

The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes; Otherwise called Mrs. Margery Two-Shoes. (5th ed.) London: Newbery and Carnan, 1768. 32mo, 3 7/10 inches x 2 3/5 inches (94 mm x 64 mm), 160 pages, 35 woodcuts.

The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes, originally published in 1765 by John Newbery, is perhaps the most influential children's book of its time. The text is typically attributed either to Newbery or Oliver Goldsmith, and the illustrations by "Michael Angelo" were most likely by Richard Johnson, who used the pseudonym as author of *Juvenile Sports and Pastimes*, published by Newbery's stepson Thomas Carnan. In the story little Margery Meanwell is orphaned, along with her younger brother, and cast into an existence in the street possessing only a single shoe. The background of Margery's plight is supplied in the introduction; it describes how her father, Farmer Meanwell, was evicted from his leased land and driven into an early grave by a selfish landowner. The subtitle reveals the book's plot, promising to share "The Means by which she acquired her Learning and Wisdom, and in consequence thereof her Estate." Despite her impoverishment, Margery is avid in her desire to read and, after mastering the skill, devises games to teach others. Having procured a new pair of shoes through the kind intervention of the local vicar (who also found a home for her brother Tommy), Margery proclaims her good luck, crying out "Two shoes! Two shoes!," thus earning her nickname. Margery's footwear allows her to begin her career as a "trotting Tutoress." Because of her exemplary behavior and learning, she is made President of "A, B, C College" where she admits students without the means to pay for their education. Goody Two-Shoes is happily reunited with her brother, also now a successful person, on the day of her marriage to a gentleman. The story contains references to two of Newbery's other children's books, *The Little Pretty Play Thing* and *The New Year's Gift*.

John Newbery (1713–1767) is the Englishman considered by some to be the inventor of children's literature and by others to have been the first to recognize its commercial potential. Newbery's publishing career began in 1730 when he was hired by William Carnan, printer of the *Reading Mercury*. Newbery must have pleased his employer, as he inherited a portion of Carnan's estate in 1737 and married his widow Mary two years

later. By 1740 Newbery had begun publishing books in Reading, and he relocated his business to London in either late 1743 or early 1744. His 1744 *Little Pretty Pocket-Book*, often referred to as the first children's book, was intended to "make Tommy a good Boy, and Polly a good Girl," as stated by the publisher on the title page. A motto in the book, "Instruction with Delight" neatly sums up Newbery's approach to children's literature, which underpinned his success. Perhaps a reflection on Newbery's own history, the children who peopled his tales succeeded or failed according to their virtues (this book being the most noteworthy example). Newbery also issued books for adults, among them works by Samuel Johnson and the poet Christopher Smart, who wed Newbery's stepdaughter Anna Maria. Newbery supplemented his publishing business by selling patent remedies, as indicated in advertisement at the back of this book and the reference to Dr. James's Powder in the opening paragraph of the story.

After Newbery's death in 1767, the publishing business was conducted by two separate firms, one headed by Newbery's son Francis and stepson Thomas Carnan, and the other by Newbery's nephew Francis and Francis' wife Elizabeth. Relations between the competing firms were not friendly, and Carnan and Newbery's partnership dissolved after a time, with Carnan continuing to publish and Francis selling patent medicines. Eventually John Newbery's publications became the property Elizabeth Newbery, and numerous publishers came to specialize in children's literature. The American Library Association's annual Newbery Medal commemorates his contributions to the genre.

This copy of *Little Goody Two-Shoes* is from the Bodleian Library's Douce Collection, named for Francis Douce (1757–1834), a British antiquary and Keeper of Manuscripts at the British Museum from 1807 to 1811. His bequest of more than 19,000 volumes contained printed books from various periods, including nearly 500 incunables, as well as roughly 425 manuscripts. Eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century children's books numbered among Douce's wide range of collecting specialties. The book is in a contemporary binding of boards covered with Dutch floral paper. Written in the recto of a front flyleaf is "Lydia Heaton | her Book | Febuary 2th: 1770"; the title page bears the

inscription “M H Haskoll” as well as the stamp “EX DONO FR. DOUCE | BIBL.
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