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[Review of the book Reading faster: A drill book by Edward Fry (Cambridge: CUP, 1963)]

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BOOK REVIEW

Words In Use
By Bullock and Turl (Bell).

The compilers of this volume have collected and defined a large number of words commonly used in written and spoken English today. Every section of the book, of which there are thirty, is preceded by one or two paragraphs in which a number of the words to follow are used, and the sections end with some useful and searching exercises. Every word in the book is followed by its usual definition and its use is illustrated in a good sentence. Clear notes clarify its usage, where this seems necessary, and words of the same origin are sometimes mentioned.

The authors state in their preface that the average high school pupil of today has an inadequate vocabulary and reads little. They believe therefore that the only way to widen the pupils' vocabulary is to make him learn selected lists of words and thereafter use the words in sentences until he is thoroughly conversant with them. While there may be some doubt as to the merits of their method—for it is hard to believe that a child who is not interested in reading will be any more interested in or likely to remember words as separate entities—yet the book is a useful one, for it is obvious that both the words and sentences in it have been carefully selected and any child who has mastered even half of it would have a good basic vocabulary.

The words are arranged in alphabetical order. The arrangement is rather distasteful to the pupil who wishes to learn a few new words each day, but it is difficult to suggest a better one. The introductory paragraphs, containing as they do, words all beginning with the same letter sound rather artificial and might well have been omitted. But allowing for its obvious limitation, the book is to be recommended.

J.R.

Reading Faster
A drill book by Fry, Edward.

Teaching Faster Reading
A manual by Fry, Edward. Cambridge University Press, 1963.

The drill book is designed to lead us towards improved reading speed and comprehension "by one of the easiest, quickest and best methods known": a series of passages for timed reading, each followed by questions, the sole purpose of which is to determine whether speed and comprehension are marching in step. Whether they are also jointly *improving* is then seen by considering results over the series.

The manual touches on many aspects of teaching faster reading in a light but most utilitarian way. It is linked to the drill book only by their common subject concern, and is bound to be useful to teachers undertaking reading improvement with their pupils, as well as to student-teachers preparing to undertake such work if necessary.

Both books are uncommonly well done, but the drill book is rather too blatantly directed towards underdeveloped countries. This may not raise the question of whether *they* will accept it, but it does cast doubt on the suitability of the book for countries that are either as a whole not so classified, or that have populations that cannot be called underdeveloped. Each of the 2,000 word-vocabulary passages in the drill book deals with one typically tropical disease; and, since there is no necessary connection between reading improvement and tropical disease, users of the drill book may feel imposed upon: as if one study was foisted on them in the name of another. A companion drill book in which the subject matter is diversified, or better still, dissociated from particular people and places, is indicated.

R. EYBERS

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