ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

PRODUCTION NOTE

University of Illinois at
Urbana-Champaign Library
BULLETIN
OF THE
CHILDREN'S BOOK CENTER
Published by
The University of Chicago Library - Center for Children's Books

Vol. III No. 6
May, 1950

BULLETIN of the Children's Book Center. Published by the University of Chicago Library - Center for Children's Books. Mary K. Eakin, Librarian.

The book evaluations appearing in this Bulletin are made with the advice and assistance of members of the faculty of the Graduate Library School, the Department of Education, and the University Laboratory school.

Published monthly except August. Subscription price is $1.50 a year. Checks should be made payable to the University of Chicago Library. Correspondence regarding the Bulletin should be addressed to the Center for Children's Books, University of Chicago, 5855 Kimbark Avenue, Chicago 37, Illinois.

New Titles for Children and Young People


A case of "Mongol dog makes good". Taken by his master on an expedition into the Gobi Desert in 1920, Wolf performs feats of memory, intelligence, and strength that would be worthy of any man. Based on the author's actual experiences in exploring the Gobi Desert, this should have been a good adventure story but it has too many flaws to make it acceptable. Although Jack Benton protests his belief in racial equality, the author's own position is left in doubt. The comparison of the Mongol with the pets of the various members of the expedition is inexcusable. Equally objectionable is the way in which "man" always means "white man"; otherwise the words "Chinese" or "Mongol" are used. Added to these weaknesses is the excess of sensationalism in each chapter. Since the book is intended for older boys, it would be preferable to send them to the author's adult, factual works which have the same information but are better written.

Attwood, Frederic. Vavache, the cow who painted pictures; illus. by Roger Duvoisin. Aladdin, 1950. 77p. $2.25. Gr.5-6.

A slight fantasy of a small American boy spending the summer on the coast of France who makes friends with a cow that can paint pictures. A nice blending of fantasy and realism. Some children may be discouraged by the excess of French names and expressions, but the book will have real value as read-aloud material.


A companion volume to Perhaps I'll be a sailor. Like the other book this one has a fairly mature text and a picture book format. This may prove a handicap unless the book is used with some motivation from the teacher or librarian. The text gives an excellent overview of the wide variety of work that goes on around a farm and stresses modern methods of agriculture. The illustrations are clear and informative and add much to the appeal of the book. A useful title for conservation classes.


Text and illustrations showing the typical cowboy as he goes about his regular work and takes part in rodeos. Of particular value are the pictures showing the various parts of a cowboy's wearing apparel and his gear. These pictures help explain many terms that are regularly used in cowboy stories, but are not often defined. A double page spread shows cowboys at work in various parts of the world. A book that should be a welcome addition to any library collection.


Every time Bob tried to get a violin quickly and cheaply his plans went awry. Finally he decided that the only way to get one was to set to work and earn it. Twenty dollars was all he needed, but that was a large sum to a young boy living in a small town in the early part of this century. Ingenuity, sheer hard work, and some helpful advice from his friend, Mr. Minette, finally brought success. A story packed with humor, suspense, and some good common sense.


An excellent biography of Edison written for the middle elementary grades. The story begins with an exciting account of the part Edison's father played in the Mackenzie rebellion in Canada and his escape to the States. In simple but very readable style the author pictures Edison's boyhood, with his early interest in chemistry, and continues through the events of his life until his death in 1931. This is a complete picture of Edison both as a man and an inventor, and should have a place in the biography collection of every library.


Two young boys from Australia have an opportunity to sail with their uncle in a replica of Captain Cook's Enterprise. In the course of the voyage they are marooned on a desert island, the ship burns, and the boys find a sunken treasure ship. A fairly credible story and one that sea-minded youngsters should enjoy.

A companion volume to *Little people in a big country*. These are pictures of modern French scenes painted by French children, most of them in their early teens. The introduction and explanatory texts are given in French and English. Useful for art classes as well as the general library collection.


Uneven collection of Ethiopian folk tales. Some of the stories will make welcome additions to the storyteller's collection. Recommended for large libraries, or where there is great need for folk material.


More antics of the Pottleby family whose chief function in life seems to be getting into and out of ridiculous situations. The whimsy is too exaggerated and the humor too slight for the book to have much real value.


An attempt to combine history and Hollywood in a story of a young boy's visit with his uncle who is a movie director. The picture being filmed is based on a biography of Francisco and his western expeditions. The history sequences are so long and dull and the Hollywood scenes so brief that the story drags too much to sustain interest. The book has some classroom value but little use in the general collection.

Dobbs, Rose, ed. *Once upon a time; twenty cheerful tales to read and tell*; illus. by Flavia Gig. Random House, 1950. 117p. $2. Gr. 2-4.

Old and new favorites about people and animals and things, all told with a freshness and humor that will please children and adults alike. An attractive book for the child's home library as well as a welcome addition to the storyteller's shelf.


The summer following graduation promised to be a special one for Sally Burnaby. She and Scotty were going steady and, with Scotty living next door, there was no reason why they could not see each other almost every hour of the day. Reality crept in when Scotty took a job with the post office that kept him busy all day and cut short his evenings. Then there were family responsibilities that Sally had not counted on, and finally there was her own job. It took most of the summer and all of her family's patience to bring Sally out of her day-dream and back to the realities of life. The problems of going steady and of first love are well handled and, through two minor characters, the difficulties arising from a too early marriage are shown. A good book for eighth and ninth grade girls who are becoming seriously interested in the question of engagement and of marriage.


Revised edition. Although the book does not achieve all that is promised in the introduction, it is of interest as a beginning guide to the study of the growth and development of the English language.


A typical Evatt mystery. The scene is a small French Canadian village. The main character, a ten-year-old girl, uses her ingenuity to help the family fortunes and brings about the reunion between a father and his long-lost daughter. The characters and situations are quite plausible and there is much of the flavor of French Canadian village life. An acceptable mystery.


Mr. Upham was the only member of the Upham family who had ever lived in the country. Therefore when an opportunity came for him to take over a friend's "country home" for a summer and have a chance to do some writing, the family accepted with little warning of what awaited them. The house had been built in Revolutionary days and had not been lived in for four years prior to this summer. At first it seemed miles away from everyone, but as the children began to explore, they found plenty of neighbors - normal and peculiar; animal and human. After the first few days they decided that country life is as much fun as city life. This, in fact, is the major flaw of the book, for the author has made every day of the summer a day of excitement and discovery, with no periods of boredom, no family quarrelings, and with an uncomplaining acceptance of the father's "no noise" rule. The result is an extremely pleasant story, with a great deal of charm, but one that does not quite achieve reality. To add a bit of spice there is a mystery that is, unfortunately, given away in the note on the back of the book jacket.


A well-written, exceedingly readable biography of one of America's best loved characters. The author has presented a well-rounded picture of Will Rogers as a very human person with his share of faults as well as good points. The unfortunate use of terms such as "Negress" throughout the book limit its value and usefulness.


A "Treasure island" type of story in which a young boy living in present day England becomes involved with an unsavory gang of seamen and goes with them to the island of Cocos to seek the lost treasure of Lima. Although the quality of the writing does not equal that of Stevenson, this is an exciting adventure story and one which boys will probably enjoy.


Ted Brett was just another Hell's Kitchen kid, slightly scrawny and the victim of gang persecution,
until he wandered into the Park's Department gymnasium one day and began taking boxing lessons. Not only does he learn to hold his own with the neighborhood gang, he finally wins his way up to the Golden Gloves city championship. The author makes a too obvious attempt to teach the lessons of democracy and racial equality, but he has given a good picture of life in New York slums.


The fiddler crab collects sand dollars but refuses to put them in a sand bank. Comes a rainy day and all his money melts away. As if the moral were not obvious enough the author repeats it in the last two lines. Poor concepts (for this age level) and poor style.


Amelia Earhart's life as a small girl on a Kansas farm. There is only casual reference to the flying experiences that made her famous, and none at all to her final flight. The story has some slight value as an example of the struggle between older and younger generations but the mediocre writing keeps it from being a book for general library use.


Within a few months time Kate finds herself faced with the problem of a new stepmother, the sudden death of her father, and threatened bankruptcy for the ranch. She reacts to the problems with hatred and anger, then turns her back on the ranch and her stepmother and joins the Girl's Rodeo Association. In due time she saves the ranch and discovers that she loves her stepmother after all. Changes in character are too abrupt to be realistic and too much of the story depends on coincidence.


Bonny-Belle, a little girl of the early 1900's, has two great desires in life - roses and a hat. However, as an orphan, boarded out by the county to the Puggstein's, there was little chance she would get either. There was not much money for extras since Aunt Puggy could earn very little doing cleaning and ironing and Uncle Pugg did nothing but sit in the kitchen and read the newspapers that were used to paper the walls. Finally Aunt Puggy rebelled and in the end Bonny-Belle got both her roses and her hat. The story is told by Bonny-Belle in the overly sentimental style that characterizes this author's books. Illustrations do not always match the text.


Chiri, the wild dog of Snow dog, and his master, Link Stevens, are back in another of Kjelgaard's excellent tales of the north woods. This time Link and Chiri go into the Caribou Mountains to rescue a naturalist and a flyer who are believed to have been forced down there. How the man and dog work together to make the rescue is a tale of high adventure with interesting side-light on human nature successfully interwoven.


A series of episodes in the life of Mounty Park Langdon and his horse, Salto. Many of the chapters first appeared as short stories in magazines and are complete episodes within themselves. Not an outstanding book, but acceptable for large collections that need more horse stories.

McDevitt, Jean. Mr. Apple's family; illus. by Ninon. Doubleday, 1950. 118p. $2.50. Gr.6-8. (D134;D7;D19).

Mr. Apple was not satisfied with ordinary names for his children, so he named each one after a different variety of apple, except the baby who was named Ann. A slight story with too much and too obvious moralizing by the author. Quaint illustrations.


Fifteen-year-old Joe Long had known nothing but circus life until the night his father was killed by a lion and the law stepped in to find a suitable guardian for him. Running away from the industrial school where he was placed pending the court's decision, Joe landed at Pop Dawson's farm with a badly cut leg and a distrust for all "gillies". The contrast between circus life and farm life is brought out quite strongly in Joe's adjustment to the farm and the community's acceptance of Joe. A swift-paced story with all the excitement and glamor of the circus, and underneath it all the warmth and strength of a happy family group.


The settling of the first colony at Jamestown as seen through the adventures of twelve-year-old Martin Wynne, apprentice to the company doctor. The story is told in a simple style that makes easy reading but has enough action and suspense to hold the reader's interest.


Fictionalized biography of the life of Abigail Adams from the time she was sixteen until the beginning of the Revolutionary War - with a final section summarizing events up to the time of the election of John Quincy Adams. The history is accurate enough and detailed enough to make the book useful for supplementary reading. However, its primary appeal for most girls will be as a love story.


Two toy animals, a squirrel and a mouse, are thrown away and escape together to the country where they establish a new home. The fantasy does not quite satisfy mainly because the author herself seems to lose sight of the fact that these are somewhat battered toys and not real animals.


A career story with a new and unusual vocation. Faced with the loss of the summer home she loves, Thistle Jones sets herself the task of earning enough money to pay the taxes. She surprises herself and her family by discovering a talent for winding fishing flies and thus saves the old homestead. The characters are the most amazing collection of people who ever got together in one book. Their dialog is no less weird and, although it
suits the characters, it does nothing to help the reader enjoy the book.


As a picture book this is excellent. There is action and humor in the illustrations, with especially good end-papers. The text, unfortunately, is completely disappointing. The story is slight, improbable, and lacking in either humor or imagination that the illustrations lead the reader to expect.


A simply written story of two children who go on a picnic with their parents, have their first experience with an echo, and learn something about map making and reading. Designed as an easy reading book it can be handled by good second grade and all third grade students. Should be useful for any elementary grade classes that are studying maps.


Gard is an exceedingly spoiled, bad-tempered boy who goes to visit his uncle's ranch and proves to make everyone uncomfortable through his own temper tantrums. An unrealistic story that has little to recommend it except that it is a horse story. There are enough of these on the market that librarians can get good quality and not have to accept second rate stories or writing.


Umar Chand is the very poor, distant cousin of a Maharaja of India. As a young boy he dreams of having enough money to build his mother a pumpkin palace—green on the outside, with yellow velvet floor coverings and white marble stairs. His dream comes true when he is chosen as heir to the Maharaja and eventually inherits his cousin's wealth. Just enough realism to give the erroneous impression that this is a true picture of modern India. Not acceptable as fantasy or realism.

Renick, Marion (Lewis). The shining shooter; illus. by Dwight Logon. Scribner, 1950. 218p. $2.25. Gr. 5-7. (D40b;D109;D92;D47).

The first days of spring brought Tip his first inmate and the chance he had long wanted of learning to play marbles. Before the season ended he had not only learned to play, he had gone to the finals in the city marbles tournament, and had found himself a job as assistant to a magician. Good pointers on how to play tournament marbles, with a section at the end on various types of outdoor marbles games. Has added value for its picture of life in one of the less prosperous, but not slum, areas of New York City.


Another story of three of the children who appeared in The Cruise of the Wadden Castle. The plot this time centers around the unsuccessful attempts of the children to earn some money during the Easter holidays. Follows the pattern of adult-child conflict that seems prevalent in the English books that have been published in this country, with additional conflict between the children and their cousin who visits them for a week. The children go through a series of misadventures from stealing daffodils to burning down a cottage (fortunately an abandoned one), and end by finding a long lost treasure.


The beautifully written story of Robert and Clara Schumann from the time they first met until they were finally married. It is more than fictionalized biography, for Spaeath gives detailed and critical analysis of the works produced by both Robert and Clara Schumann during this period. This emphasis on the technical aspects of the Schumanns' music may limit the appeal of the book; however, it is quite probable that girls who are reading the book as a love story will simply skim over the technical parts.


Carlos, a small boy living on a ranch in Colombia, has one great ambition. That is to own a saddle like the one belonging to the owner of the ranch. By helping to catch some cattle thieves, Carlos finally has his wish. Not an important book but a pleasant story that gives a good picture of life in modern Colombia.


Another in the season's crop of baseball stories. The background is, again, professional baseball. Much of the action takes place during spring training and concerns a rookie with no league experience who manages to make the major league during the course of the spring season. The usual characters are present and the plot offers little that is new. The story moves swiftly and as a sports story is satisfactory.


The harum-scarum Malones are back, with Beany in more trouble than managed in the first two books together. Her problems involve the usual difficulties in keeping the boy friend's feelings smoothed; a cousin who visits for a week. The children go through a series of misadventures from stealing daffodils to burning down a cottage (fortunately an abandoned one), and end by finding a long lost treasure.


Interesting biography of one of the greatest magicians of all time. Amateur magicians will be
particularly interested in the descriptions of some of Houdini's most famous tricks.


Somewhat of a cross between Peck's Bad Boy and the Peterkins, with Herbert playing the role of "Bad Boy" and his Uncle Horace as the "Lady from Philadelphia." Each chapter is a complete episode - many of which have appeared as short stories in Story Parade magazine. Taking the stories one at a time, some of them have a fair amount of humor. Trying to read the book through at one sitting becomes a boring and exceedingly un-funny occupation. The last section shows particularly bad taste in the methods Herbert and his friends use to "earn" money for some musical instruments.


Gr. 7-9. (D59).

The biography of Amos Fortune, a Negro, who was born in Africa, brought to this country as a slave, and lived to become one of the most respected men in his community. A slow beginning and the author's usual poetic style may limit the book's appeal. It is, however, a worthwhile addition to the biography shelf of any library.


An excellent discussion of the factors that have gone into the development of the Japanese people, politically and socially. The author points up differences between the ways of thinking of the Japanese and Western peoples and gives clear, logical reasons for those differences. This is a book that should have value for every library and classroom collection as an excellent source for information and understanding of the Japanese.

Instructional Materials, Supplementary Reading and Sources of Material

The materials listed here are not available from the Children's Book Center. Orders should be sent to the publishers of the individual items.


Account of how one school library served its community during the summer months.


Annotated, graded list of outstanding books of 1949.


Includes techniques, indexes, lists, collections, individual works, recordings, individual records.


Selected list of old and new favorites. Annotated, graded.

Farm life. Reprinted from Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia Available to teachers and librarians on request.


It's all yours. 16mm, black and white, 1 reel sound picture, 10 min. Produced by Pocket Books, Inc. for the Teen Age Book Club. $25 to non-commercial film libraries, educational institutions, etc. Obtainable from the Teen Age Book Club, 7 East 12th Street, New York 5, N. Y.

Designed to promote better reading.


Books that are supplementary to basic text series either for their values as sources of information or for recreational reading. Graded.


Murphy, Lucy L. "Saints and wee folk." The Catholic Library World 21:165-68. Mr'50.

Irish folk tales for the storyteller.


Tryon, Caroline and Lilienthal, Jesse W. "Guideposts in child growth and development." NEA Journal 59:198-99 Mr'53.

Discusses the developmental tasks of childhood.

Urbancek, Joseph J. "Mathematical teaching aids." Chicago Schools Journal Jan-Feb'50 supplement.

Annotated list of audio-visual materials, books, pamphlets, and magazine articles.


Children's Spring Book Festival Awards

Picture Book Age: SUNSHINE, by Ludwig Beomels (Simon and Schuster)

8-12 Years: WINDFALL FIDDLE, by Carl Carmer (Knopf)

Older Children: AMOS FORTUNE: FREE MAN, by Elizabeth Yates (Aladdin Books)