

# 18TH AND 19TH CENTURIES

## *John Newbery and Children's Book Publishing*

By the mid-eighteenth century the serious publishing of children's books began, notably by John Newbery (1713–1778), a clever English bookseller. It was Newbery who first successfully promoted children's literature. His books were largely collections of stories and poems by various (usually anonymous) writers (including himself). His publication *A Little Pretty Pocket Book* (1744) is one of the first published children's books designed to entertain children as well as to teach them. Newbery's contribution to children's literature was recognized in 1922 when Frederic Melcher established the annual Newbery Medal, awarded in the United States for the most distinguished book written for children.

## *The Rise of the Folktales*

The didactic element in children's books persisted through the early nineteenth century. But alongside the moralistic tales came the revival of the old folktales from the quickly fading oral tradition. Actually, folktales were printed in England as early as 1729, when *Tales of Mother Goose*, originally retold by the Frenchman Charles Perrault (1628–1703), was first translated and published in English. These retellings of old stories, including "Cinderella," "Little Red Riding Hood," and "Sleeping Beauty in the Wood," soon became staples in English nurseries. In the middle of the eighteenth century, a Frenchwoman, Mme. de Beaumont, retold numerous fairy stories, including "Beauty and the Beast" and "The Three Wishes," usually with a moral purpose. John Newbery's successor, Elizabeth Newbery, published the first children's edition of the Middle Eastern *Tales from the Arabian Nights*, featuring Sinbad the Sailor, Aladdin and his lamp, and others, in about 1791.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, two German brothers, Jacob (1785–1863) and Wilhelm (1786–1859) Grimm, collected a great number of folktales and published them (once again not expressly for children), and the Grimms' tales are still the most famous of all collections. The Grimms also inspired a flurry of folktale collecting throughout Europe, including Hans Christian Andersen in Denmark and Asbjørnsen and Moe in Norway. Folk rhyme collections were equally popular (see Figure 1.3) By the end of the nineteenth century, the collectors Joseph Jacobs (*English Fairy Tales*) and Andrew Lang (*The Blue Fairy Book*, *The Red Fairy Book*, and so on) were delighting children and adults alike.