

Significant Books in Review

Column Editor: Ruth Streit

► Arbuthnot, May Hill. *Time for Poetry*. New York: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1951. 438 p.

Time for Poetry, by Mrs. May Hill Arbuthnot, is altogether too valuable a book to be associated with only one set of readers. Poetry has been and is now badly neglected in the lives of boys and girls. As Mrs. Arbuthnot says, it should be read to them. There is not a day in the year when poetry read to the children with genuine feeling would not very much increase the meaning of that day's experiences for each boy and girl.

Poetry Should Be Read Aloud

Perhaps poetry suffers from the same "bug-a-boo" that freezes science out of all too many classrooms. Teachers are vague as to its value and fearful of their own lack of knowledge, and, in the case of poetry, of their own ability to read it well. It is true that many teachers read poetry poorly. But those teachers who are sincerely determined to improve can learn to read poetry well. Speech teachers, fortunately, are increasing and there are many excellent books to help the earnest teacher.

Mrs. Arbuthnot, in the excellent introduction to her book, which it is to be hoped teachers will study carefully, shows clearly why poetry should be read aloud and, usually, by the teacher. There seems to be widespread uncertainty as to the value of poetry. The question is frequently asked, "How do you teach poetry?" All too often teach-

ers decide that the best way is to demand that children memorize poems selected for them. The fact that the "miracle" of a poem can "take many of the experiences of the child's every-day world and give them a new importance, a kind of glory that they did not have when they were just experiences," is missed. As Mrs. Arbuthnot says, "When poetry does this it becomes a shining armour against ugliness, vulgarity and brutality."

Poetry is placed in all good readers because it is realized that, in spite of the fact that the teaching of a child to read has become almost a neurotic obsession, schools are still inadequately supplied with books. Good books of great variety, interest and beauty would seem to be the sine qua non of a room in which boys and girls are expected to learn to read and to love books. Because, unfortunately, many of these classrooms have only textbooks, it is important that there be some poetry included in the readers. Poetry, as Mrs. Arbuthnot says, should be read to the children by the teacher. After a teacher has read a favorite frequently so that it has come to have great meaning for a child, he may come to the place where he enjoys reading or memorizing it.

The Need for Humor

Another asset which Mrs. Arbuthnot has in abundant measure and which is an essential element in any happy, wholesome classroom especially today, is humor. In a world where emotional problems are multiplying, humor is nec-

essary. Fun is scattered throughout the book, from,

"She forgets she borrowed butter
And pays you back cream."

Through,

"Bob, bob, bob

Goes her little round head."

To,

"Yes the Rum Tum Tugger is
a Curious Cat

And there isn't any need for
me to spout it:

For he will do

As he did do

And there's no doing anything
about it."

This book is a valuable anthology and it would be good to know that one would find soon, a "well-worn" copy on every teacher's desk. The teacher who uses poetry as Mrs. Arbuthnot suggests will find herself adding other fine books of poetry to her poetry shelf.—*Ruth Bristol*, Montclair State Teachers College, Montclair, New Jersey.

ADDITIONAL PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

A number of useful books in the field of school administration appeared during the recent past. Van Miller and Willard Spalding have taken a fresh look at the field in *The Public Administration of American Schools* (World Book Co., 1952), and have done an excellent job of clarifying the social importance of the educational leaders' viewpoints. Harlan L. Hagman has made a similar comprehensive review of the duties and responsibilities of top-level leadership in *The Administration of American Public Schools* (McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1951). Both volumes will probably be consulted for years to come along with leading texts by Moehlman, Mort, or Reeder.

Clyde M. Campbell has edited a read-

able, authoritative series of essays by leading thinkers in the realm of democratic practices in administration, *Practical Applications of Democratic Administration* (Harper and Brothers, 1952). G. R. Koopman, Virgil Rogers, and Herman L. Shibley are among the contributors who consider specific paths toward improved group leadership.

Tested Public Relations for Schools (University of Oklahoma, 1952) and *How to Conduct a Citizens School Survey* (Prentice-Hall, 1952) by Stewart Harral and Merle Sumption, respectively, are unusual and welcome items. Harral treats briefly a variety of specific facets of public relations and basic principles. Among his topics: financial campaigns, improving annual reports, preparing newsletters, use of TV and radio. Sumption deals with the organization and development of a grass-roots study of the local schools. He seems fully to understand newer trends toward lay participation in school improvement studies.

A substantial amount of work has gone into Lowry W. Harding's *Functional Arithmetic Photographic Interpretations*, Dubuque: (W. C. Brown, 1952). This meticulous writer has selected dozens of photographs which help teachers visualize good practices and significant concepts in arithmetic and interprets them most ably.

Managing the Classroom (Ronald Press, 1952) is designed to introduce the new teacher to administrative duties, broadly interpreted by Edwin J. Brown, the author. While somewhat prosaic to the seasoned teacher, the book should find a place at the undergraduate level.

—*Harold G. Shane*, professor of education, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

Copyright © 1952 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.