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BULLETIN
OF THE
CENTER FOR
CHILDREN'S
BOOKS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
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WITH ANNOTATIONS

R  Recommended
Ad  Additional book of acceptable quality for collections needing more material
     in the area.
M  Marginal book that is so slight in content or has so many weaknesses in style
     or format that it should be given careful consideration before purchase.
NR  Not recommended
SpC  Subject matter or treatment will tend to limit the book to specialized col-
     lections.
SpR  A book that will have appeal for the unusual reader only. Recommended
     for the special few who will read it.

Except for pre-school years, reading range is given for grade rather than for
age of child.

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New Titles for Children and Young People

Agle, Nan (Hayden). *K Mouse and Bo Bixby*; drawings by Harold Berson. Seabury, 1972. 96p. $4.95.

Nine-year-old Robert (Bo) Bixby sees a kangaroo mouse when he and his parents come out to the site of their new home with the contractor, Mr. Voleo. Bo is enthralled and immediately decides that he will catch K (for kangaroo) for a pet and that he will protect the animal from Mr. Voleo's stated dislike. The chapters are told alternately from Bo's viewpoint and that of the mouse, as the house grows and free space for wild creatures diminishes. The message is a worthy one, and the ending (house finished, boy deciding to give the mouse a home rather than catch it, mouse moving in) shows a concern for animals—although not all readers (or their parents) may cheer at the thought of making mice welcome. The weaknesses of the story are that so little happens, and that the two sets of chapters never really coalesce.


A nonsensical story with a bit of a bite here and there is illustrated with colorful pictures, beautifully detailed. A box of raisins looks tempting to Little Fox, but his mother says that too much of anything will make you sick; actually, she wants the fruit kept for a pudding. Little Fox takes the box, cadges a lift from Crow, is dumped (with the raisins) into the lap of a circus fat lady, escapes from her and her dog, is held up by a weasel, and gets home with the box of raisins. He gets a spanking but also gets his favorite dessert for dinner—raisin pudding. The "real reason" behind ostensible ones is used throughout the story, a device that may make the listening audience interested in motivation, but it is more than probable that they will enjoy the story for its circus setting, charming illustrations, lively action, and final note of reassurance.


Another volume based on the author's family history, much of the material here gathered from the writings of Almedingen's great-grandmother, Anna Poltoratzky, and told in first person. Although at times the chronicle moves slowly, it is engrossing as a picture of a Moscow merchant's family of the late eighteenth century, and the book should especially appeal to readers who enjoy the myriad details that give historical writing verisimilitude. There is little that is dramatic in Anna's life, since she lives quietly at home, tutored in a fashion unusual for girls of that era, the only large events in her girlhood being a meeting with the Tsarina (Catherine the Great) and her only brother's decision to marry an Englishwoman.
and leave Russia forever. The story concludes with Anna’s marriage, although an epilogue describes briefly the events of the remainder of her life. A glossary is appended.


Amiably frenetic drawings illustrate the tale of a child who describes his very first day at a new school, the humor of the pictures reflecting that of the text. Some Awful Things happen, like finding out that nobody, but nobody else brings hard-boiled eggs, or like making a mistake when looking for the boys’ room, but it becomes increasingly clear that the other children are really very friendly, that Tom’s real problem is apprehension. Indeed, by the time he has been absorbed into the gang in after-school play, he too knows that the very worst thing is already over. The text verges on cuteness once or twice but is on the whole child-like, particularly in the dialogue, and the message seems to be that school is fun and not the worst thing at all.


One of a series of books that are job-oriented, the simple vocabulary, large print, and subject interest indicating that the books are best suited for the slow older reader who faces a decision about employment. The information about being a waitress is given within a fictional framework (a girl at camp talks to a camp waitress) that is not too convincing and seems unnecessary. There is some value in the idea that menial work is dignified enough to merit consideration, but the reader who is approaching working age is not likely to be enthralled by a career-guidance book that begins, “Lisa was happy. She had never been to camp before. She met new friends. She played new games.”


Pablo Picasso was so pleased by the gift he received on his 85th birthday from the children of Vallauris, a collection of their drawings of bullfights, that he added some of his own, selected the best of theirs, and suggested they be printed as a book. The text gives some facts about the artist and about bullfighting, and the illustrations are artfully arranged, the deft lines of a Picasso drawing coming always as a surprise after pages of the naive and vigorous pictures by the children.


A story set in the state of Washington at the turn of the century. At first Amanda and her friends think the old lady who has moved into an old shack is a witch, but the girls soon find that Mrs. Hankinson is gentle and friendly. They decide to help her find the pieces of red material she needs—seven shades of red—for a rose-patterned quilt. Amanda is especially anxious to have the rose quilt win a prize because her tyrannical grandmother expects to going on taking first prize every year. On a visit to Portland, Amanda encounters a flood, becomes friendly with an opera star, helps a Chinese worker, and returns with the seventh piece of red material. The characters tend to be stereotypical, although they range...
from sugar to vitriol (grandma, who is nobody’s ideal grandmother) and the story seems padded with busy incidents, but the historical background and period details are colorful and the enterprising heroine sees plenty of action.


A continuous text first discusses linear measurement, going to some lengths in comparing the two systems of measuring (with the metric system shown as more practical) and going on to measuring in two and in three directions, and measuring capacity and weight. The process approach is used, with red-banded headings, “Think for yourself” on some pages. Clear as the text and its illustrations are in handling each aspect of the topic of measurement, the progression of aspects of the topic in a continuous text means coverage of many concepts and terms in comparatively few pages; it is possible that the reader may feel overwhelmed by so much material. The one weakness of the book is that it asks questions (“How do you think an anemometer measures the speed of the wind?” . . . “Radar measures distance by time. Can you guess how?”) which the reader cannot be expected to answer on the basis of logic plus information in the book. There is a list of answers at the back of the book—but not for all questions. An index is appended.


A story told only in pictures is slight in essence: a small girl knits a cat, a mouse ravels it, the girl knits a new tail. There doesn’t seem to be enough action to compensate for the lack of detail that might expand the plot in print, and the illustrations have a static quality: large areas of color, sometimes harsh, with some pages that are busy, others that are effective.


Another good book in a fine series, Oxygen Keeps You Alive is perfectly clear, simply told, and accurate. The illustrations amplify the text, which describes how oxygen in the air we breathe is carried throughout the body, how people who are not able to get oxygen (astronauts who leave their ships, divers, climbers of high mountains) must carry a supply, and how other life forms (fish, plants) use oxygen. A few home demonstrations are suggested to show that there is air in water and that boiling removes that air.

Brooks, Polly Schoyer. When the World was Rome; 753 B.C. to A.D. 476; by Polly Schoyer Brooks and Nancy Zinsser Walworth. Lippincott, 1972. 235p. illus. $6.95.

A history of Rome is told in painstaking detail and in conservative style, with emphasis on leaders and battles, intrigue and succession. There is no broad canvas here, but a series of meticulously researched studies: a great deal of attention is, for example, given to Galen and his work, and to the architecture of Pliny’s summer estate, but little that describes the life of the common people or the Roman colonies. The book is written carefully; the captions for illustrations are less careful—the text refers, for example, to the hut of Romulus thus: “The foundations of a primitive mid-eighth-century dwelling—which may have been his—have been found by modern archaeologists.” The picture of a thatched hut, two pages earlier, is labelled, “The hut of Romulus.” Solid, accurate, and informative, a boon to the lover of history. An extensive bibliography and an index are appended.

Photographs of figures-in-process as well as of finished beast and human forms illustrate some of the objects that can be made with polyurethane, the plastic called flexible foam. The instructions are clear, but there is little variety in the objects suggested, and the not-infrequent references to the “astonishingly real” appearance of the animals or people are perhaps more opinion than fact. Both the figures and the various decorative ideas given at the end of the book are amusing, but they persist in looking like flexible foam.

Brown, Marcia Joan. *The Bun; A Tale from Russia*. Harcourt, 1972. 30p. illus. $4.95.

A variant of the story of the gingerbread boy, illustrated with vigorous, almost strident pictures marred by the tight binding. With the last of their flour, an old woman made the bun her husband had requested, only to see it (round, and smiling mischievously) roll off through the doorway. Using its wiles to escape the old couple and several animals that want to eat it, the bun goes merrily on its way until it meets an opponent even more sly, the fox. End of bun. The cumulation and repetition in the bun’s song, the lively action in both the illustrations and the story, and the concept of the story are appealing, but neither in the writing nor in the illustrations is this distinguished.


Five stories are retold and are illustrated in woodcuts that are bold in design and color, stylized and effectively African in mood. Four of the tales are about animals and their trickery, one of them (“Frog and His Two Wives”) a “why” story; the title story is on the familiar theme of the outcast youth who, with the aid of magic, gains love and success. The stories have humor and action but the style of the retelling does not quite capture the flow and cadence of the oral tradition.

Buck, Margaret Waring. *How They Grow*; written and illus. by Margaret Waring Buck. Abingdon, 1972. 40p. $4.50.

A description of the reproductive cycles of various forms of animal life, a page or two being devoted to each. Since the text includes such different creatures as insects, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals, the treatment given to each is of necessity superficial in a book of so few pages. The information is accurate and the careful drawings helpful, but the brevity of the text makes this only an introduction to a subject more fully covered in many books for the middle grades reader. An index that gives both common and scientific names serves as a table of contents, although the entries are under specific rather than general names: “Red-legged grasshopper,” and “Pumpkinseed sunfish” for example. A divided bibliography is appended.


Only the illustrations indicate that the protagonist, in this read-aloud story about imaginative play, is black. Christopher’s assortment of hats lends authenticity, in his mind, to being milkman, fireman, detective, and cowboy, in a day of play punctuated by encounters with Mrs. Jones (his mother) who obligingly feeds him and goes along with his make-believe. There is a mild humor in the use of
Christopher’s dog as a bear or steer in the role-playing, but the writing is otherwise rather static. However, both the idea of a happy and busy day spent in constructive play and the fact that both of Christopher’s parents are so understanding are valuable assets.


Although the instructions for making various kinds of puppets are not always detailed, this is a good introduction to puppetry because of the variety and simplicity of the material it includes: finger puppets, hand puppets, and puppets made from socks, mittens, rolls of cardboard, paper plates, etc. The illustrations show colorful basic materials that would need coloring in actuality: for example, cardboard rolls are shown as green and yellow, paper bags in several shades, whereas most tubes and bags are of a uniform color and would need painting of crayoning—for which no instructions are given. The text consists only of instructions, with no background or overall suggestions, although a few ideas for staging and a list of materials are added at the close of the book.

Cimino, Maria. *The Disobedient Eels; And Other Italian Tales*; with pictures by Claire Nivola. Pantheon Books, 1971. 53p. Trade ed. $3.50; Library ed. $4.49 net.

Seventeen stories from different parts of Italy (the region or city often mentioned in the tale) are illustrated by pale, often busy, drawings. The stories vary: some are really so brief as to be only jokes, some depend so much upon latent content as to be vapid for the reader who doesn’t share the association, while some have the true robust humor of the folk tale. All, in varying degrees, are funny stories, but not many in this collection are outstanding, chiefly because of the tendency toward a flat ending—and in a funny story, a flat punch line is a serious offense.


A testament to a man of probity, written by his son-in-law. Otto Kiep’s family was German, and he had been instilled with ideas of the greatness of that country by his parents, all through his childhood in Scotland, where he was born. A soldier in the German army in the first world war, Kiep became a lawyer and diplomat, his principles of justice sorely tried by the excesses of the Hitler regime, which he served until his open pessimism about the war led to his being taken as a political prisoner, and eventually to his being hanged. Although the author’s admiration borders on reverence and each of Kiep’s actions is accepted uncritically (his signing of a loyalty oath to Hitler while on an assignment in Chile, for example, is excused by “If they hadn’t done it, the mission would have failed. And who would have been hurt? Not Adolf Hitler, but a lot of German workers . . .”) the book gives an interesting picture of Otto Kiep as an individual and as a prototype of the reasonable man caught in a situation that divides his loyalties, and it is written with good characterization and a flair for vivid description.


“If we had dark skin they’d be handling out welfare checks and patting us on the back, the government and the college crowd and the rich ones out in the suburb. But all we are is white people, working people, plain ordinary Americans.” That’s
what Andy's father says, and Andy (who tells the story) has absorbed his attitudes. When a busing program brings black children to Andy's school, it is particularly exacerbating to his father, a policeman, to be on duty. When tension and protest erupt in the school community, Andy sees prejudice in action; learning to know some of the newcomers and to understand their problems, Andy's prejudice is eroded to a realistic degree. While his viewpoint changes (helped by the ideas of an older brother who often quarrels with their father) Andy has not yet escaped his parents' bigotry. They are not going to change—but he is still young, and there is hope. The story has a plot, but it is more an exploration of a situation and of attitudes, offering no pat answers but giving an honest picture of a child's first questioning of parental values and a coruscating picture of prejudice.


Through the work of archeologists, primarily that of Sir Arthur Evans, the palace at Knossos has emerged to enthrall and puzzle later scientists. There is little in this account that cannot be found in other surveys of Cretan exploration and comparisons of Crete and Mycenae, but this is one of the more smoothly written of the many books on the subject. Details of finds and of facts that substantiated theories or raised new questions are incorporated with skill into a text that goes into considerable detail about the work of Ventris and about the possible causes for the destruction of Cretan palaces and cities. A final chapter describes recent (the 1960s) discoveries. An index is appended.

Domanska, Janina, Illus. *If All the Seas Were One Sea;* etchings by Janina Domanska. Macmillan, 1971. 29p. $4.95.

The familiar nursery rhyme about a tree made of all the trees in the world falling into a sea made of all the seas in the world ("... what a splish splash that would be!") is illustrated with the intricate but not too-busy geometric figures that are distinctively Domanska's style. The designs are stunning and sophisticated, and color is used with enough restraint so that the two do not compete.


Ten-year-old Mandy climbs over the orphanage wall and finds a wee deserted cottage; for months she works at clearing and planting. One day she finds that somebody else has been working in the garden and has left a note signed, "An Admirer." One day Mandy is missing, and the matron calls the property-owner next door; he goes out into the storm, brings Mandy home to his cozy house and his loving wife and his friendly son—all of which may just lead the reader to suspect adoption is in the offing. It is, and the book ends on as sentimental and Victorian a note as it has maintained throughout. Very sugary, very bland, and quite pedestrian in style.


Like many other drawing books, this uses the step-by-step technique: start with a square, or some other figure, add a line here, a dot there, and voila! a train or cat or lobster pot. The book is colorful; while it can give children ideas about the use of shapes in space, it probably teaches them to copy rather than to draw. Double-page
spreads are devoted to topics (animals, boats, "inside stuff," 'outside stuff," etc.) with each page divided horizontally into narrow bands, each filled with a series of progressive drawings, so that the pages are gay but are crowded with tiny pictures, too small-scale to be very useful, save for adults working with bulletin boards.


Swahili for numbers one to ten is given in a counting book illustrated with softly drawn pictures, strong in composition, that show aspects of East African life: The digits are followed by the Swahili word, its phonetic pronunciation, and a sentence in which the names of objects that are to be counted are printed in the same dark red as the Swahili word, the rest of the print in black. "Snowy Kili manjaro is the highest mountain in Africa... Many kinds of animals roam the grassy savannah lands... The Nile River, which flows between Uganda and Egypt, is filled with fish..." (one mountain, five animals, seven fish). Although such references to river boundaries or to mountains may mean little to children young enough to be learning to count, the setting, the use of Swahili words, and the serenity and dignity of the pictures make this an impressive addition to the genre.


Like the Gidal books and the many comparable books that describe a culture by focusing on the life of one child's family, this text is concerned both with the family and with the town and the country in which they live. The writing is direct and matter-of-fact, the description of Zhivko's activities interspersed with information about the earthquake that almost demolished the town (Skopje, capital of Macedonia) and the holiday ceremonies in memory of that day. There is some material about Tito and about Yugoslavian history and government, a bit about education, and so on, but most of the text discusses such homely things as Zhivko's chores and Baba's cooking. Pleasantly low-keyed. A pronunciation guide is appended.


Large, clear print and sentences that are not too long make this historically-based fiction easy for primary-grades children to read, and the separation of the text into chapters lends it a dignity they appreciate. Nine-year-old Aaron is anxious to do his share in the fight against the British, but his dreams of glory are not realized; all his family will let him do is saw wood for the ovens that will bake the soldiers' bread. The British threaten Bennington, and the inhabitants wait anxiously for help to come from the Green Mountain Boys. When the hungry troops arrive and devour the bread, Aaron realizes that he has, indeed, done his share. The dialogue is heavily laden with exclamatory remarks and the ending of the story is weak, but it has historical interest, plenty of action, and a protagonist with whom readers can identify, since his achievements are realistic.


The apartment Manuel lives in is crowded, and he yearns for some place he can call his own. He tries establishing squatter's rights under the kitchen table, but he is in the way; he plays in the hallway and disturbs a neighbor; he pre-empts the broom...
closet. Just right! His older brother and sisters agree that he has found a good place, and his understanding mother, when she comes home from work, agrees to let him have his supper in his very own place. A slight story, static in style, that may evoke sympathy from young readers who understand Manuel’s need, but this has neither the vitality nor the tenderness of Elizabeth Hill’s *Evan’s Corner*, which treats the same problem.


A biography that begins in Parks’ fifteenth year, with the death of his mother and his subsequent move to St. Paul to live with a married sister. His brother-in-law threw the young man out, and from there on Gordon Parks made it on his own, working as a waiter and in the C.C.C. before he became interested in photography. The book has only a little information (but enough) about Parks’ personal life, and it is candid about the prejudice he encountered. It is weakened by the style, flat in tone and occasionally overwritten; some of the incidents are described with more vitality and smoothness in Turk’s *Gordon Parks* (reviewed in the November, 1971 issue) although that is for younger readers.


First published in England, the third of a trilogy of which the first, *The Moon in the Cloud* (winner of the Carnegie Medal) was reviewed in the June, 1970 issue and the second, *The Shadow on the Sun*, in the June, 1971 issue. The appeal of familiar characters and the deft mixture of period details and fanciful humor in the Egyptian setting (the land is called Kemi) and the vigor of the writing style add to the attraction of a fast-moving plot. Reuben and Thamar have come from Canaan with their son, hoping to find a cure for the sick boy, and they become involved in the power struggle that is going on in Kemi, the evil No-Hotep, advisor to the Prince, pitted against the wise advisor to the Princess Ta-Thata, the half-sister who is to rule jointly over the land.


Giving good coverage, but sedately written, this discusses the formation, erosion, and enrichment of soil, and the ways in which soil contributes—directly or indirectly—to plant and animal life. The variation in soils and the ways in which man can control or improve them are also described. The illustrations are deftly drawn; on some illustrative pages there is no indication of scale. On the whole, a useful book for earth studies and ecology, minimally marred by the occasional question that seems condescending: “Can you think of other plant parts we eat? . . . Can you think of other things we use every day that are made of wood?” A relative index is appended.


Edward Gorey’s sophisticated drawings are exactly right for this tongue-in-cheek story with a fanciful plot and meaningful dialogue, especially amusing for readers with a dry sense of humor. Treehorn is a boy and his shrinking is literal. He gets smaller and smaller, trips on his own clothes, cannot reach things, and is almost entirely disregarded by his parents. (“I wonder if he’s doing it on purpose. Just to
be different.”) His teacher says, “Nursery school is down the hall, honey,” but when she realizes that the tot is indeed a shrunken Treehorn, she says firmly, “... see that it’s taken care of before tomorrow. We don’t shrink in this class.” Perhaps meant as an acid comment on the failure of communications between generations or even between individuals, the book comes off as a piquant ploy.


Matt and Danny go off to the mountains with Danny’s father who is a science teacher at a university; the boys are going to hunt specimens for their rock collection and Professor Kasai to look for a petrified log. The story serves as a vehicle for presenting information about fossils and aspects of geology (occasionally misleading) and information is fairly smoothly integrated with narration. Danny, who is black, knows all the correct procedures for collecting, and sets an example for Matt, enthusiastic but bumbling; the relationship is amiable, and it is Matt who accidentally finds the log after Professor Kasai has given up hope, but there is no question about which boy is the more competent.

Kandell, Alice. Sikkim; The Hidden Kingdom; text and photographs by Alice Kandell. Doubleday, 1971. 62p. Trade ed. $5.95; Library ed. $6.70 net.

Although limited in its usefulness as a source of information by the lack of index or table of contents, and weakened by an occasional contradiction (“... everyone is kind and considerate to each other...” but “If a person ... has committed a crime...”) this is a book that should appeal because of its exotic quality. Lying on the old trade route between India and Tibet, high in the Himalayas, the country of Sikkim is governed by King Palden Thondup Namgyal and his American queen. The book is adequately written, giving historical, cultural, geographic, and economic facts; the handsome photographs (many in color) are, unfortunately, without captions, but they make visible the beauty of the country and corroborate the details noted by the author (a college friend of Queen Hope’s) on her visit to Sikkim.


Friends leave. One mourns. Life goes on. Emily combines a babysitting job with watching the furniture that belongs to her friend Junie’s family being taken out. Sitting on the front steps with little Rufus, munching steadily through a bag of food she has brought along, Emily says farewell to the familiar objects: “Good-bye, white dishes with your yellow borders that I had chicken and rice on two nights ago... good-bye, red chairs with your cold smooth seats and good-bye, forks and knives and spoons and cake mixer that made brownies...” and so on, roomful by roomful. The litany is interrupted periodically by little Rufus wandering off and concluded by an interesting delivery of new furniture by another set of movers, a vanload that includes a girl’s bicycle, just the right size. Not substantial in content, the story is appealing because of the familiarity of the objects, the lightness and humor of the style, and the echoing breeziness of the illustrations.

A very good first book on the subject for primary grades readers, giving major facts succinctly: the bat is a mammal, it is nocturnal in its habits, it locates food by ultrasonic echo, and there are many varieties of bats. Each fact is given enough amplification to make it comprehensible, but not so much that the younger reader will be confused.


The story of a Jewish German refugee family is based on the author's life, and it has the illuminating verisimilitude of detail and the acuteness of observation that come from personal experience. Although the jacket states that "one day her father was unaccountably, frighteningly missing," the book describes Anna's father's departure as deliberate, for he realized what would happen when Hitler came to power. Joined by his wife and children in Switzerland, Anna's father decided to take his family to France. Interesting both as a family story and a wartime story, the book is particularly appealing for its reflection of a range of attitudes and as a picture of the adaptability and courage of displaced persons.


The great names of baseball have not been left to moulder in oblivion, so there is little here that is not covered in other books—but to baseball fans, reminiscence is always pleasurable, and to young people who play infield positions, a catalogue of heroes should be alluring. Twelve profiles of outstanding players are included (three for each position) and the writing, capable journeyman sports reporting, describes some of the highlights of their careers.


Handsomely illustrated with photographs, many in full color, that show the artifacts, art objects, and architecture of the Sumerians, this study of their culture is written competently, in a straightforward but informal style. The first chapters describe the work of early archeologists and the first finds, then go on to give historical background for the later chapters, in which various aspects of Sumerian culture are discussed separately: art, religion, education, etc. One chapter "A Stranger in Nippur," is written in narrative style; quotations from source materials occur frequently throughout the text of the book, and the epics of Gilgamesh are summarized in the last chapter. The high gloss of the pages is a weakness of an otherwise excellent survey. A reading list and a relative index are appended.

Larsen, Peter. The United Nations; At Work throughout the World; devised and photographed by Peter Larsen; ed. by Egon Larsen; illus. with 130 photographs. Lothrop, 1971. 127p. Trade ed. $4.95; Library ed. $4.59 net.

Although a brief introduction gives facts about the founding and the structure of the United Nations, the book is actually about U. N. agencies. Each chapter describes one agency, and each begins with a sentence or two about a child—but the material is not really related to that child, and the agencies help people without regard to age (although the implication is that these U. N. agencies primarily help children.) The book is profusely illustrated with photographs, many of children. Since over a dozen agencies are described and since many of the pages are given
over to photographs, the amount of information about each agency is minimal, useful though it may be.

Leach, Christopher. *Kate's Story*. Four Winds, 1972. 128p. Trade ed. $3.95; Library ed. $4.12 net.

After her father's accidental death, Katie and her mother move to London, where Katie's loneliness and her worry about her secret are aggravated by her mother's plans to marry again. But she isn't Katie's mother, that's the secret—for a neighbor has let slip the fact that Katie is adopted. Her resemblance to a motion picture star convinces Katie that she is the child of the frail, glamorous Eva Stewart, and she rejects the adoptive mother who by her new interest seems (to Katie) to have rejected her daughter. Katie gets into trouble after being involved in a demonstration, but she has by then made a new friend and gained a new maturity that enable her, when her mother comes to visit her at the detention home, to accept love and to realize that she, Katie, is whatever she is whoever her natural parents were. The storyline is not strong, but some of the incidents are, and the situation is developed with realism and pace. Characterization is not deep, but it is solid, and the writing style—smooth, and with good dialogue—makes the story flow smoothly.


An oversize book has busy pictures in Richard Scarry style, and no text. Although the introduction suggests that the illustrations "offer children a wonderful chance to create their own stories" the pictures have no developing action and seem better suited to use by pre-readers as a compilation of activities or objects related to a place: a zoo, a plant nursery, an airport, et cetera. Children may be intrigued by small differences between the details of a European scene (despite some English in the painted signs within the illustrations) and the more familiar American.

McClung, Robert M. *Bees, Wasps, and Hornets; And How they Live*; written and illus. by Robert M. McClung. Morrow, 1971. 64p. Trade ed. $3.95; Library ed. $3.78 net.

Written with lucid simplicity, this is a discussion of the order Hymenoptera that is authoritative in both the writing and in the carefully detailed drawings. A description of general characteristics such as the four life stages, the membranous wings, and the characteristic wasp waist is followed by brief discussions of individual members of the order, giving facts about nest building, the evolution and use of the sting, eating habits, behavior patterns, et cetera. All of the material is interesting, but the communications system of the bee and the fact that bees are more useful to men than are other members of the order makes the section on bees particularly valuable. An index is appended.

May, Julian. *Islands of the Tiny Deer*; illus. by Rod Ruth. Scott/Addison-Wesley, 1972. 43p. $4.50.

A description of the small whitetail deer of the Florida keys, illustrated with pictures that are—with few exceptions—overly busy. The text is simply and clearly written, giving facts about habits and habitat, and discussing at length the probable adaptation to environmental changes that has produced a species so much smaller than the other whitetail deer of North America. The book closes with a discussion of the conservation measures that have successfully built up the herds after they were threatened with extinction.

A picture book without words tells the story of two children’s game of hide and seek, with the elusive boy’s blue clothes always tantalizingly visible to the reader; in every picture (some single-, some double-page spreads) the blue can be seen as well as the red dress of the pursuing girl. The intricate and colorful pictures follow the two from garden to house and out into the garden again, where the game ends. Although the illustrations haven’t the boldness of color and composition of Charles Keeping (the artist’s husband) they are like Keeping’s in the vigorous use of color and in the handling of the human form.


Graciela is twelve years old, one of ten children in a Chicano family, and she describes their yearly trip to Michigan to pick produce, their efforts to improve financial conditions and to get an education. She is candid about the prejudice against Mexican-Americans in their Texas town, but does not dwell on it, and she speaks with affection of her older sister, her father’s going to school, a younger brother’s illness. The text is based on taped interviews, the style matter-of-fact; the illustrations show a neat white house and a family of attractive children. The book does not negate the sorrier plight of most migrants and many Chicanos, but adds another dimension.


First published in 1915, an edition to which 140 rhymes have now been added. The book contains the original illustrations, now very old-fashioned, and is probably of more interest to the adult for its historical use than to the child who today has a choice of so many more attractively-illustrated editions. A first-line index is appended.


Although the writing is this collective biography is often tinged with florid journalese, it is lively and informal, enthusiastic rather than adulatory. The foreword, by a Chicano psychiatrist and educator, gives good background for the biographies of twenty Chicanos who have become known for their achievements in many fields. Anglos can learn; Chicanos can be proud—that is the message. A list of source materials and an index are appended.


Four stories that are fanciful occur as episodes lived by each of four boys, the whole set within a realistic framework. In a dusty abandoned house Sig finds a box that has on its cover four dragons, each in a different color. One by one, he and the other three put together the pieces, each working separately and with a different color, and each boy slips back in time to an adventure: Sig, who is of German descent, lives an episode in ancient times and fights the dragon Fafnir, a black boy becomes a Nubian slave of princely blood in Babylon, a boy of Chinese descent goes back in time to China; Artie Jones becomes Artos Pendragon. When the four boys meet and talk about their experiences, they become friends. The framework is not quite substantial enough to compete with the four fanciful episodes, and is
subordinate to them; they are imaginative and wholly-conceived, but written in rather ornate style.


Seven excerpts from autobiographies, plus one reprinted article, each prefaced by the editor's introductory remarks, give a picture—collage in effect—of facets of African life. All but one of the selections are contemporary, and they include reminiscences of childhood, reactions to the United States, an example of the indignity and injustice of apartheid, and a country boy's experiences on a first visit to a city. The one older selection is from Olaudah Equiano's life story, the excerpt describing how he was kidnapped into slavery in 1756. The writing styles vary from flat narrative to a lively sense of the dramatic (Peter Abrahams) but the material is always interesting and often moving.

Olsen, Ib Spang. Smoke; written and illus. by Ib Spang Olsen; tr. by Virginia Allen Jensen. Coward, 1972. 40p. $4.95.

A new book from the new winner of the Hans Christian Andersen Medal has Olsen's typical vigor and humor, and the combination of realism and fantasy he has used in the past. Here a family bent on a country outing discover that the air is everywhere polluted by smoke. They cap one set of chimneys in a factory with their personal belongings (with a hat grown ridiculously large covering one chimneytop, for example) and empty their pockets to pay for stopping the smoke in another factory. What they do is nonsensical, but it gets the message across: pollution is not somebody else's concern, but something each of us can work to abolish. The plot is servant to the message but the book is not overburdened, since the style is light and the pictures gay.


Sara Mayberry's parents are (sometimes embarassingly) nonconformists. When they move to the East from California, they travel in an old garbage truck; their new house is almost barren of furniture while the yard is filled with junk sculpture. None of this is appealing to conservative neighbors, and Sara knows it. However much Glenda's mother disapproves, Glenda, who is indeed hefty, becomes Sara's friend. The story is centered on the unstable friendship of the two girls, a narrative punctuated by Sara's recipes for alphabetburgers, printed upside down. Alphabetburgers are Sara's inventions—appleburgers, beanburgers, etc.—which she cooks because her parents live on health foods, and both their mention and the upside down printing become awkward interruptions of the story. The assets of the book are the acceptance of off-beat parents and the easy, natural dialogue. The plot, however, is diffuse and basically ineffective.


Lively and humorous pictures illustrate a book that takes a positive attitude toward change, a phenomenon that can both baffle and frighten children. The bouncy text rhymes, pointing out changes in the weather and growth in animals, and throughout the book the phrase recurs: "Everything changes all of the time." Sample snatches: "Dogs were once puppies/ Cats little kittens/ Frogs were first tadpoles/ Hens little chickens... Wool from a sheep can make a warm sweater/
Gloves, caps and shoes can be made of soft leather . . ." And then to the real point: people change most of all: sad people can become happy, mean people can learn why to say thanks (unfortunately, the illustration suggests that the reason is birthday presents) and a stranger may become a friend. While there's a generalization here and there, never underestimate the power of positive thinking: this may reassure an apprehensive preschool child.


Neil is at first both amused and repelled by the retarded boy who has moved into the neighborhood and is attending his school, but he soon begins to feel sympathy for Alan (the "Dummy" of the title) and to defend him when others tease him. And Alan responds, following Neil affectionately. Soon rejected by his other friends, worried by Alan's situation (autistic sister, withdrawn mother, father in an institution, home a shambles) and bitterly conscious of the harshness and hostility of his own parents, Neil is driven to run off with Alan. When they are caught, tension has pushed Neil to the breaking-point, and his sympathy for Alan results in his identifying with Alan. There has been, throughout the book, a train-of-consciousness reaction from the retarded Alan, and the startling ending has the same disjointed and monosyllabic speech (always italicized) only this time it is Neil. He has become a dummy, too. Not quite as effective as Platt's other study of a disturbed child (perhaps because the focus is broader here and therefore more diffuse) this is, nevertheless, a perceptive treatment of a child's sensitivity. Artistically it suffers somewhat because there is so little relief from the almost universal reactions of suspicion, intolerance, fear, and hostility on the parts of the adult characters.

Raskin, Ellen. Franklin Stein; written and illus. by Ellen Raskin. Atheneum, 1972. 30p. $4.95.

Locked in an attic room, Franklin had been sawing and hammering away, making a complicated and ingenious construction (Rube Goldberg cartoon-type) which he called Fred. Franklin Stein's sister sneered at Fred, and when he (or it) was lowered from the attic window, other people saw him and agreed. "Evil . . . awful . . . Eek! . . . wicked," were some of the comments, and policeman Foster wrote in his book, "Atrocious, ferocious, ghastly giant monster . . ." But the judge of the pet show to which Franklin Stein and Fred were hurrying thought otherwise, and the fickle crowd was soon singing the praises of the ingenious piece of junk construction. The story is written with sparkling wit and in a sophisticated style, and the illustrations—which echo the humor of the text—are effective both in the use of color (bright, clear shades of red, blue, and green) and in the way in which they complement and supplement the story.


Fifteen-year-old Petey Shannon is determined to earn enough money by the first of September to buy back his father's boat, Wild Wind, taken by the undertaker in payment of funeral expenses. His grandfather is dubious, but Petey is convinced that between lobstering with Granddad and working on his uncle's garbage truck, he can do it. The story of hard work and success is given some vitality by including a love story and by Petey's fight against the marauding tactics of Spider Tate (the man his father was fighting with when he died) who has just come back from prison. The writing style is a bit heavy, and the action is almost all at one level, but
the plot is adequately structured and realistic, and the characterization is credible if not deep.

Schiller, Barbara, ad. *The Wandering Knight*; ad. and retold by Barbara Schiller; illus. by Herschel Levit. Dutton, 1971. 55p. $4.50.

An adaptation based on the writings of Sir Thomas Mallory; an author's note explains that at the time he wrote *The Noble Tale of Sir Launcelot du Lake*, Mallory had not yet read the French accounts (on which his own work was based) of the love between Lancelot and Guinevere. This, then, is the story of the young knight on his search for adventure, and it consists of several episodes in which Lancelot meets and bests other knights, usually at the behest of a fair damsel. The reader enamored of knighthood and legend will enjoy the action and the hero's prowess, but the story is less cohesive than others by Barbara Schiller, and the episodes, however they begin, are repetitive.

Shannon, Terry. *Zoo Safari; The New Look in Zoos*; by Terry Shannon and Charles Payzant; illus. with photographs. Golden Gate, 1971. 78p. Trade ed. $4.95; Library ed. $4.79 net.

Although the continuous text is not carefully organized but tends to ramble, the material it provides is interesting enough to compensate for the lack of focus. Profusely illustrated by photographs, the book describes the zoos and wild animal parks of today, with their freedom for the animals, natural barriers rather than barred cages, concentration on specialized collections instead of one or two of many species, and the increased understanding of animals' needs that make such new zoos a place where observers can learn—and possibly some animal species be saved. Brisk and informal in style, sympathetic without sentimentality. An index is appended.


Editor of *Sport* magazine, Al Silverman has gathered, in an anthology that should prove enticing to sports fans, stories about outstanding athletes written by outstanding sportswriters. The emphasis is on the individual rather than on games, the material has been gathered with discrimination, and the book is varied both in the styles of the articles and the subjects they describe. The material is grouped chronologically, and it gives, in addition to lively portraits of athletic stars, some authoritative information on what happens in the world of sports: relations with the press, the effect of television, finances, and strategy behind the scenes.


Large, sparse drawings face a page in which the text, printed in very large type, is balanced by plenty of white space. The writing style is flat, but the combination of text and pictures may incite small listeners to the kind of imaginative play that needs no elaborate props or equipment. Tracy has only a stick. But with an ordinary stick, she pretends to row a boat, she fishes in a puddle, she plays throw-and-retrieve with her dog, she frightens off a boy ("Mean Max") and signals to her mother by rapping on the window.

Although not written with the sense of wonder that is in the Guilcher and Noailles books in the series, this is a competent and detailed description of both the life cycle of the *Bombyx mori* and of the procedures by which men obtain its silk. For the silkworm, life cycle and usefulness to man are inseparable, because it cannot fly or feed itself and would probably not survive if it were not bred for its cocoons. Magnified photographs add to the usefulness of the text; an index is appended.


First published in Great Britain, a story with a Slavic background and brilliant, vigorous illustrations that complement the mood of the fairy tale, which has many of the familiar elements of the genre: the witch in disguise, the husband-prince rescued from his thrall, the wife enjoined never to investigate or she will lose her husband. Tamara, who has agreed to marry a man whom she knows only by voice, adores her handsome husband but cannot resist the forbidden: she asks his name. He vanishes, she searches for him, and by dint of the help and magic of creatures she has befriended, she finds her husband and frees him from the spell of the Sea Witch, and they live contentedly and in peace for the rest of their days. Adequate in style, and strikingly illustrated, the story both in its vocabulary and in its plot are suitable for the middle-grades reader who may scorn the oversize format more usually used for the picture book age.


Connie Mack, Joe McGraw, and Joe McCarthy are discussed in a baseball book that is written and illustrated in pedestrian style ("When he took the Giant job . . .") but will undoubtedly appeal to readers who love the game. Each of the three biographical sketches has a smattering of information about the subject’s childhood, with some standard fictionalization in the incidents, and proceeds to the glories of a great career. Endpapers carry a diagram of a diamond, with additional facts given in a side panel, and the photographs are interesting.


His older brothers and sisters offered to let Tommy share in the presents they were making for Mommy’s birthday, but he wanted to find his own gift. He decided to catch a fish. Striped bass, it would be. Doggedly, knowing the birthday dinner had started, the five-year-old sat on until the moon rose—and he had a bite. Just in time to see the birthday candles lit, Tommy marched in cradling in his arms a large bass. Tommy’ persistence and the kindness of his siblings are strengths that balance the weakness of a sedate style in a story written unconvincingly as the first-person account of a child of five. The clean, bare drawings in pastel colors evoke the wind-swept atmosphere of the seashore.
Reading for Librarians

To order any of the items listed here, please write directly to the publisher of the item, not to the BULLETIN of the Center for Children's Books.


Trezise, Joan. "The Use of Realistic Fiction about the Poor with Middle Class Eighth Grades." *Elementary English*, March 1971.