," at any rate, would walk along at a fine pace.

Long, light sticks were carried to steer the ships round dangerous corners, and through narrow and difficult channels like the Two Snags; and when I say she steered this way, or her skipper took such



a course, you will understand it is just put that way because it sounds better.

The two longest voyages were those of the "Theodore" and the "Pasear," both of which vessels travelled about a mile along the river. The owners think that any other little boys who live near a stream sufficiently deep to float ships drawing so little water might like to follow their example and build a fleet, therefore I am to tell you how each vessel was built, as well as the story of its voyage.

The chart shows the winding river down which the clippers voyaged, and on it are marked the various snags, rapids, and other dangers.

JACK B. YEATS,

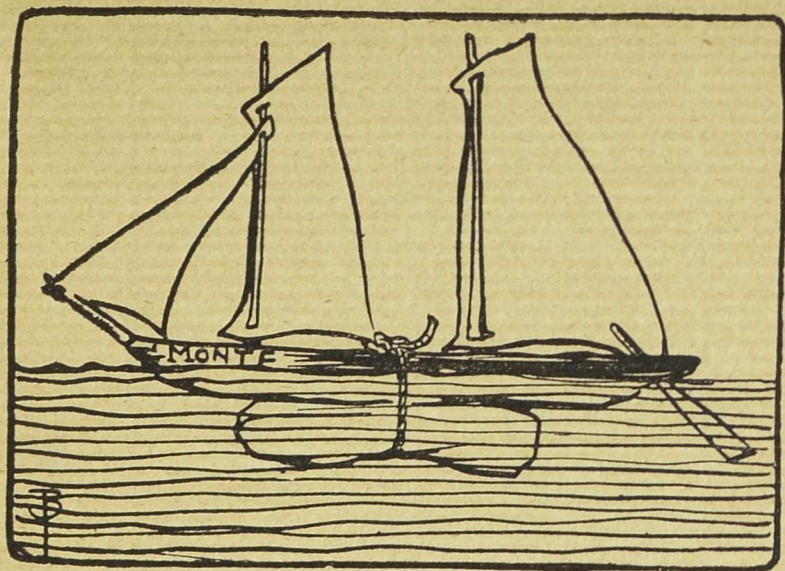
*Gara River.*

The owners and myself are indebted to the Fleet Poet for the verses through the book.

#### THE FLEET.

<i>The Monte</i>	-	- Fore and Aft Schooner
<i>The Moby Dick</i>	-	- Paddle Steamboat
<i>The Theodore</i>	-	- Fireship
<i>The Pasear</i>	-	- Top-sail Schooner
<i>The New Corinthian</i>	-	- Brig





## THE “MONTE”

The “Monte” was the first of our vessels, and was made out of a flat piece of wood about five inches long, shaped at one end for the bow. She had two masts of very thin wood, and was rigged as a fore and aft schooner with paper sails, which had holes in them so as to fasten them to the masts.

She had a stone underneath her to keep her upright, and a piece of string tied round her, amidships, to keep on the stone. In the picture the stone is shown through the water, so that you can see how it was fastened on, but it did not really show like that.



## THE "MONTE'S" VOYAGE

She started from No Name Straits with wind and tide; it was blowing a gale at the time—of course you will understand that it was not blowing a gale *to us*, but in proportion to the size of her, it must have been a gale *to her*.

She kept her course toward the land, going by the Round Channel, as we had not then discovered the passage through the Two Snags she then put her helm to port and bore away for mid-stream to avoid the nifty Snags that lie at the foot of the bluff called Pirate's Leap, called that because a poet who had been a pirate, I expect, was thinking about a poem when he ought to have been shoving the vessel off the rocks, and so he fell in.

The "Monte" then put her head south-west by south, half south, a little southerly, sir, and tried to make the current called the Bully Bowline, but she kept too far to the west'ard, and so she got caught by the other current, the wrong one, called the Blackwall Hitch. The "Monte's" skipper got excited then,



and tried to cross the middle of the river, but she dashed round in the current under the cliffs, and was only saved by very good steering from running straight into the very dangerous snags called the Bad Snags.

However, she weathered them and dashed on over the Marbley Shallows; we called them that because the stones under the water used to roll along like a lot of little marbles. She kept a fine course from that on, and went at a great pace, about fifteen knots; once she stuck her nose in the bank, but the sails swung her round, so on she went and ran beautifully into Safety Cove. But, like a silly, her skipper came out of it again before we could tell him not to, and hit against, oh! such a nasty rock; it heaved her on her beamends, and then she turned very slowly round until her masts and sails were underneath, and her stone keel on top. And that was the end of her.

This was what the Pirate Poet made about her:

And now by Gara rushes,  
When stars are blinking white;  
And sleep has stilled the thrushes,  
And sunset brings the night;

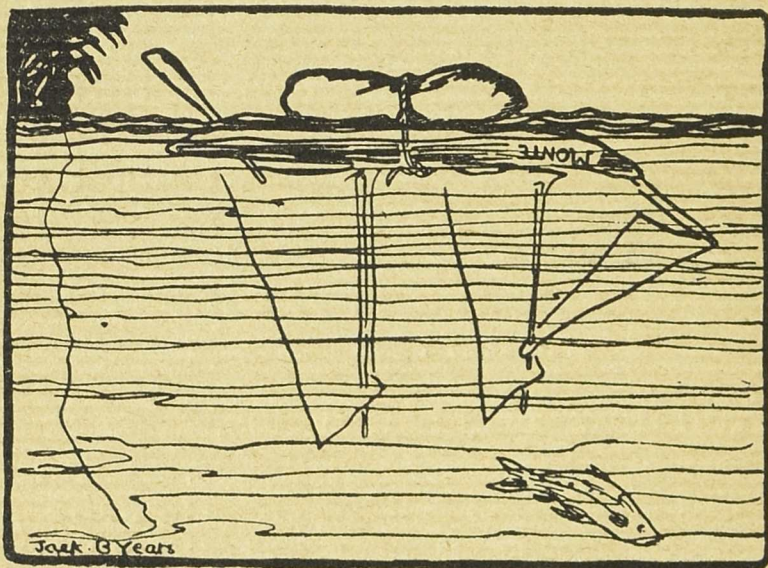


There, where the stones are  
gleamin',  
A passer-by can hark  
To the old drowned "Monte"  
seamen  
A-singing through the dark.

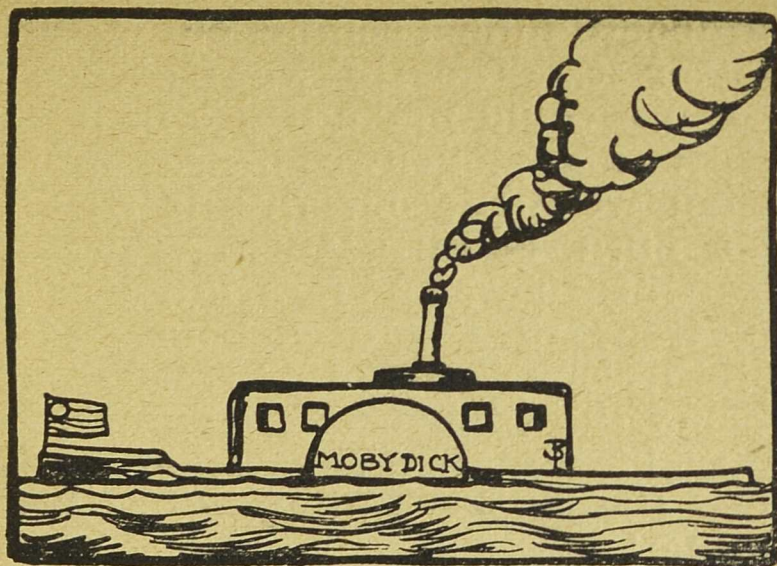
There, where the gnats are pesky,  
They sing like anything;  
They sing like Jean de Reszke,  
This is the song they sing:

Down in the pebbled ridges  
Our old bones sing and shout;  
We see the dancing midges,  
We feel the skipping trout.

Our bones are green and weeded,  
Our bones are old and wet;  
But the noble deeds that we did  
We never can forget.







## THE “MOBY DICK”

She sailed down Gara Valley,  
She startled all the cows;  
With touchwood in her galley,  
And green paint round her bows.



The “Moby Dick” was supposed to be a Mississippi River steamboat; she was built out of a flat piece of board almost fourteen inches long and six inches broad; on top of that she had a cardboard box with cabin windows drawn on it, and she had cardboard paddle-boxes with her name painted on them with ink; she also had an eagle painted on her deck-house. Inside her deck-house there was a cocoa tin with a



cardboard funnel coming out of the top of it. The tin was there so that we could make a fire in it of paper and touchwood. At first, when we made our fire, it would not burn because there was no draught, so we made a large hole in front of the deck-house and another one abaft, also holes in the side of the cocoa tin ; that made a draught, and then you should have seen the smoke coming out of her funnel !

## THE FIRST VOYAGE OF THE “MOBY DICK”

She started from No Name Straits, but she had to put back again because her fire was not burning, so we stirred it up a bit and put in some more dry touchwood, then it smoked fine, and we let her go.

She was going the Round Channel when her Mate sung out to the Captain :

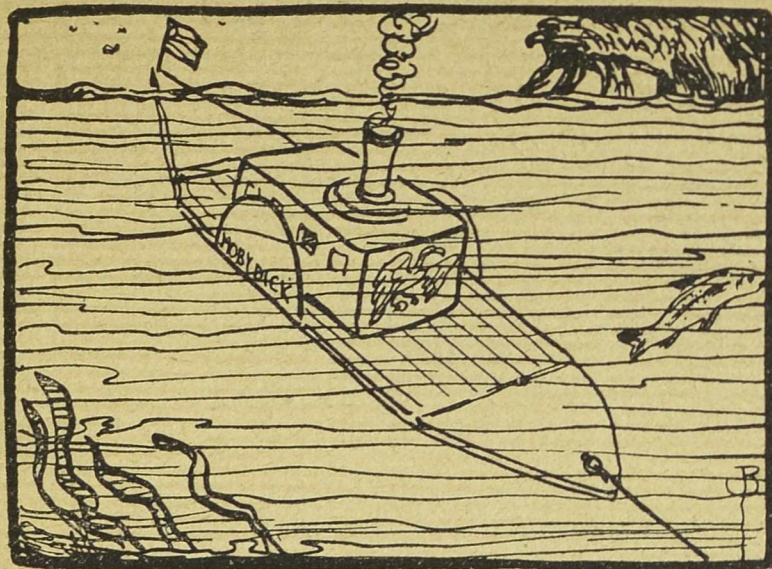
“She'll go through the Two Snags !”

“She'll never do it !” shouted the Captain.

“Let's try her !” yelled the Mate.

“Go ahead !” roared the Captain, and the Mate shoved the helm hard





up, and she slid through without touching anywhere.

*And so the "Moby Dick" was the first to use the Two Snags Passage. Since then all our vessels have used it.*

After she had passed through she bore away towards the easterly shore, and went easily along with the Bully Bowline current; but as she was not smoking properly, her Captain gave orders to beach her on Treasure Beach (we called it that name because it looked just the sort of beach pirates would choose to bury treasure in). When she came ashore we stirred up her furnace until it burnt magnificently, then we shoved her off



again, and she looked really great as her smoke and herself were both reflected in the water as clear as anything. She then continued her voyage over the Marbley Shallows on to Safety Cove.

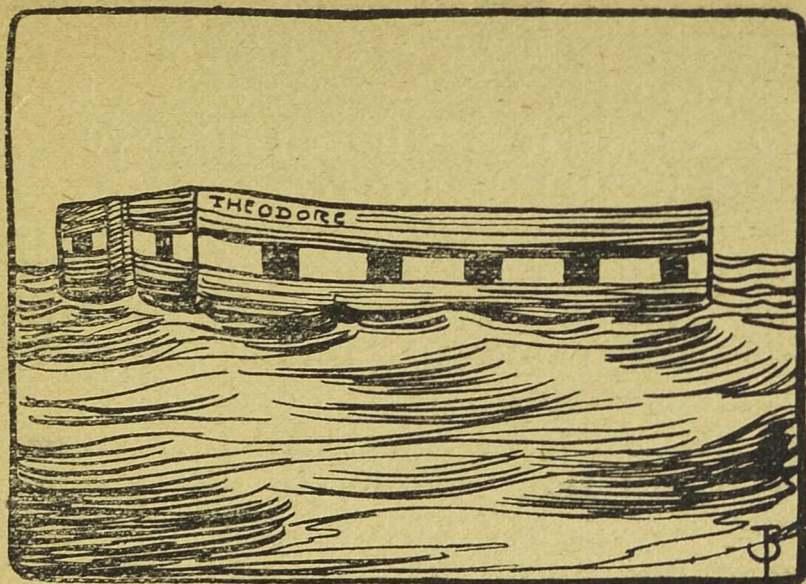
The "Moby Dick" did so well that run that we thought we would send her down the river again at once, and we *did* send her down, and no mistake, because we put an anchor on her stern, with lots of cable, and just when she was going through No Name Straits she let go her anchor, because we wanted to see how she would look when it brought her up all standing.

Well, she dragged her anchor for a few yards until it caught in a weed, and what did she do but get pulled right down to the bottom of the river, the stream was too strong for her.

She came to flying anchor

At the twilight time of day,  
But the strain on the cable sank her,  
And her crew, oh, where were they?





## THE "THEODORE"

There was nothing very grand about the appearance of the "Theodore"; we were in a great hurry to go out, so could only build her very badly, but in spite of that she was a jolly good clipper.

She was built out of a long cardboard box, and had the lines of her ports painted on with ink, and the portholes were cut out. She did not have any masts, we did not have time to make any for her.

## THE VERY LONG VOYAGE OF THE "THEODORE."

The "Theodore" was launched to the north of the Two Snags, but



she caught fire suddenly—really, we set fire to a lot of touchwood and stuff inside her because we wanted to see what a ship on fire would look like on the river.

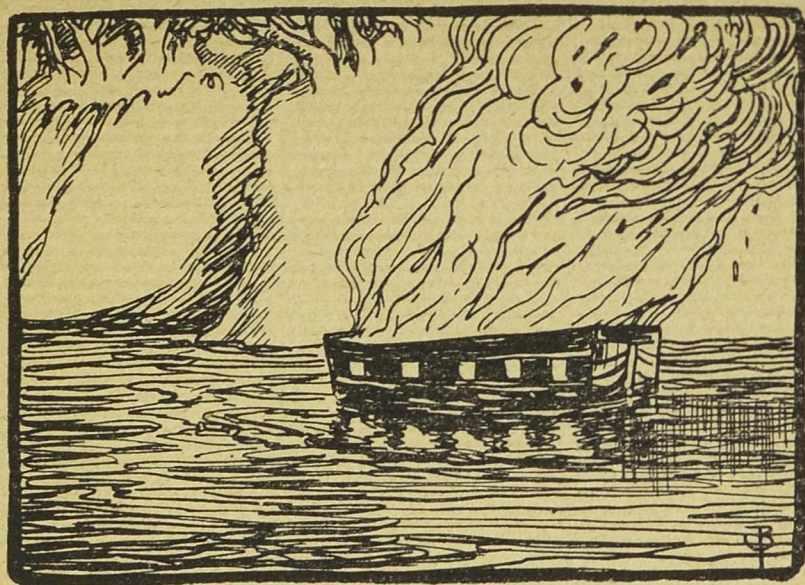
And she looked splendid with the crimson flames coming out of her ports, and the reflection on the still piece of water just under the cliffs was beautiful.

The fire burnt away like mad, and did not go out till she got as far as Safety Cove. But the fire had not done the old "Theodore" a bit of harm; the water kept the fire from burning through her, except for one big hole the fire had burnt through just above the water line.

The skipper set all hands to work to rig up a tarpaulin to keep the water out; we really stuffed a big dock leaf in, and the "Theodore" continued her voyage right through a terribly dangerous passage at the western end of the Twisty Straits, opposite the Desolate Dead Man's Teeth, and she passed The Narrows, the most dangerous place on the whole river, where there is only just room for one vessel to pass through at a time.

She continued round the next bend in great style, passing under





the Buccaneers' Gallows, another most desperate place, and came out in the beautiful clear water, where she went along finely.

Then we had to go home, and the last we saw of her she was going round a big bend as fast as anything, and the man on the look-out was singing out,

“All clear ahead!” and the skipper was singing out,

“Keep her as she goes!” and the man at the wheel was singing out,

“Aye, aye, sir! as she goes it is.”

We went down the next day, but saw nothing of her, though we went ever so far along the river.

She may now be on the high seas, with a skipper shouting all the time,



“Keep her as she goes, and for the Spanish Main.”

And let no landsman doubt it,  
She was a gallant ship;  
And her Cap.(brave man) throughout  
it  
Kept a stiff upper lip.

## THE “PASEAR”

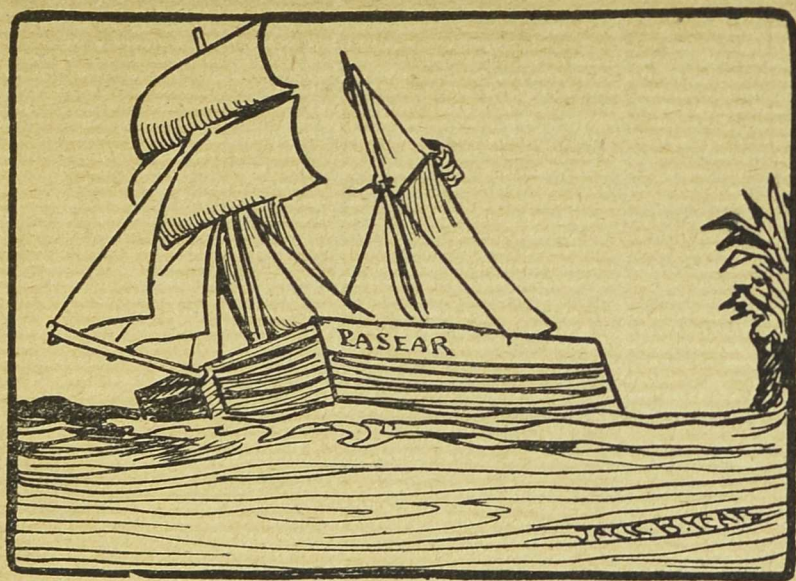
The “Pasear” was a top-sail schooner, and could not she just travel when the wind was in the proper quarter! She was built out of a bright green cardboard tie box, with a lid, and stones inside to ballast her.

On her fine, long voyage she passed all the dangers of the narrow reaches of the river, and sailed out into the deep, clear channel before the wind; and she went so far and so fast that it took us all our time to keep up with her, so we could not think of names for all the headlands she passed—she went nearly a mile.

Then “it was time for us to leave her,” so we left her all snug and comfortable in a little cove called Huckleberry Cove, after Finn.

We could not get down to the river again for two days, and when





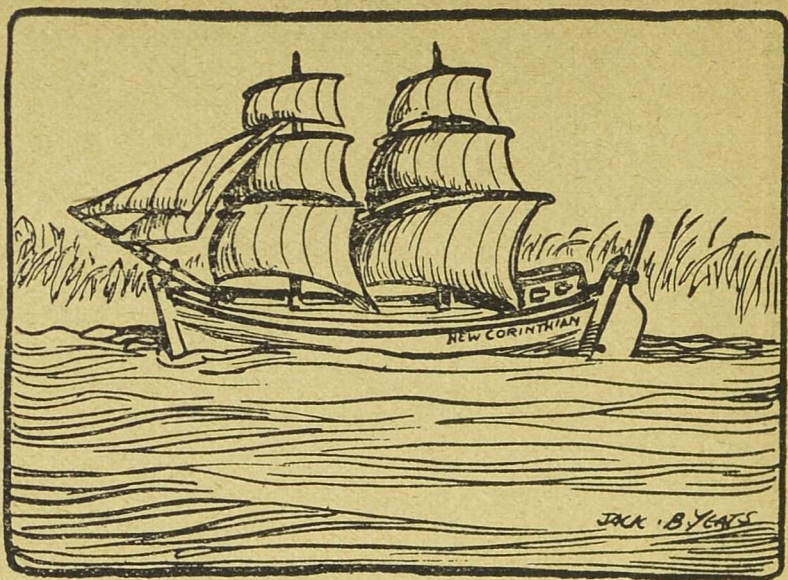
we did we could not find her for a long time, but at last we did find her—under water—she had gone down in twenty fathoms, we could see her quite clearly resting on the sandy bottom; she must have sprung a leak, and her captain had not the sense to beach her, as he should have done.

## THE “NEW CORINTHIAN”

She was the finest vessel we had in the fleet.

She was built out of a toy life-boat, with a lead keel fastened on, and she had paper sails and a rudder.





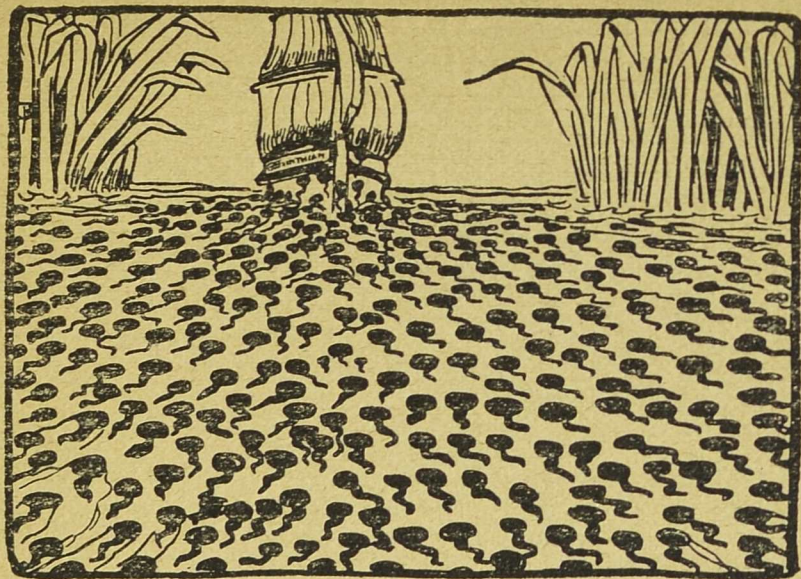
The "New Corinthian" sailed in the nicest way, but we were too proud of her, after we had rigged her, to let her go down the big river, so we sailed her on a small pond called Mystery Bay; we called it that name because it looked so terribly deep, but was really only about three feet deep.

The "New Corinthian" did not have any adventurous voyages, but she had as good a time as she could have, sailing round and round Mystery Bay.

But it must have been pretty exciting on her when the tadpoles tried to board her.

But what we liked best was seeing the vessels of our fleet tear-





ing and gliding and shooting down the flood and through the currents of the Gara river.

### NOTICE TO MARINERS.

Since the above was written, the owners have put a buoy in mid-stream, between the Blackwall Hitch and Bully Bowline currents, and mariners will keep a southeasterly course, leaving the buoy nine fathoms and a-half on the starboard.



JACK YEATS'S CHAP BOOKS, *Printed for, and Sold by* ELKIN MATHEWS, *in* Vigo Street, *nigh* the Albany, London. *Sold also by the* BOOK-SELLERS *in* Town and Country.



## A BROADSHEET:

For the Years 1902—3. With Pictures by P. Colman Smith and Jack B. Yeats.

Hand-coloured, Twenty-four Numbers, with portfolio, £1 7s. 6d. free.

The Contributors include W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, Professor F. York Powell, "A.E.," Wilfred Gibson, John Masefield, Dr. Douglas Hyde, and others.

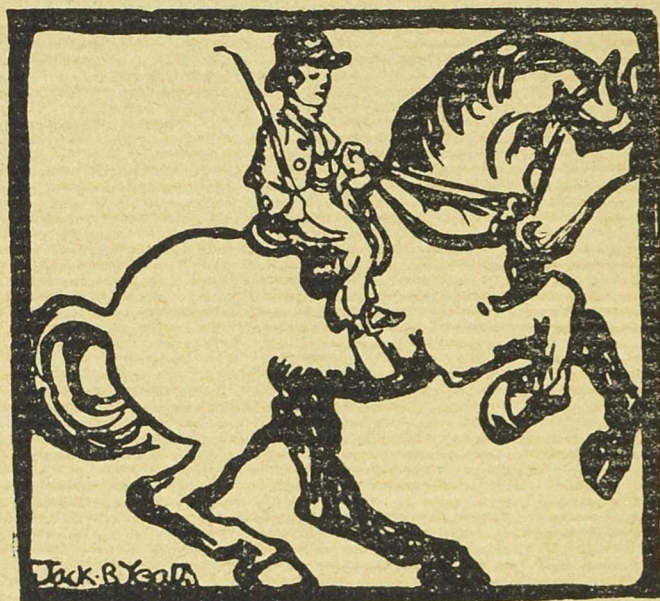
\* \* \* Specimen copies may be had, post free, 1s. 2d. net.

---

"Mr. Yeats has not yet come by his own; when he does the world will recognise more exactly than it has done hitherto what a facile and original artist he is."—*Speaker*.

"Miss P. Colman Smith undoubtedly has a great eye for colour, and a most curious conception of its application; indeed the colouring of 'A Broadsheet' is its most striking feature."—*The Reader*.

"These twenty-four Broadsheets may be wisely collected by the curious."—*The Sphere*.

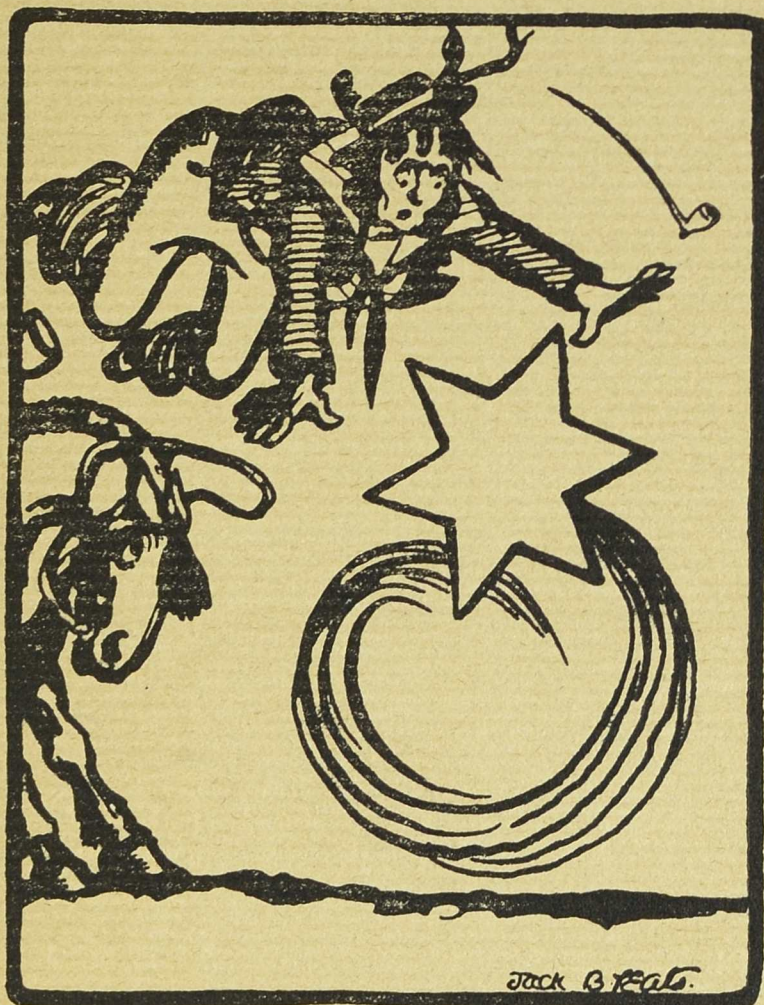




*One of Jack B. Yeats's Books for Children.*

## THE BOSUN AND THE BOB-TAILED COMET.

Foolscap 8vo, 1s. net; or Coloured by the Author, 5s. net.



" 'You'll see how the little dears will sing out when they ketches hold of me and my bob-tail '—here the Bosun paused to turn his quid and hitch his trousers up. Then he dexterously tied another knot on his Comet's tail lest it should sweep the pens off the table, or upset the ink-pot.'—*The Daily News*.

"The title is sufficient to indicate the nature of the little book in which Mr. Yeats displays all the humour which has so characterised the series of picture books, and his facile pen has lost none of its old-time cunning."—*Dublin Express*.



## One of Jack B. Yeats's Plays for the Miniature Stage

### JAMES FLAUNTY: OR, THE TERROR OF THE WESTERN SEAS.

1s. net; or, Coloured by the Author, 5s. net.

"A 'MEMORY' of R. L. Stevenson comes seldom amiss, and now especially, when the romancer's name and fame are as a shuttlecock between wholly adoring and still discriminating friends, may be considered apt and seasonable. So it won't hurt to read this:

"There stands, I fancy, to this day (but now how fallen!) a certain stationer's shop at a corner of the wide thoroughfare that joins the city of my childhood with the sea. When upon any Saturday we made a party to behold the ships, we passed that corner; and since in those days I loved a ship as a man loves Burgundy or daybreak, this of itself had been enough to hallow it. But there was more than that. In that window, all the year round, there stood displayed a theatre in working order, with a 'forest set,' 'a combat,' and a few 'robbers carousing' in the slides; and below and about—dearer tenfold to me!—the plays themselves, those budgets of romance, lay tumbled, one upon another."—*A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured.*

"Here, palpably, was a hint for somebody, who has turned out to be Mr. Jack B. Yeats. The first of his 'plays in the old manner'—'*James Flaunty; or, The Terror of the Western Seas*'—lies before me, and it is a study in grotesque. The most notable point in this production is the fact that the interest thereof attaches not only to the dialogue—you will, however, relish that—but to the setting, the close reproduction of old-world lettering and art, which is a vast deal more than an ordinary publisher's advertisement, and cunning enough to deceive the very elect. The ferocious woodcuts, the jaunty humour of the speeches, the fore-and-aft and down-the-hatchway plot, the bizarre characters, harmonize perfectly, and well they may; for Mr. Yeats, all by himself, has invented those same characters, contrived the plot, fashioned the speeches, and designed the illustrations.

Debauched by sixpenny and even threepenny editions, some may rail at this as a dear shilling's worth. (For superior copies the charge is a crown.) For all such niggards this lean but precious pamphlet—it is no more—will be caviare. But drat economy, say I, when a paltry subscription will land you straight into the arms of a real toy pirate. Never again will you have so good a chance of seeing one, of hanging on his talk, of sympathising with his peril. Never, I mean, apart from the present showmen, who, however, promise yet better things. Stevenson, you mark, had two sources of enjoyment—play and puppet-show—and Mr. Mathews announces his intention of producing the plays, with scenes and characters, on sheets, to be cut out and played on miniature stages. What *will* the next generation be like? Certes, 'tis a bold experiment, and, to say the worst, a queer revival."—*Speaker*, 1/2/02. F. J. S.

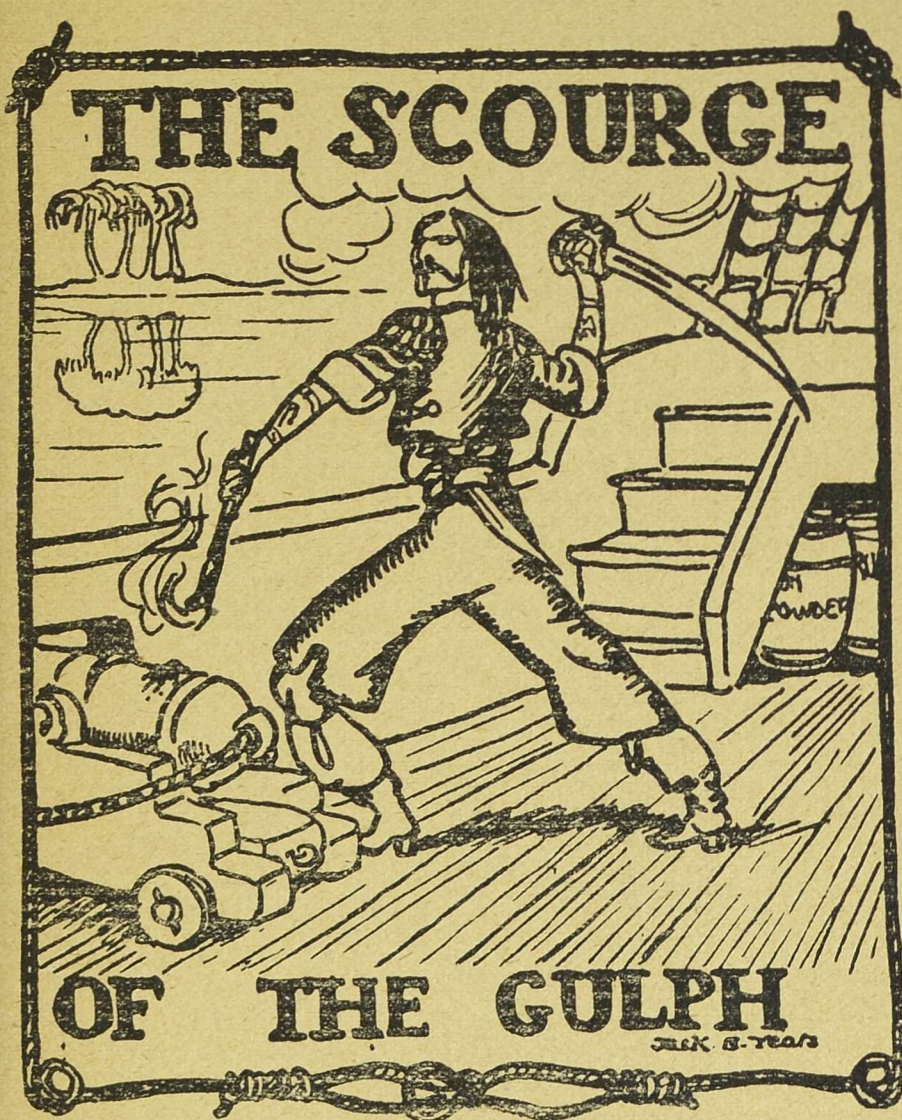
"At a time when the palmy days of the drama are a melancholy remembrance, we welcome the publication of *James Flaunty; or, The Terror of the Western Seas*, by Jack B. Yeats (Elkin Mathews), which, in its awakening of romance, may be dimly associated with the Celtic revival. The spirit of the publication may be indicated by a quotation on the cover from Stevenson's "*A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured*." It is announced that copies of the play coloured by the author may be had for five shillings, but it is difficult to believe that colour can add materially to the excellence of these designs. Still, a judicious use of crimson lake ("Hark to the sound of it, reader," as Stevenson says) might add something to the glories of Captain Gig and the rest. We may particularly commend the reticence of effect in the pictures, which aim at no vulgarity of face-tiousness, and there is an exquisite moderation in the dialogue. 'It is intended later to produce the plays with scenes and characters on sheets, to be cut out and placed on miniature stages.' We should like to be there to see."

*Manchester Guardian*, 10/12/01.



One of Jack B. Yeats's Plays for the Miniature Stage

1s. net; or, Coloured by the Author, 5s. net.



"Mr. Jack B. Yeats's latest play for the miniature stage, *The Scourge of the Gulph* (Elkin Mathews, pp. 18, 1s. net), has the same exalted qualities that endeared 'James Flaunty' and 'The Treasure of the Garden' to the judicious. Blood runs gaily through the lee scuppers, in accordance with the best precedents; but plenty more of it is left to keep up the native hue of resolution in the cheeks of the survivors. If Mr. Andrew Lang ever finds the 'Odyssey' losing its power to affect the mind like ocean thundering on a Western beach, he should try 'The Scourge of the Gulph.' There is a delicious drawing by Mr. Jack Yeats on the back of the cover."—*Manchester Guardian*, 12/1/04.



*One of Jack B. Yeats's Plays for the Miniature Stage*

## THE TREASURE OF THE GARDEN:

A PLAY IN THE OLD MANNER.

With Illustrations, Hand Coloured by the Author, 4to,  
5s. net; Uncoloured copies, 2s. 6d. net.

\* \* Stages, with Prosceniums designed by the Author, Footlights, Slides, and Scenes can be had, price 5s. net, each. The Play set up ready for Acting by the Author, with Stage and all necessities, price three guineas.

"THE sensations of wonder and respect produced by Mr. Jack B. Yeats's play (for a miniature theatre), 'James Flaunty; or, The Terror of the Western Seas,' are deepened by the appearance of *The Treasure of the Garden* (Elkin Mathews, 5s. net). Here we have no mere jejune text, but also the characters and the scenery painted unstintingly by the author, and all ready to be gummed on cardboard and strut and fret their five minutes on the toy stage. As Stevenson, were he now living, would probably cut his work in order to produce this drama if it reached him in working hours, the rest of us need take no shame to ourselves for the same inclination. For about ten shillings—a stage costs five shillings—the least among us may now explore the sensations of theatrical management—a happiness for which far higher prices have been paid by many famous lessees of Covent Garden and Drury Lane."—*Manchester Guardian*, 2/3/03.

"So many in these days are for reviving the romantic drama, for bringing to life—

The mellow glory of the Attic stage,

and for restoring the arts of acting and of speaking verse, that we have come to regard the exposition of a new theory without emotion; the advent of a new play without excitement. Our romantic dramatists take themselves too seriously, and aim at expressing rather the sorrows than the joys of life. Since the world has heard the beauty of the muted string it has forgotten that life ever went merrily to a pipe, or to the Arcadian, but penny, whistle. It has forgotten the song, and the old tune, and the old story. It has forgotten that the drama ever shook men's hearts, and has come to prefer that it should help to digest men's dinners. We want—

The old laughter that had April in it.

Now perhaps the chief reason for the dulness of modern plays is the somewhat exclusive attitude of the playwright. His appeal is no longer to the world. His appeal is to an audience. No breadth of range, no scope, is allowed to him. He has lost touch with the external forces of daily life. An introspective study, an allegory of the state of his own mind, is the most we can look for from him.

But in Mr. Jack B. Yeats we recognise the makings of a dramatist of an older order; a writer of plays that are written in the intimate speech of the folk-ballad. While his contemporaries argue, wrangle and disagree as to what is music, and what is the best music, and what music saves a man's soul, he, like the hero Finn, is content with the best of all music—

The music of the thing that happens.

His play of '*The Treasure of the Garden*' carries on a tradition that shook the stage before playwrights became self-conscious and before poets aimed to please the high foreheads in the stalls. There is no mental dyspepsia in his characters. They present no problem. Their aim is to be real. To be glad and sorry for a little while on a miniature stage measuring a foot across."—*Academy*, 14/3/03.

PUBLISHED AND SOLD BY

ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET, LONDON.









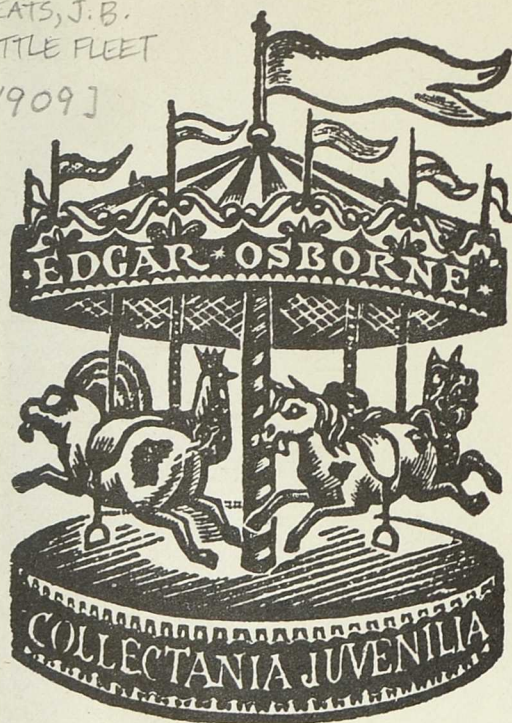


SA(TBC) (drifol.)

YEATS, J. B.

LITTLE FLEET

[1909]



37131 054 857 669



