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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


Oversize pages afford Ambrus broad double-page spreads that show to advantage the bright peasant costumes and the raffish antics of the two animals who crash the country wedding; it is unfortunate that the pages are so tightly bound as to lose the centers of the attractive pictures. The story line is weak: a fox and a wolf hear about the wedding feast, don stolen trousers and join the guests; they sneak off and eat much of the food that’s been prepared. Sated and tipsy, they are caught and impressed into further feasting, and they decide to give up wedding feasts forever.


Perhaps the most familiar dream-of-glory tale in children’s literature is retold in a simply but smoothly written adaptation. The woman who goes to market, daydreaming about how her basket of eggs will be only the first step in accumulating a fortune, who tosses her head with haughty pride, and who breaks every egg that was in the basket on her head is shown in pictures that have vitality and humor, with clear, strong colors that make the book as attractive for group use as it is for reading aloud to a single child.


A detailed account of the invention of the telegraph and of the construction of a telegraph system that spanned the continent, of the successful laying of a trans-oceanic cable (after several failed attempts) and of the abortive effort to establish a land line through Siberia and Russia, with final chapters describing the advent of the telephone and the first transcontinental conversation in 1915. Most of the material is interesting, but the writing is uneven and occasionally has careless errors ("... forty animals yolked to a single vehicle.") and some odd historical interpretations, such as the treatment of the Mexican War: "The Mexican rulers of California were weak and lazy, however, and these Americans were eager. They staged what became known as the Bear Revolt in 1846 and declared California’s independence. Two years later, Mexico formally gave California to the United States." Despite the weaknesses, the book gives a dramatic picture of the trying task of setting up telegraph lines and it gives some historical information. A bibliography and an index are appended.


Eddie decides that school is not for him, that he’ll live at the zoo with the animals and show people the way, that since the animals don’t read he doesn’t need to,
either. Eddie’s father obligingly lets Eddie take the lead. But, error piled upon error, Eddie can’t read the signs and tries to bluff his way, resulting in: paint on his hands, fish for feeding seals instead of the peanuts he’d intended to get out of the machine for himself, the wrong flavors of a drink and of ice cream, almost going into the wrong restroom. They finally reach the elephants, but by then Eddie has decided to go to school and postpone living at the zoo. The concept is hammered home, but the comedy of the incidents is the sort that appeals to children, and the lesson about the practical value of reading is very clear. Illustrations are in cartoon style, and the text, while a bit stilted for reading aloud, is adequately written; for the child who can read independently, the book may offer the always-pleasant experience of knowing better than the protagonist.


Diagrams and trendy collage pictures illustrate a loosely organized book of tips about wise purchases, with a textual emphasis on preservation of a balanced ecology and of energy resources. The book does not attempt to cover all subjects; as the preface explains, housing, cars, and insurance are topics too complicated and large to cover, but it gives advice on food, clothing, furniture, recreational equipment, kitchen appliances, et cetera. Included also are general tips on watching labels, contracts, and advertisements, sales, and so on. The text is written in brief paragraphs with headings in heavy type, and the writing style is breezy and informal. A list of sources of information and a relative index are appended.


Linda wasn’t the fattest girl in the fifth grade classroom but she was the butt of most of the teasing, especially after she gave a report on the whale and talked about blubber. That’s when Wendy (as described by Jill, who tells the story, Wendy’s the queen bee) started calling Linda “Blubber,” and after that the teasing became persecution. When Jill defended Linda, locked in a supply closet, and let her out, Wendy and her sycophantic set turned on Jill, and she found out what it was like to be a taunted outsider. Realistically, no miracles happen. The social relationships settle down, but Linda is still an outsider and Wendy still arrogant. The change is in Jill, whose sense of values shifts to include the compassion that understanding another’s position brings. The plot is nicely balanced by Jill’s friendship with reliable Tracy Wu, her support and sympathy from understanding parents, her relationship with an erudite younger brother, a Hallowe’en escapade, etc. A good family story as well as a school story, this had good characterization and dialogue, a vigorous first-person writing style, and—Judy Blume demonstrates again—a respectful and perceptive understanding of the anguished concerns of the pre-teen years.


Tired of being ill, a small girl asks the wind to tell her stories about what goes on behind each window she sees across the way. Scheherezade-style, the wind obliges with a very short tale each day; on the seventh day the child is well. Samples: behind one window live two frightened monsters, Drool and Gool, who never leave their apartment; behind another is a family of plants who put their children out on the windowsill; in a third apartment a dog sits typing day in, day out, eating the words about food, and sleeping only when he’s typed a word like “chair” or “blanket.” This reaches a bit too hard for the fanciful although it has some intriguing concepts
and is written in a pleasantly casual style; the illustrations, decorous art nouveau, are
competently executed but rather prim.


Another story about Cool Hankins (of *Hey, Big Spender!* ) and the Dogtown
ghetto. Pressured into joining a gang, Cool tries to make a deal, promising the gang
leader silence in return for being let alone, but it doesn’t work. What does work is
honey, honey candy made from a hive of bees that have been brought from Africa by
a Mr. Kinsman. The candy induces pacifism, the bees themselves can heal a wound,
and Mr. Kinsman’s goal is to bring peace to the world. He brings accord to the gangs
by giving them honey candy; it acts as a tranquilizer, is explained as an enzyme. The
plan to sell the bees to the United States doesn’t succeed; Kinsman goes back to
Tulami, the gangs resume their normal behavior—but they’ve had the experience of
peace and brotherhood, and Cool hopes that it will make a difference. The setting is
strong, as are the Dogtown characters; the efficacy of the honey is not quite convinc-
ing, and this almost-fantasy element doesn’t quite mesh with the brutal reality of
ghetto life, so that Bonham seems almost to have moved into science fiction.


Bova explains why putting men on the moon was only the first phase of space
exploration and how the knowledge gained from the Apollo missions has already
been put to use in the operation of Skylab. He discusses the Apollo-Soyuz mission
planned for 1975, a joint project of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., as a scientific and
political step forward; he describes the information that has been garnered from
technical apparatus about geological, agricultural, meteorological, and other prob-
lems. In closing, Bova discusses the costs of space flights and how they may be
alleviated in the future by the reusable space shuttle. The writing is crisp and knowl-
dgeable. An index is appended.

Brand, Oscar. *When I First Came to This Land* ; illus. by Doris Burn. Putnam, 1974. 48p.
$5.95.

The music for the song, which Brand wrote in 1948, is included at the back of the
book, and the cumulative verses about an immigrant settler’s life are illustrated with
attractive pictures that echo the light tone of the text. The cumulation and the rhyme,
as well as the litany of conquered woes, should appeal to children: “... I called my
duck, Out-of-luck, I called my horse, Tired-of-course, I called my cow, No-milk-
now, I called my shack, Break-my-back.” And all the while the land (“sweet and
good”) yields its bounty, the house stands secure, the children thrive, “And I’d done
what I could.” No sentimentality about the contribution of the immigrant farmer, but
the message of joy in the land and hard work is very clear.

$6.95.

Shades of Damon Runyon, here’s a Manhattan floating crap game run by Fat
Charlie (who has been promising for decades to marry his girl friend Vivian) and a
racing crowd with characters like Racetrack and Johnny Nerves. Fat Charlie uses
ten-year-old Janet’s gift for predicting numbers to control the game and also to do a
bit of racetrack betting. Janet’s an orphan who leads a double life: one is working for
Fat Charlie and playing the guitar in his nightclub; the other is being a sweet little
schoolgirl, running a rooming house, and keeping a protective eye on her beautiful
but dumb older sister. A black law student, Moose, is Janet’s mentor, and the story
erupts into fast action when Janet helps the gang in robbing a safe (but not for money)
and Moose is arrested. Often funny, certainly action-filled, written with flair—but limited by the fact that the characters are derivative and by the fact that the story is overdrawn if viewed as realistic and not quite enough overdrawn if regarded as fantasy.


"Joyriding" was a favorite occupation of the 1920's, at least with that part of the population that was known as "flaming youth." In this description of the high school years of Susan Cucci, resident of a small New Jersey town, there are few girls who emulate John Held's flappers. Certainly not Susan. Shy, conscious of the limp left by polio, aware that she is always on the fringes of the girls' group and ignored by the boys, Susan vacillates between longing to be like the others and to be accepted by them, and to be herself. A good artist, she finally has the courage to spurn the education course her parents and grandmother have insisted is the only career for her and to accept an art school scholarship. Many of Susan's problems are those of every adolescent generation, and her adjustment to her handicap is realistic, but the story is curiously lifeless, a mélange of carefully observed period details, fairly patterned characters, and a stolidly constructed plot.


Sandy had thought the green-eyed woman she'd met in the button store was a witch, and she found out it was true, for the woman changed herself into a kitten and ran off with the odd little man-shaped button that had talked to Sandy and her friend Janet. Save for readers who dote on anything about witches, this seems a pallid tale, each adventure (eating apples that make the girls invisible, finding a tiny button that's a space ship accommodating Janet and Sandy when they shrink to miniature size, rescuing the witch when her brother—the ex-button—changes her into a button) awkwardly glued to the next, with the final exit of witch and buttons seeming a flat chopping off, rather than an ending to the story. The writing style is passable, but the plot's very contrived.


A lucid explanation of the Wankel engine is prefaced by a description of other engines and how they operate. Corbett uses the latter to point out the ways in which Wankel improved on the internal combustion engine; his detailed description of the functioning of the Wankel is matched by clear diagrams that are nicely correlated with the text, and he concludes by pointing out the advantages of the Wankel (cheaper to build, quieter to run, less exhaust pollutant, lighter and smaller, easier to repair) and the problems it still presents (primarily, it's more expensive to run). He describes other contenders for successors to the internal combustion engine: the Williams turbine, the Stirling hot air, the steam engine, and the electric car. Solid stuff. A glossary and an index are appended.


Lisa and Bruce find a cat that wears spectacles and has a thumb; they take it home and their mother says they can keep the cat; at night they follow it onto the rooftops and see it doing magical tricks. The cat disappears, they see it performing on television, rush to the theater, snatch it from the stage, and go home. This weak story, written in mediocre style and illustrated with drawings that are crowded with eye-straining details, is followed by some explanations of magic tricks. Even these are of poor calibre, many of them necessitating obliviousness on the part of the viewer—for
example, moving a chair without seeming to touch it is done by attaching a thread to your shirt button and moving backward.


A companion volume to the author's *Opera* and *Orchestral Music* is, like them, arranged chronologically by chapters that discuss the lives and the works of composers, major and minor. The introductory section describes instruments and musical forms in general terms, but these subjects recur throughout the book, with a particular form often explained in considerable detail; Ewen is concerned both with particulars and with such broad topics as trends and influences. Erudite and serious but written with enough skill so that the book is not dry or heavy, this is lucid enough for the general reader, dignified enough for the specialist. Many photographs and drawings of musicians are included; a glossary and a relative index are appended.


An anthology that comprises material from *Cricket* magazine, of which some are reprints or excerpts and some were written for the magazine. There are poems, stories without words, fiction and nonfiction, and an odd bit here and there—an autobiographical piece by Singer, a recipe here, a puzzle page there. And everywhere, as in the magazine, a small cricket and friends making side remarks. The latter occasionally seems too cute, but the book—like the magazine—is notable for the consistently high calibre of the selections.


Although a prefatory note addressed to adults suggests that Howie’s disability is probably cerebral palsy, the nature of his handicap is not specifically stated in the text. He’s presented as a boy in a wheelchair who goes by special bus to a special school, whose limbs are too weak to do many things other, physically normal children can do. At times Howie is frustrated, but most of the time he’s a happy child, loved and loving. The climax of the story comes when Howie, after long effort, manipulates his wheelchair by himself. Readers may wonder why he wheels his way to Daddy down the long, empty classroom when the hug at the end of the trip (in a subsequent picture) shows the beaming faces of teachers and classmates, but this is a minor flaw in a book that should make normal children understand better the problems of the handicapped and may make permanently handicapped children feel that they aren’t wholly ignored (i.e. anathema) in the literature for children.


Walking through the fields, the Happy Lion and his friend François protect a rabbit being chased by a hunter; the lion goes back to the zoo accompanied by Joe the rabbit and his wife Martha. And their children. Then more rabbits come, and still more, until the lion house is so crowded that the lions give their rabbits away to people; the animal lovers who had out-argued the hunters who wanted their prey released take all the rabbits except Joe and Martha. The sign over the Happy Lion's door is changed to "House of the Happy Lion and His Rabbit." (No mention of the lioness? Of Martha?) The story is solid enough although rather blandly told; the collage illustrations are colorful and vivacious; the message about loving animals rather than killing them is loud and clear.

As in Fitzgerald's books about The Great Brain, this is an episodic story told by a younger brother, Tommy, about the acumen and prowess of his older brother Wally, who is shrewd, tenacious, and not quite ethical—well, mercenary, at least. Wally has set himself up as a detective and he does indeed solve every case that comes his way, even one that baffles the police. This is rather weaker than the Great Brain books, not because it seems imitative, but because the pattern of incidents is repetitive and the language (for example, a repeated use of "how do you figure those apples," "just how do you figure all those apples," ) seems less appropriate to the contemporary setting than to the period and locale of the Brain books.


Emma is eleven, black, fat, and very, very bright. She wants to become a lawyer like her father, but he disparages her ambition; having gained status (a good address, a white maid) he objects even more strongly to his other child's goal, for seven-year-old Willie wants to be a soft-shoe dancer like his mother's brother Dipsey. Their reed-in-the-wind mother is no help, but Emma gains some comfort and support when she joins a secret organization of children who tackle personal problems of members by committee visits. It doesn't help. What Emma finally learns is that her father is not going to change, so she must. When her father barks, "Women lawyers are idiots! They're the laughingstock of any group of lawyers . . ." Emma says calmly, "That is your problem, not mine." Emma knows where she's going. The characters are more interesting than convincing, especially Willie, whose precocity and dedication make him seem almost Emma's age. But Emma's problem is real, and her adjustment to parental implacability—a stage she reaches after fuming resentment—is arrived at realistically. There's some wit and certainly much sophistication in the writing, a metallic polish that is right for the setting and the people.


A strong message, a weak story, and handsome illustrations that have a deeper level of fantasy than the story are combined in a quasi-humorous plea for being one's brother's keeper. Lion (pencil-thin and clad in a suit of armor) rules a land of animals who are nearly starving because of a long drought. The obese and selfish king of the next kingdom, a human being, refuses to share his country's bounty; the Lion and the Grocer (a hedgehog who is Minister for Food) are chased home by a fleet of tanks that bog down when bombarded with peas (But the animals had been starving?) and incidentally plow the obdurate soil. The King gives up, the Lion says, "Peace," the King groans, "Don't mention peas, ever." When the Lion says "Peace" again, the King asks what the recipe is. A weak ending, and certainly a weak plea for peace, since the King not only doesn't understand the word, but neither he nor his army seem to be convinced of its value. The pictures show monstrous and delectable cakes, candies, sodas, et cetera, all out of scale with the people who supposedly produced them—but they are striking.


Sitting alone and watching his favorite television program, the Dinky Donk Show, small Jory is enchanted when a puppet clown leans out to beckon him in. The clown puts down a small ladder, and Jory climbs in to join the cast in a paper party: confetti snow, papier mâché cake, etc. Invited to remain, Jory remembers his dog Peetz, and leaves. En route to his room and his pet, Jory turns to look at the set and the ladder is gone. The fanciful idea of entering the set has been used before, but it is one that
appeals to children; the plot is, however, not substantial, being more an extended situation than a story, and the separation of fantasy and realism at the close is weak. The illustrations of the party scenes, with gay paper streamers and puppet characters, should prove attractive to the read-aloud audience.


A.D. (Adriana) felt that her parents had pushed her into taking the summer job, thirteen was too young to go off as a babysitter for a lively two-year-old. All the way to Nantucket? And there was certainly something odd about Mrs. Cramer, her employer. A.D. was right, there was something wrong with Mrs. Cramer, a very unhappy and insecure person—but she appreciated A.D.'s efforts to help her and was grateful for the responsible way in which A.D. took care of the baby and shouldered extra work. There's a pleasant, minor first love, an episode of a quasi-ghost figure (who appears as a hippie seeking his lost love of an earlier century) that adds nothing to the story but is used as a fulcrum for realistic developments at several points, and a very nice handling of A.D.'s first menstrual period and of Mrs. Cramer's encounter with a sympathetic artist who builds her morale. It's a well-written story of a summer in which an adolescent gains maturity in a convincingly moderate degree; the characterization and dialogue are sound.


A reissue of the 1944 publication, based on the Margaret Hunt translation, which was and is a standard edition of the collected household tales. A discussion of folk literature, with examples from the Grimm's stories, adds to the value of the book.


A competent translation of a favorite fairy tale is illustrated profusely by gravely romantic pictures. This is very much like the Randall Jarrell translation save for the repeated use of "Mirror, mirror on the wall, Who is the most beautiful in the land?" rather than the more familiar, "Mirror, mirror on the wall, Who is the fairest of us all?" A large, square block of print is superimposed on one side of each double-page spread, and the subtle tones of the background picture set off the text, with little action hidden by it. Despite an apparent minor inconsistency (Snow White's apron is sometimes at the waist and sometimes has a top bib) the pictures are perfectly appropriate for the mood of the story and are distinguished for their color, composition, and background detail, although they do not have the exquisite detail of Nancy Burkert's pictures of the Jarrell translation.

Halacy, Daniel S. *The Energy Trap*. Four Winds, 1975. 143p. illus. $6.95.

A sober and sobering assessment of the situation in which the world is today, with population and pollution and demands for energy increasing, while available energy sources dwindle and future attempts to meet demands impose additional problems of further pollution, enormous cost, and problems of disposal. A gloomy picture, but it is presented in matter-of-fact fashion; the prospects of using solar energy or geothermal sources as well as of a mandatory return to a simpler standard of living are explored, and Halacy presents some cogent arguments for action now. Despite minor flaws (a chart on oil production that refers to numbers showing thousands of barrels per day—but has no numbers; the dubious opening sentence which states that a desire to harness "all the energy sources in the environment" is "one of the

Everything a young person could want to know about training and grooming a dog for competition is included here, even choosing a breed and selecting the handler's clothes for the show. All of the intricacies of categories and judging are explained, as are the rules for participants. A very useful book, written in a brisk, informal style and with material neatly organized. An index is appended, and the photographs have been selected with care, many of them showing correct and incorrect ways to gait, pose, or lead a dog.


Translated from the Swedish, the story of a seven-year-old whose grandfather is the dear and stable person in her life is written in a direct style and with an ingenuous tone that echo the personality of its protagonist. Maria finds it a little difficult to understand why Mama has to go to a rest home, but she feels secure as long as Grandpa is there. She feels somewhat uneasy with her divorced father's second family, but accepts the situation. Hellberg's artistry lies in the fidelity with which he captures the essence of a child who is basically happy: Maria does miss her mother, but that doesn't keep her from being ecstatic at learning to ride a bicycle. Warm, candid, gently humorous, it's a story that has, despite the difference in locale and situation, some of the cozy intimacy of the Moffatt stories.


Little Owl, who hasn't yet learned how to fly, has dreams of glory; he is keeper of the trees, guardian of the forest, great helper and traveler. Sent on an errand, he runs into Jonas, a small creature vaguely like a subdued Sendak monster, who helps him learn to fly. There are small embroideries on this theme and on the account of a birthday party that doesn't go just as Little Owl has planned it but is nevertheless a success, and the book meanders along in a pleasant enough way but it lacks focus or a well-defined story line.

Howard, Max. *People Papers.* Harlin Quist/Dial, 1974. 31p. illus. Trade ed. $5.95; Library ed. $5.47 net.

Quist books are usually beautiful examples of bookmaking, and this is no exception; the text is weak, the illustrations by a dozen or so artists are all interesting and inventive, and some of them are stunning. The text comprises some short, short stories and some one-page gags ("DID YOU KNOW It is impossible to bite the back of your own neck?" "DID YOU KNOW If you wear your socks for more than thirty days you will have to scrape them off your feet?"). Some of the stories have a zany punch, some have an unveiled message, some are flatly silly and unfunny.


An adequate, highly fictionalized biography of the free black Philadelphian who served as powder boy on the *Royal Lewis* during the Revolutionary War, lived for a
time in England, and returned to his native city to become a wealthy businessman and a tireless worker in the black cause. Forten's change of opinion about setting up an African colony gained him some enemies, but on repeated occasions his articulate fervor was crucial to a minor or major victory in the struggle for freedom and equality. The writing style is banal and is marred by occasional jarring use of contemporary phrasing ("... one of mine's busted," "... don't say that in front of the kids,")) but the facts of Forten's life are interesting, and this complements the existing biographies of other members of the Forten family, and contributes to the body of literature about the role of black Americans in the early days of United States history. A glossary is appended; there is no index.


Four stories about a major legendary figure in the folklore of many North American Indian tribes are illustrated by awkwardly drawn pictures that incorporate authentic motifs. The style of the adaptations is breezy, with a jarringly contemporary phrase here and there: "It's easy for you to talk," or, "But how come it was he who brought you?" There are better versions of the Coyote stories; the major asset of this collection, adequately told but lacking cadence, is that the four selections show various aspects of Coyote's adventures; he's always a trickster, but in one tale he rescues a young woman; in another, "Coyote Loses His Dinner," he is out-foxed by an animal just as voracious; in another he helps all the animals; in "Coyote Steals the Summer" he receives his powers from the Sky Spirit.


An oversize book with illustrations that are alternating double pages of color and black and white. The text is printed in very large type that looks hand-drawn, the illustrations are awkward and excessively cute. The story demonstrates cooperation, friendship, and love for growing things, but does it in a text so contrived and pedestrian as to outweigh any positive value. Wads Hippopotamus and his friend Gina Giraffe nurture a seed that has fallen from the sky onto the star where they live. It grows into a tall star flower; when the cold weather comes, Star Flower waves "her last petal at her two best friends" and goes to sleep for the winter. The two friends walk off down Stardust Road to gather corn; the wind whispers "Spring will come again, Spring will come again." Finis.


Dinosaur enjoys the spaciousness of a penthouse apartment after leaving his cramped space in Greenwich Village; his best friends, Octopus and Worm, who have helped him unpack, decide to give Dinosaur a surprise housewarming party. Each brings a gift, each gift is described, they all have a good time. There's always some appeal in animals and in parties, and the illustrations are humorous, but the story has no focus. It's adequately written but this isn't Klein's metier.


A comprehensive discussion of the intricate system of defenses in the human body, from the simple sensory reactions and the defensive functioning of the skin and the mucous membranes to the more complicated action of antigens and antibodies. Knight describes the immunity system and its aberrations, and concludes with a chapter on basic health care: cleanliness, diet, adequate sleep, etc. The text is accurate, the subject interesting, but the book is weakened by the solid passages of close
print and by the inadequate labelling of illustrations. A glossary of terms and a relative index are appended.


All the other mice who worked in the Friendly Mousetrap Factory frittered away their wages every payday, but Pinchpenny hoarded his money. Then a cat built a better mousetrap, the world beat a path to his door, and the Friendly Mousetrap Factory closed. Shivering in the Christmas snow, the other mice came to Pinchpenny for help; he wouldn’t give them money to be carelessly spent, but he did announce that he had bought the factory and that there was work for all: making cat traps. The story ends, “The mice lifted their voices in grateful song, and the spirit of Christmas filled the air.” The book has some amusing concepts, a slight plot buttressed rather artificially by material about the factory owner and by the Christmas ending, and a note of didacticism. The illustrations are intriguing in black and white, subtly humorous and very detailed, with some too-busy pages; they catch to a nicety the Victorian tongue-in-cheek bathos of the story.

Lasson, Robert. If I Had a Hammer; Woodworking with Seven Basic Tools; photographs by Jeff Murphy. Dutton, 1974. 75p. $7.95.

Clear photographs of procedures, correct and incorrect, add to the usefulness of a very good book for the beginning woodworker. The author discusses seven basic hand tools and how to use them, then gives step-by-step directions that are crisp and lucid for making several simple projects; much of what Lasson says in discussing the use of tools or handling of woods in giving project directions is applicable to doing woodwork generally.


Lauber describes the habitat of the alligator, its habits, the reproductive cycle, the animals that prey on alligator young and are food for the adult reptile. She explains the ways in which alligators, by digging ponds, help sustain other forms of animal life during dry spells or long droughts and discusses the fact that a successful program of conservation turned the tide, recently, and reversed the downward trend of the alligator population. Crisp, straightforward writing, largish type face and adequate space, and a simple, but not oversimplified vocabulary, make this a useful first book on the subject. The photographs are of good quality and well placed; a one-page index is appended.


Nineteen stories chosen, for the most part, from established collections (German Hero-Sagas and Folk Tales, Tales from Silver Lands, African Wonder Tales), represent fourteen countries of origin. There is some variation in style, and any such conservative selection is useful for storytelling, but there is nothing unusual or original here and the illustrations are not distinguished.


There are three themes here: the setting itself, an earlier Tahiti, peaceful and lushly beautiful; the story of Tiki’s friendship with Paul Gauguin; the story of Tiki and Toa, the dolphin he had found and trained while it was just a few months old and which he has later to protect against a rapacious local official and the fearful mob whose superstitions the latter has aroused. The majority of young readers are less
likely than are adults to be interested in the troubles and theories of the painter, and while there is appeal in the affection between the boy and his pet and in the intelligent dolphin, the book is so burdened by contrived plot, uneven tempo, and mediocrity of writing style as to be massively tedious.


An interesting assortment of science fiction stories about cities of the future, each author envisioning the controls or stresses of a society unlike the one we know. Van Vogt’s “Enchanted Village” is set on Mars, Heinlein’s spunky heroine lives contentedly in a lunar city, contemptuous of Earthdwellers (although some of her best friends are from Earth) and in Keith Roberts’ “The Deep” the earth has become so crowded that there are scores of underwater cities. Other stories envisage the vicissitudes of life on Earth; in Kornbluth’s “The Luckiest Man in Deny” there is war between the city-states, and in Damon Knight’s “Natural State” there’s war between city and country dwellers. James Harmon’s “The Place Where Chicago Was” seems contrived, but the other seven stories and Benet’s poem “Metropolitan Nightmare” are excellent. The consensus of the authors and of the compiler, in her interesting preface, is that we are strangling ourselves, although this is not unanimous.


The life-cycle of woodchucks is described in a lightly fictionalized story that begins with a hibernating female waking to spring, mating, and breeding. Most of the text describes the care of the litter of four, their training for independence, and the establishment of separate holes for the two surviving young, one of the others having been killed by a dog and one by a car. The weather changes, and the mother woodchuck goes down into her hole one frosty morning and curls up for another winter’s sleep. The text is accurate and informative but has a flat quality that does not suit the narrative framework.


This is based on historical events, although the author’s note indicates that some leeway has been taken; dialogue is fictionalized. The story of the war is written from a biased viewpoint, defensible as an historically accurate representation of the feelings of the Texan settlers, less defensible in exposition. *Glory Horse* was a real race horse, Old Whip, and his adventures here are seen from the viewpoint of an English boy living on a Texas ranch. Commandeered by Santa Ana, the horse is recognized by the boy after the battle and the Mexican leader’s disguise penetrated, so that he becomes Sam Houston’s captive. The writing style is smooth and colloquial, and the book is an interesting adjunct to curricular studies despite the bias; the pencil sketches are deft and vigorous.


As he did in *Poor Richard in France, The One Bad Thing about Father, and Me and Willie and Pa*, Monjo pictures a major American historical figure from a child’s viewpoint. Here the commentator is Ellen Aroon (Ellen Wayles Randolph), a favorite granddaughter of Thomas Jefferson. Her candid remarks about Grand Papa give a great deal of information about Jefferson, but they also have an ingenuous charm of
their own, as Ellen prattles on about what Grand Papa is like, and what he thinks of other people, and what other people think of him, and all the things that keep him so busy. Monjo’s special ability to invest history with grace and humor adds enjoyment to the usefulness of a book that can give young children accurate information about Jefferson and about the period of his tenure in office.


A novel about a future world in which medical services are obtainable only under government supervision (with compulsory sterilization the price for treatment on a long-term basis, robot-surgery, etc.) focuses on the illegal practices of the medical underground. Bladerunners are the suppliers who enable doctors to practice illegally, and Billy Gimp, bladerunner for Doc Long, is picked up by a Health Control agent. Doc learns that Health Control is aware of his underground practice, and he averts disqualification by predicting, and helping to cope with, an epidemic. In the end, the government turns to the bladerunners for help, and Billy and his colleagues become heroes. Nourse’s medically-oriented science fiction always has adequate characterization, authoritative details (he is a physician) and competently constructed plots. Here, although the medical situation of an imagined 21st century is nicely conceived if biased, the book is weakened by many long passages of medical details. A sample sentence within such a passage: "In theory, by repetitive neuropantographic scan of the same surgeon doing the same kind of procedure multitudes of different times, the number of surgical eventualities that the computer could be programmed to face and act upon would be increased exponentially until, in the end, the risk that the computer might encounter a problem or complication it could not handle was reduced to the point of the negligible."


This sequel to The Church Mouse and The Church Cat Abroad is more sophisticated than its predecessors, in part because some of the story is carried by handprint in the illustrations, in part because some of the humor depends on comprehension of the gibes at adults, an understanding not all of the read-aloud audience possesses. Nevertheless, there’s more than enough plot and humor for the unsophisticated child, and Oakley again has created a delightful blend of such appealing elements as bland nonsense, animal friendship, and adventure. Plus, here, the lure of the intricacies of spacecraft and a planned flight, although he’s hard on the poor scientists, who are lampooned in Punch fashion. Two of the churchmice are captured by scientists and are being groomed for a flight when Samson, the church cat, comes to the rescue. The resultant mission is enjoyable chaos, and much more fun than is usually garnered by the adult reader-aloud is provided here as well as a witty gambol for the read-to.

Patino, Ernesto. A Boy Named Paco; Spanish tr. by Herlinda P. Olivas; illus. by Arturo Perez Torres. Naylor, 1974. 42p. $4.95.

A text in English, illustrated with awkward drawings, is followed by the same story in Spanish, but with only one illustration at the beginning of the Spanish text. The book begins, lamely, with a few lines about a teacher telling about Paco rather than moving immediately into the story. Paco, adept at playing the part of the bull in games with other boys, is not able to keep a job because he stops to play. He hops a ride on a truck and finds he is at a bull ranch. The owner agrees to let Paco work, sure that the boy will tire of menial tasks; then the owner’s son, who fights bulls on horseback, discovers Paco’s skill at playing the part of the bull and uses Paco for practice sessions. Paco’s parents are happy and all his townspeople admire him
because it is a great honor to work for the famous man who owns the bull ranch. The
writing style is pedestrian, and the story moves slowly, its one appeal probably being
to those young readers who are interested in bullfighting. A list of English definitions
of thirteen Spanish words is appended.

Perl, Lila. America Goes to the Fair; All About State and County Fairs in the USA; illus.
with photographs. Morrow, 1974. 127p. Trade ed. $5.50; Library ed. $4.81 net.

Although the writing style is rather monotonous, this survey of fairs gives such a
comprehensive picture of the myriad activities that go on at fairs of every size that it
is valuable for its information. Preceded by two lengthy chapters on the first fairs of
early times and the fairs of early America, the text describes in great detail the prizes
and demonstrations at agricultural fairs, the hoopla of the midway, the homemaking
exhibits and contests, the youth groups that participate, the sporting events that are a
part of many fairs, et cetera. A list of 100 major fairs in the United States and an
index are appended.


A series of projects of varying difficulty, each with step-by-step instructions, is
preceded by a page of general instructions and some lists of tools and materials. The
projects are grouped under four headings: Moving Toys, Simple Mobiles, Balanced
Mobiles, and Other Ideas. Measurements are given in inches and in centimeters,
with adequate instructions for finishing details.

150p. $9.95.

This is certainly one of the most beautiful of Price's series of books about the arts
and crafts of various countries or regions, in part because the objects shown are so
striking, in part because the book itself is handsome and dignified in layout. The
photographs and drawings are of high quality, the text written with grave simplicity
and as informative about cultural context as about the art forms it describes and
pictures. Material is grouped by technique and medium: metal sculpture, clay sculp-
ture, textile arts, pottery, etc. The final chapter discusses work of contemporary
artists. A list of notes on illustrations (including location if the object is in a museum),
a bibliography, and a relative index are appended.

$5.95.

Lynn, whose family has just moved to Nantucket, is fascinated by the life-size
figurehead of a whaling captain, Jabez Warren, and writes a school paper about it
after doing some research in the library. The Warren estate is for sale, and Lynn tries
every way she can to earn money enough to buy the figurehead before the estate is
sold. In so doing, she comes across a strange man, lame and swarthy, about whom
she's suspicious; her investigations lead her to a frightening confrontation with him,
alone in the deserted Warren mansion. The story then moves into the patterned
mystery formula: a lost treasure, tantalizing clues, persistence and acumen on the
part of children in solving the mystery. In the conclusion, Lynn and four other
children go along with the salvage crew of deep-sea divers (highly improbable) as
they successfully retrieve the chest of doubloons and—yes—pieces of eight that lie,
encrusted but undamaged, just where Lynn's clues have said it would be. There's
some suspense, plenty of action, and a salty setting, but the style, the characters, and
the plot are weak.

Most parents would be dubious if their child came home and said he had seen a fish walking, a bright pink fish. Donald's parents scoffed, and so did his friends—but Donald had seen a walking catfish. A naturalist neighbor explained that some imported catfish had gotten away, that they were voracious eaters and could upset the ecological balance by leaving too little food for other fish. The only thing that might help would be a cold spell. Indeed, one night the temperature drops and Donald sees many dead catfish—but it warms up again, and Donald sees a bright pink form slipping into the water. . . . . . . . The catfish invasion really took place, and Ricciuti deftly uses the facts to point out the dangers of upsetting the balance of nature in an easy-to-read book that reads smoothly, is given a humorous tone by the illustrations, and has a topic as intriguing as the promise of the title.


There's some historical basis for this story of how "Silent Night" came to be written; it was composed by a church organist in the Austrian Tyrol to be sung to guitar accompaniment after the organ broke down. Ah, but how did the organ break down? The Richards version is that the leather bellows is eaten by a starving mouse, Johann, so that indirectly his action becomes his "gift" to Christmas. Johann, a music-loving mouse, takes over the position of churchmouse despite parental opposition to a job that will never pay well. He can't resist the music. Poverty leads to hunger, hunger to bellows-nibbling, etc. The story is adequately written, a bit verbose for the read-aloud audience and a bit too juvenile for the independent reader; the illustrations by a major Canadian cartoonist are delightful, lively and humorous.


The story of a white-footed mouse who is entranced by the music of a flute is based on an episode in Thoreau's *Walden* and is illustrated with pictures that have a delicate yet vigorous line and clear, pure colors in their depiction of the flora and fauna that surround the cabin. Not having known man as a predator, the mouse is not afraid of the man; she even climbs on his shoulder, and she listens intently to his flute-playing. When winter approaches and the man unwittingly disturbs the mouse's nest as he reinforces the flooring, the mouse moves to a tree. She cannot hear the flute, but one day she sings, a high, trilling song. The story is sedate and gentle, and it gives a plausible picture of a woodland biome; it is written with a fairly sophisticated vocabulary.


Billy had always liked to hunt and fish anyway, so the idea of going off into the wild to live on his own was an attractive way of getting out of a situation that was making him unhappy. He and Mom and the other children had gotten along fine since father died, why did she have to marry Mr. Wilson? Billy was determined not to go to the wedding, determined to make it on his own. He struggled through for a few days, then crept back home; listening to a conversation between his mother (who knew quite well where Billy was) and his new stepfather, then getting caught by his new stepsister and hearing how she felt, Billy changed his mind. And was glad he did. Although the relationship between mother and son has been pictured as laconic and stoic, the flat tone of the final scene is disappointing; the whole story is almost too low-keyed although convincing and adequately written. While there is appeal in the boy-against-the-elements episode (Billy's sustenance realistically supplemented by
contributions from a loyal friend's kitchen), the early episode, in which the two boys go hunting for sport rather than food, may disturb some readers.


Toby, thirteen, resents his stepmother and her ten-year-old daughter, even though he can scarcely remember his mother, because they and his father seem so content, so happy with each other. Angrily flouncing out of the house one day, Toby stumbles on an old man who lives in a woodsy shelter. Josh Penfold is serene and wise, satisfied with his lonely life; Toby writes an essay about him: "Study of a Rare Animal, the Solitary Man." The ensuing publicity and inquiry put Josh in a home, where he shortly after dies of a respiratory infection. The sympathetic understanding Toby gets from his stepmother and stepsister, Ma's solicitude about the grief and guilt Toby feels, and the contrast between Josh's loneliness and his own comfort break down the boy's resistance, and he at last accepts the love of all his family. The structure is spare, the characterization strong, and the writing style of the story, first published in England, is straightforward and restrained.


As she did in *Kongo and Kumba*, Schick describes actual forms of animal life to give validity and color to a text that makes a creature's life cycle both comprehensible and fascinating. Named (by a watcher) Zeus and Artemis, two peregrine falcons courted and mated on the west bank of the Hudson River Palisades in the 1940's. Here they made a nest, raised and trained their three eyasses, and returned another year to mate and breed again. Then they disappeared, as peregrines were disappearing everywhere, victims of DDT. Conservationists and ornithologists, alarmed, began trying to breed peregrines in captivity, and the last section of the book describes the successful breeding program at Cornell as vividly as its beginning depicted the soaring, swift flights of Zeus and Artemis. Beautifully written, and most beautifully illustrated.


A story set in Africa in the 1830's describes the conflict between the Hottentots and the Hereros, or Cattle People, after the long drought of the previous decade brought the latter to Hottentot country, Namaland, in search of grazing land for their beasts. Seen through the experiences of a Nama boy, Garib, the dramatic tale describes the leadership of "The Lion of Africa," Jonker Afrikaner, his downfall, and the impact of the white missionaries on tribal patterns. Garib, captive of the Cattle People and later an aide to Jonker Afrikaner, grows to detest the recurrent warfare and leaves to make his own life. Much of the material is based on records kept by traders and missionaries, but the historical value of the book is outweighed by the sweep and color of the story: the writing style is solid and mature, the characters have vitality, and tribal cultures are described with dignity.


The author-artist describes, through the words of the older of his two children, a day in their lives. "Hi, my name is Bweela," the story begins, "Me live wit' my Daddy and Javaka. He is my brother ... Me and my Daddy take care of Javaka yrs. 'cause he only a liddo boy." Bweela, all of three, says loftily, "And Javaka don't even know how to make stink on the pot." Her own best words, says Bweela, are "prettyful" and "youadummy" and "whatshappeninman" and "Iwantsomewater-dad." Javaka has some, and one of Daddy's is "Iloveyou." The illustrations are so
brilliant in use of color, especially in outlining the children's faces, that the captivating Bweela and her brother are almost lost on most pages. While it is refreshing to have the physical functions so important to small children treated honestly, the account of the day (staying with a babysitter, being picked up by Daddy and taken home for baths and dinner) is loosely constructed and has no focus or direction.


A story set in the Scottish Highlands has good atmosphere, believable if almost-stereotyped characters, a quiet plot, and a sedate style of writing leavened by adequate dialogue and by the inclusion of a recurrent element of supernatural. Dour and self-centered, Reverend McNeil is troubled by the recurrence of precognitive dreams of disaster. His daughter Margaret, the protagonist, is worried about her father and by him, and in the end her foreboding is justified, for the dearly-loved brother who has left home after quarreling with their father is indeed killed. Margaret finds help in the supportive affection of an older man whose library she has been cataloging, and their lightly-suggested romance culminates only in a hint that they will be together in the future. All very sedate and correct, all patterned and romantic.


The situation of the child who is a member of an elite social group but dubious about its values, and the situation of the child who discovers that a social pariah can become a friend have both been explored in the literature for children; here they are combined quite deftly and perceptively, but with little impact. Sharon, the leader of the Very Important Girls, is almost a stock character, the possessive manipulator; the other characters are drawn with more individuality. Lizabeth, the protagonist, knows that Sharon would be horrified if she discovered Lizabeth's secret friendship with the class creep. Loren, she had found when exploring a deserted house, is a very nice boy who understands that at school they act like strangers. Only when Loren is about to move away does Lizabeth, faced with the choice of ignoring Sharon or staying away on Loren's last day, have the courage to invite Sharon to join the farewell party for Loren. The climax of the story, Lizabeth's defiance of snobbishness comes, therefore, in a too-little, too-late fashion.


A thoughtful and objective assessment of the problems of giving adequate health care today incorporates some of the programs and some proposed changes that may provide more adequate care in the future. Health maintenance organizations that give complete coverage on a prepaid basis, hospital services that extend into the community, shorter and therefore less expensive medical training, the use of auxiliary personnel, the provision of medical social workers and health counseling—all of these programs have been or are being set in operation. The book does not confront the possibility of a national health service such as Britain's or the various medical insurance plans, but it does describe some of the efforts to cope with the inadequacies in our health services. A bibliography, a list of sources of information about health care, and an index are appended.
BIBLIOGRAPHIES

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


