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Vol. I

No. 8

New Books for Children

Abrahams, Robert D. Mr. Benjamin's sword; illus. by Hershel Levit. Jewish Publication Society of America, c1948. 183 p. \$2.00 Gr. 6-9

A good adventure story concerning the escape of the Secretary of State of the Confederacy after Lee's surrender. The excellence of the story is weakened somewhat by uneven writing and stereotyped portraits of Negroes and Union soldiery. As for example, the Negroes are referred to as "niggers" until the final episode when they do a service to the fugitives. The attitude towards them then is completely reversed with no natural transition of feeling such as should take place. The constant emphasis on Mr. Benjamin's religion acts to set the Jews apart, rather than to bring common understandings which the author intends. The fact that Mr. Benjamin is not an Orthodox Jew makes one wonder whether the author was attempting to temporize. In readability this book is "tops" but for effecting the underlying purpose it seems weak.

Agnew, Edith J. My Alaska picture story book. Friendship Press, c1948. 56 p. Gr. 3-5

A series of 32 excellent photographs showing various phases of Alaskan life today. They are accompanied by descriptive material presented in the form of letters from a young uncle to his 19 nieces and nephews. Their style is breezy but simple and informing.

Bailey, Flora. Summer at Yellow Singer's; illus. by Ralph Ray. Macmillan, c1948. 199 p. \$2.50 Gr. 5-7

Judy and Jon spend a wonderful summer with their father and mother on a Navaho reservation. They make friends with several Navaho children, learn many of the Indian customs and legends; and have some exciting adventures. This is an unusually good presentation of Indian life and customs. The songs and legends are brought in much more naturally than is usual with material of this sort. It is unfortunate that the villain is a Mexican and may be branded as a stereotype.

Bannon, Laura. Watchdog; story and pictures by Laura Bannon. Whitman, c1948. 46 p. \$2.50 Gr. 3-5

When Alberto sets his heart on a little puppy he rationalizes that his family needs a good "watchdog." In the process of realizing his ambition, the reader has a vivid picture of the preparations and colorful activities of a Mexican Indian fiesta, complete with a castillo, in celebration of Mexico's day of freedom. Laura Bannon's pictures both in color and gray tones are delightfully interpretative. The book has strong reading appeals as well as curricular usefulness.

Beck, Mary I. Tai-Lee's precious seed; with drawings by Jim Lee. Friendship Press, 1948. 137 p. \$1.75 Gr 5-7

Tai-Lee returns to his village after the war, bringing a basket of seed which his father has entrusted to him. After flood and plague he learns how precious his package is to the future of his people. A good book for Sunday School collections -- the religious element is well integrated and the purpose not too obtrusive, but the book may not have a wide general appeal because of this element.

Carter, Russell Gordon. Teen-age historical stories; illus. by Edgard Cirlin. Lantern, c1948. 251 p. \$2.50

These stories are obviously written to order. Many of them read almost like Horatio Alger. The emphasis is on wars and individual deeds of bravery -- usually performed by young boys.

Cutler, Lin. Peg-a-Leg, the cobbler of Dunscon; illus. by Henry Stahlhut. Knopf, c1948. 43 p. \$1.75 Gr. 1-3

"The best cobbler, the greatest cobbler, the cleverest cobbler in all Dunscon" comes to grief when he attempts profiteering on the king. Repentance and a last minute bit of resourcefulness bring this whimsical and jolly little story to a satisfactory close. Henry Stahlhut's illustrations are noteworthy. Good for reading aloud.

Fulton, Reed. Stevedore; a story of the water front. Doubleday, c1948. 216 p. \$2.00 Gr. 9-12

Stevedoring is a rough and dangerous work and this story of the Seattle docks pulls no punches in describing that roughness and danger. The author has created characters who talk the language of the docks and who act and react as typical stevedores. A well-written yarn on a subject that has been long neglected. The book has added value in that it gives a dignity and sense of worth to a type of work that is not "professional" or "white-collar."

Hollister, Mary Brewster. Dike against the sea; illus. by Kurt Wiese. Friendship, c1948. 126 p. \$1.50 Gr. 5-7

True and Star live on land reclaimed from the China sea and protected by a high dike. The destruction of the dike by typhoon, the discovery of smuggled sugar, and a village feud provide the means for the two children to reunite their mother with her family. Some plot and character improbabilities, such as the immediate reversal of feeling on the grandfather's part when meeting his grandchildren, weaken the book. The religious element while not predominant, may limit the appeal, but book could be used in church school collections.

Kelsey, Alice (Geer) Mingo of the merry-go-round; illus. by Janet Smalley and Jeanne McLavy. Friendship, c1948. 128 p. \$1.50 Gr. 5-7

Another of the Friendship press publications which can be recommended for church school collections, but in which the religious element while well-handled, is liable to detract from the general appeal. Mingo, traveling over his native Puerto Rico with a carnival, and seeing all the various ways of life, decides to become a farmer and learns the necessity of elementary education.

Lang, Andrew, ed. Rose fairy book; illus. by Vera Bock; with a foreword by Mary Gould Davis. Longmans Green, c1948. 212 p. \$2.50 Gr. 4-6

Another in the series of color fairy books. These tales are selected from the Brown, Grey, Lilac, Orange, and Pink Fairy Books. Good selection and excellent format.

Lent, Henry Bolles. "I work on a newspaper"; photographs by James B. Walsh. Macmillan, c1948. 152 p. \$2.50 Gr. 5-7

An amazingly full and contrived day's visit to a newspaper office provides the material for this book. Absolutely no phase is missed and certain chapters can be used separately. For example, there is a brief chapter on type; another tells of Ham Fisher of "Joe Palooka" fame and of how the comics are made. This is tempered by a children's editorial on the importance of reading other material than the comics. The "we and present-tense-style" reminiscent of the old carpenter readers is annoying but is easy reading and there is a wealth of information about a day in the life of a newspaper.

Owen, Frank, ed. Teen-age base-ball stories; illus. by Drayton S. Haff. Lantern press, c1948. 255 p. \$2.50

A timely anthology of 16 exciting baseball stories by various able writers. Although the main theme in each is the great national sport, the stories are rich in developmental values and involve other sports as well as larger aspects of interpersonal relations.

Prescott, William Hickling. The conquest of Mexico; ed. by Marshall McClintock; introduction by Sylvanus G. Morley. Messner, c1948. 360 p. \$5.00 shs

This abridgment is designed for modern reading. The original edition listed as o.p. in the SCES (1947 ed.) and labeled s, has 594 pages. This new edition has 349 pages of text. In reading difficulty it certainly no longer needs to be designated for older high school years and above. J. Fred Rippey designates the extent of abridgment as follows in the June 20th Chicago Tribune:

"Probably following the advice of Sylvanus Morley, an able student of the civilization of the Aztecs and the Mayas who knows more about both than Prescott ever knew, McClintock omits the long section describing the Aztec culture and lets the story begin with Hernando Cortes, his youth in Spain and his arrival in the newly-discovered West Indies. He also omits the elaborate documentary footnotes and lengthy philosophical digressions, and in some instances substitutes his own diction for words whose use and meaning have changed since Prescott's day. The result is a swiftly moving drama of those stirring and brutal events that the history texts have labeled the Conquest of Mexico."

Mr. Rippey also regrets the omission of Prescott's preface which gives the reader the author's viewpoint.

Staffelbach, E.H. For Texas and freedom; illus. by Hugh Wiley. Macrae-Smith, c1948. 271 p. \$2.50 Gr. 7-9

An exciting tale of Texas and the fight against Santa Anna. Not an unusual account, but there is plenty of excitement and adventure, and the parts the two young boys play are not too improbable.

Tensen, Ruth M. Come to the zoo. Reilly and Lee, c1948. 23 p. \$1.75 K.-gr. 2

Designed as a first "read alone" book. The author, an experienced first grade teacher, has used a 43 word vocabulary in a simple text built around a fine collection of zoo pictures. Futura hand-set type is used. Names of animals are not given in the text but animals are re-introduced with miniature pictures and names in review pages at the end. The text is also repeated. This book is like a trip to the zoo and might actually be used to precede or follow one.

Werner, Jane, ed. The golden book of nursery tales; illus. by Tibor Gergely.  
Simon & Schuster, c1948. 146 p. \$1.50 (A big golden book) K-gr. 2

A collection of nursery tales, old and new. The retellings are adequate, although not so good as some of the older versions. This is a book for home purchase rather than library use. It has good read-aloud stories and some that the beginning reader can handle alone. Illustrations are not good, but do not detract too much from stories.

Worth, Kathryn. Sea change. Doubleday, c1948. 240 p. \$2.25 j & shs

The summer of Kristy's sixteenth year marks a change for her. It is a time of growing up and of re-evaluations. These changes are well drawn, but the chief appeal the story will have for adolescent girls, lies in Kristy's love affair with the young Irish boy, Francis O'Hanlon. This is a book that admirably fills the need for a light love story for high school girls.

#### AIDS FOR ADULTS

##### Biographies of scientists.

Higgins, T.J. Book-length biographies of physicists and astronomers. Amer. Jour. Phys., 12; 31-39, 234-236 (1944)

Biographies and collected works of mathematicians. Am. Math. Monthly, 51; 433-45 (1944)

Book-length biographies of chemists. Sch. Sci. & Math. (1944) 650-665; (1943) 438-403

Biographies of engineers, metallurgists, and industrialists. Bul. of Bib. 18; 207-10, 235-39, (1946); 19; 10-12, 32, (1947)

Publications of the Child Study Assn. 221 W. 57th St. NYC

Frank, Josetti and Straus, Mrs. Hugh G. Looking at the comics. 20¢

Redl, Fritz. Techniques of sex information. 15¢

Frank, Josette. Those children's radio programs. 15¢.

Child study assn. staff. When children ask about sex. 25¢.

Gruenberg, Sidonie. Comics as a social force. 15¢.

Child study association. Books of the year for children. 20¢.

Let them face it; today's world in books for boys and girls. 20¢.

Magazines for boys and girls. 20¢.

Greenberg, Sidonie. Favorite stories old and new. 6-9 yrs. Doubleday, \$2.50.

Child study Association has presented Lois Lenski's "Judy's Journey" (Lippincott) its 1947 award for "a book for young people which faces with honesty and courage real problems in today's world."

Special citation: Bishop, Clair Huchet "Pancakes Paris" (Viking)

Jackson, Jesse "Anchor Man" (Harper)

Lewiton, Mina "Divided heart" (McKay)

See Child Study, Summer, 1948. p. 86)

Community Chests and Councils of America. Field trips to health and welfare agencies. Author, 155 E. 44 St. N.Y. 17

Children's books about nature, Spring, 1948. Child Study, Summer, 1948, page 87.

The Plot Completion test helps find the wishful thinkers and sentimental readers. 15¢. (Published by W. Wilbur Hatfield, 211 W. 68th St., Chicago 21, Ill.)  
See article Evaluating growth in the study of literature, by Walter Loban in The English Journal, v. xxxvii, no. 6 June, 1948. p. 277-283. A consideration of methods and tests.

Kiefer, Monica. American children through their books 1700-1835; foreword by Dorothy Canfield Fisher. University of Pennsylvania Press, c1948. 248 p. \$3.50 Adult

Here is a well-written, interesting account of child life in the early days of this country as seen through the books that were published for children. Of interest to all students of children's literature. Good reading, in fact, for anyone who likes to look into the past to see what changes in ideas and attitudes have taken place through the years.

N.Y. (City) Board of Educ. Puppetry in the curriculum. 171 p.

N.Y. (City) Citizen's committee on children. The group living of children. Author, 136 E. 57th St. N.Y. 22.

Needs of children from nursery school to after school groups. Points out tangible and intangible factors essential to group living at all ages.

Recent books for junior and senior high school pupils. Eng. J (H.S. ed.) June, 1948. P. 297-306

Titles being considered for next revision of "Books for you" and "Your reading." NCTE.

The following evaluative criteria were compiled and discussed by a seminar group interested in the evaluation, analysis and use of materials with children and young people. They are tentative only and we invite your comment and recommendations. Other projects of the seminar will appear in later issues.

#### EVALUATING INTERCULTURAL MATERIALS FOR CHILDREN

##### I. Types of material (Approaches to the problem)

###### A. Fictional approach

1. Books that bring groups together without differentiation (Beim "Two is a team")
2. Books dealing with culture and homelife of a group, showing that all people are basically the same (DeAngeli "Up the hill")
3. Books presenting the problem of intercultural conflict and understanding
  - a. From "our" point of view (Whitney "Willow hill")
  - b. From "their" point of view (Means "Great day in the morning"; DeAngeli "Bright April")
4. Allegorical (Coe "Charcoal"; Holding "Miss Kelly")

###### B. Contributions approach

1. Biography (Bontemps "We have tomorrow"; Graham "There was once a slave")
2. History of a group or people (Bontemps "Story of the Negro"; Lengyel "Americans from Hungary")
3. Literary contributions (Paul Lawrence Dunbar, etc.)

C. Informational approach

1. Anthropological (Evans "All about us"; Linton "Man's way from cave to skyscraper")
2. Straight problem attack (Baruch "Glass house of Prejudice"; Alpenfel's "Sense & nonsense about race"; Benedict and Weltfish "In Henry's backyard")

Note: Obviously these groupings are not discreet and certain books would fall very acceptably into more than one of them. Under the fictional approach 1 & 4 are approaches frequently used in literature for the young child. 2 come shortly after. 3 is used after children have been made aware of "Differences" and conflicts.

II. Criteria for evaluating books in this area.

- A. Evaluate as children's literature; well-written, good plot, good characterization, readable, accurate.
  1. Should be in good taste. No one part or element should detract from the value of the book as a whole. Nevertheless the book should be judged for its overall value or effect rather than by minor parts.
  2. Children must find the book acceptable in terms of its particular type of literature.
- B. Characters must not be stereotyped; must be people in their own right and not manipulated to prove a point. Lead readers to think of the characters as individuals rather than as "Jews", "Negroes", etc.
- C. Situations must be natural and a balanced sample of what might occur.
- D. Solutions of problems must be fair and possible.
- E. Book must contribute to understanding rather than highlight or aggravate a problem needlessly. As far as possible, the book must present a slice of life in which the author's attempt to present a problem does not result in undue distortion or overemphasis.
- F. Illustrations must be acceptable and true, both artistically and to the group represented.

III. References

- American council on education. Literature for human understanding. 1948.  
Baker, Augusta. Books about Negro life for children. B. Interc'l ed. 1946.  
American Council on Education Reading ladders for human relations.  
American Council on Education 1947 \$1.00  
Miles, Louella. One World in School. A. Teachers Association 1946.  
Rollins, Charlemae. We build together. N.C.T.E. (New Edition this fall).