

taxpayers, there should be an investigation to determine the individual mentalities that are to be placed in the educational hopper. There must be school graduations arranged to meet the educational demands of the different types of minds that present themselves, he asserts.

Mental ability is not equal in all persons, he declares, nor is there any particular relation between mental power and chronology. For this reason the chronological classification of children is to be discouraged, and in its place he urges that there should be established a system of educational training and discipline founded upon an appreciation of mental and physical health.

It may be argued that this is a costly suggestion, says the writer, as physical examination can be made rapidly while psychological tests can only be given slowly. This is not wholly true, as only a small percentage of children will require individualized mental examinations and the status of the large majority can be adequately determined for practical purposes by means of group tests. It is admitted that considerable work along this line is still required; nevertheless, the careful development of group tests for elementary schools will be accomplished more rapidly when the demand for their use is stimulated by the desire of educational systems to employ them, in the opinion of the physician.

From the standpoint of promoting the welfare of their own children, says the writer, physicians should be the first to recognize the importance of mental examinations. They should be leaders in their communities in emphasizing their necessity, their pedagogic and hygienic value, their simplicity and their eminent practicality. For the improvement of parental understanding of their children, for the increase of co-operation of parents with schools, for the relief of teachers from unnecessary burdens, and for the protection of the peace and progress of children, mental examinations are as essential as physical examinations.—*New York Times*.

“Just when the conservation and advancement of our civilization is laying larger demands on the public school, that institution is rapidly losing its power to meet even the comparatively modest requirements of a passage.—Frank E. Spaulding.

VI

SOME SUPPLEMENTARY READING MATERIALS FOR THE GRAMMAR GRADES

Once the child has learned to read, even ever so little, he should spend much of his reading period in *reading*. This means individual reading, with the teacher's direction, and a consequently reduced number of class “reading lessons.” It also means the introduction into the primary and the grammar grades of much supplementary reading material. For children may acquire the ability to read after a fashion from cut and dried lessons from the school reader, but they do not acquire the reading habit. This comes only after much experience in reading complete selections of intrinsic interest.

This book-love may be fostered in the primary grades, but it is in the grammar grade years that it must be strengthened into a life habit. Here the child must read widely and constantly; read for wanted knowledge upon a topic under class discussion; read for skill in thought-getting and the power to convey this thought to others; and read for sheer enjoyment. I watched a 4-A class in our Training School during the past year. They were re-living pioneer days in the Valley of Virginia with Boone as the center of interest. Books and magazines accumulated, from the library, from home, from kindly disposed neighbors. During their free periods the class was allowed to go to the table and read. At the end of the unit of work, one child had read eleven books or articles concerning Boone. One overgrown boy of irregular attendance had read none; the class had averaged four books or articles each.

These children had been led to read by vitalizing a topic in history until they hungered for more information concerning it. Their history lesson became a conversation period when various pupils reported what they had found. Very often statements were challenged by some young thinker, but that only gave the speaker an opportunity to produce the book and read his proof aloud with a triumphant air. As a result of this supplementary reading the class gained in its ability to read both silently and aloud. They also learned how to handle books, how to use a table of contents and an index, how to

track a subject down until the information they wanted was found. But by far the most important outcome of the work was the love of reading that the class acquired.

This keen interest in reading is often secured by means of a story hour. Here the children read books of their selection from the table. Then once or twice a week the group assembles for "stories." The child reading generally tells the major part of his story, reading the more interesting bits. If the class understands that unless the reader interests them they are free to pursue their own reading, a strong motive for artistic oral reading is secured. Children are not challenged to hold the attention of the class when the teacher sees to it that every one "keeps the place," but when the responsibility is turned over to them! that is quite another matter. I remember one eleven-year old boy, new to our school, who attempted to read to his group with almost no preparation. He was an abominable reader and by the time he had finished practically the entire group was quietly reading. He was chagrined to the point where hard labor was attractive. Or rather reading became a matter of far more importance than he had ever deemed it. He requisitioned the combined forces of home and school, to help him choose another selection and master it thoroughly. His joy when the class gave him attention was akin to that he experienced upon the playground when he pitched a good curve. Reading had been made worthwhile; it had been put into the list of accomplishments worthy of a boy's best effort.

When children spend much time in reading, they pick up most of the necessary reading abilities. But whenever occasion arises the teacher calls all or a part of the class together for a lesson in reading skill. For this she may use a school reader, but she often prefers a supplementary geographical or historical reader, thinking this the best medium for teaching how to study. In fact adequate reading experience requires a goodly collection of books, general reference books, supplementary geography, history and nature study readers, and story books. The ones commented upon below have been tried out and found valuable. The list is not complete, and there is somewhat an overbalance of story books against informational ones. A more detailed list made up by members of

the class of 1921 of the Harrisonburg Normal School will be published in a later issue of THE VIRGINIA TEACHER.

Skinner, Eleanor L.—Tales and Plays from Robin Hood. Cincinnati: American Book Company. 1915. 236 pages. (72 cents).

Bound in Lincoln green this little book has all the charm of the immortal Robin himself. The selected stories are told simply but in beautiful style. The little plays tempt young actors of today into a blissful loss of self-consciousness upon the stage. I have seen more than one fourth-grade boy master the reading process in order to be chosen to read a favorite part aloud. Although not a complete edition, this one is probably the best one for school use.

Bender, Millicent S.—Great Opera Stories. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1921. 186 pages. (80 cents).

This is one of the "Every Child Series." It contains stories from some of the world's greatest operas retold from original sources. It will be good supplementary reading for the course in music appreciation.

Catherwood, Mary H.—Heroes of the Middle West. Boston: Ginn & Company. 1898. 141 pages. (64 cents).

The early history of the Mississippi Valley is here told with dramatic charm. The writer has made a very faithful study of her sources and there is much use of first hand material. This is the type of history book that a grammar grade boy borrows in order to read it through ahead of the class.

Skinner & Wickes—A Child's Own Book of Verse. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1919. Book 1, grades 1-4, 92 pages, (72 cents). Book 2, grades 3-5, 130 pages, (80 cents). Book 3, grades 4-7, 124 pages, (80 cents).

A collection of the world's best poetry for children, well adapted for use as supplementary reading material. These poems are equally good for individual or class reading. Children love the books and unconsciously acquire a permanent taste for poetry. They are well bound, printed in good clear type, with inimitable illustrations.

Colum, Padraic—The Children's Homer, or the Adventures of Odysseus and the Tale

of Troy. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1918. 254 pages. (\$2.25).

The "World's greatest story" told for those whose imaginations are best "used to deeds and wonders," the boys and girls. By weaving selected stories from the Iliad and Odyssey around the figure of Telemachus, Mr. Colum has made one continuous tale. Willy Pogany's illustrations breathe the very spirit of old Greece into the pages of this little book. Every boy and girl has the inalienable right to know Homer—would that every one could know him through this unusual edition!

Greene, Frances Nimmo—King Arthur and His Court. Boston: Ginn & Company. 1901. 126 pages. (72 cents).

This is a good edition for children's use. It is printed in good bold-faced type and well-bound. The style is good and the language easily within the grasp of fourth graders. The stories are dramatically told and are easily made into little plays.

Cobb and Cobb—Clematis. 246 pages. (60 cents).—Arlo. 206 pages. (55 cents).—Anita. 285 pages. (65 cents). Newton Upper Falls, Mass.: Arlo Publishing Company. 1917.

These three "Arlo Books" are stories of rather unusual charm. They are so well written that they lend themselves well to oral reproduction, to division into thought units for oral reading, or to study lessons. "Clematis" is a story of American child life well adapted for use as the first complete reading book with a strong third grade or a weak fourth grade. "Arlo" is an interesting story of a boy living among the mountains of southern Europe. Anita is a little Colorado girl living with her parents in a mining camp of the early days. Her experiences give an intimate picture of the western mining country at that period.

Foster & Cummins—Asgard Stories. Boston: Silver, Burdett & Company. 1901. 110 pages. (72 cents).

This edition of the Norse myths is well adapted for use as a supplementary reader from the fourth to the sixth grades. A pronouncing vocabulary adds much to the worth of the book.

Young, Martha—When We Were Wee. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1914. 153 pages. (80 cents).

This story of a family of ten grandchildren living in the blackbelt of Alabama during the war between the states gives the child an insight into what life was really like in the South during this period. It is illustrated with some photographs of the grandchildren and their aunts. One of these aunts, Miss Julia Strudwick Tutwiler, afterwards became one of Alabama's leading educators, known all over the country for her work in prison reform and child labor. Her father, the grandfather in the story, was born in Harrisonburg and received one of the first degrees from the University of Virginia.

Scott, F. L.—How the Flag Became Old Glory. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1915. 173 pages. (80 cents).

Our country's history is here told in a series of stories and poems. There is considerable new material. The author has drawn freely from Southern literature and thus gives a well-rounded picture. This book will serve equally well as a supplementary reader for ordinary use, as a source for special readings for opening exercises, or as a collection of stories for the child's individual reading.

Froelicher, F. M.—Swiss Stories and Legends. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1917. 147 pages. (80 cents).

These stories are suitable for supplementary reading in grades 4-6, especially in connection with a study of Swiss child life.

Frentz, F. W.—Uncle Zeb and his Friends. Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press. 1919. 224 pages. (90 cents).

These stories give a touch with nature and a refreshing inspiration toward the homely virtues. A vast amount of scientific knowledge about everyday things is wrought into them. The stories do not form a "whole" but each is in itself a complete unit.

Best, Susie M.—Glorious Greece and Imperial Rome. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1921. 225 pages. (80 cents).

Miss Best has prepared here a most excellent background for the study of American history. She tells her stories well, and has the knack of choosing stories interesting to children. The book is well illustrated.

Baldwin-Livengood—Sailing the Seven Seas. Cincinnati: American Book Company. 1920. 304 pages. (\$1.00).

A series of adventure stories intended to awaken interest in the seas, and especially in the American merchant marine. The boys and girls will find this book thrilling, and yet it will be of great benefit to them. For grades 6-7.

Chapman, F. M.—*The Travels of Birds*. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1916. 159 pages.—*Our Winter Birds*. Appleton. 1919. 180 pages.

These books are a rare find, with scientific knowledge so well told that they are sure to hold boys and girls. "The Travels of Birds" gives good maps of the routes the birds take in their migrations. "Our Winter Birds" contains illustrations in color of both the permanent residents and the visitors. These books will be invaluable in connection with a Bird Club, or a project in bird study, they will be equally good for individual reading in the grammar grades.

Bates, Katherine Lee—*The King of the Golden River*. Chicago: Rand McNally Company. 1903. 82 pages.

This little story of Ruskin's is indispensable in the grammar grades—every boy and girl has the right to read it at this period. There is nothing else with quite the same lesson of human kindness so artistically told. Miss Bates has edited this edition very carefully.

Stickney, J. H.—*The Water Babies*. Boston: Ginn & Company 1916. 273 pages. (60 cents).

This is a good edition of this valuable fairy story, within the grasp of the fourth grade, but better suited to the fifth or the sixth grade. There are notes and some good illustrations.

Southworth & Kramer—*Great Cities of the United States*. Syracuse, N. Y.: Iriquois Publishing Company. 1916. 309 pages.

In this book the important facts in the geography of the United States are grouped around representative cities. It will prove very valuable in training fifth and sixth grade children to give supplementary reports.

Dunn, Fannie W.—*What Shall We Play?* New York: The Macmillan Company. 1918. 182 pages. (80 cents).

A collection of favorite stories in play form. Good for reading in "parts." One of the "Everychild Series."

KATHERINE M. ANTHONY

VII

PRIMARY LANGUAGE

A THIRD GRADE EXPERIMENT

The real teaching of language is often neglected in our primary grades. If we were to ask our fourth grade teachers to tell us which subject they find their classes to be least proficient in, I believe that the answer of a large number will be "language". Language is rather an intangible subject to teach in a well rounded way and the results of the work are not always ponderable or measurable. For these reasons many schoolrooms miss the benefits and joy to be derived from language work with small children; but it offers great opportunities for habit building and for creative work and deserves our serious consideration and best efforts.

I believe that we do not set as definite aims for this work as we should and we do not do as intensive work as worth-while backgrounds demand. We sometimes allow the primary children to follow the line of least resistance in language. When a group shows that they are very much interested in some particular phase of the work, they are allowed to spend most of their time on that one phase. Sometimes the teacher enjoys one form of work much more than another and unconsciously strengthens that preference to the neglect of other phases.

Because we do not take the child's measure in language, at regular intervals, as we do with his number work and reading, we are inclined to feel that it is not necessary for us to do as systematic, definite work as we do in those branches.

Let us, as primary teachers, set about changing this situation. We should have an aim in language, for every day we should know what we want to accomplish with our grade and work toward that goal surely and steadily. In order that we may preserve the spontaneous, free self-expression characteristic of most children upon entering school, and to secure in them steady growth in the mastery of style and form, so that both their oral and written expression may be effective, it is necessary for us to be keenly awake to our daily task.

THIRD GRADE ORAL ENGLISH

In order that the oral English of the children of the Third Grade may be well rounded,