

The thesis seeks to introduce and systematize the work of a long-time forgotten rural teacher Jaroslav Petr (1862-1922). Today basically unknown, he once was an important figure in the pedagogic circles. Although isolated, misunderstood and boycotted by conservative colleagues as well as by then highly influential Catholic authorities, he strived for emancipation of Czech schools within the Habsburg monarchy and especially for modernization of elementary education (refusing herbartianism, promoting hands-on teaching, free school, child-centered approach and other modern concepts). Naturally, he mainly addressed rural-specific challenges. As one of the first Czech education workers he realized the important impact of environment on the development of a (child's) personality, developed so called pedagogic regionalism and accordingly is an author of an innovative model textbook called Elementary teaching for rural schools (*Prvouka na škole venkovské*) which is based on its principles. At the same time, Petr was alarmed by the low quality of literature written for children or chosen for children to read, and strived for improving it – he wrote numerous literary reviews, essays on how children literature should look like, proposed reading lists, edited several children's readers with special emphasis on folk literature and dialects. Petr also initiated the trend of publishing “beautiful” books for children, i.e. outstanding not only in literary content but also in their physical form (enriched by high-quality illustrations).