

form setting that is virtually unchanged from one book to the next. Equally stereotyped are the habits, dress, and even physical characteristics of the Textbook Towners, so much so that it appears almost as if the same family, residing in one type of home and community, lives through scores of "readers." Whatever deviations one might observe from time to time are negligible and do not distort in any way the consistency of the picture. For this reason it is possible to give a fairly lucid description of the neighborhood, home, and members of the family and feel reasonably sure that the readers will recognize them in any of our modern primary-grade story texts.

Beginning then with the physical appearance of Textbook Town, one cannot help but sense a certain well-scrubbed charm about it that is immensely appealing to the reader. There are its rows of brightly polished little cottages, fronted by neatly manicured lawns, all suggesting an atmosphere of order and cheerfulness. In this sunny neighborhood setting, children have lots of room for out-of-doors play, and families are able to enjoy their living space with the kind of "elbowroom" that is not possible in the more thickly populated cities. The reader gets to know these picturesque surroundings quite intimately, for much of the action in the stories takes place there. Occasionally, he is given also a glimpse of the business center in Textbook Town, particularly when the narrative calls for a family shopping tour. However, no similar opportunity is provided for him to see other parts of the city, such as its manufacturing center, or neighborhoods different from the one in which the Textbook Town family lives.

As for the family's living quarters, here too the accent is upon comfort and beauty. If the house furnishings do not seem lavish, they are at least tastefully designed and abundant enough to provide each of the inhabitants with his material needs for a contented home life. Father has his favorite easy chair, his well-equipped workshop, and a private garage for the family automobile; Mother's household chores are made comparatively simple by modern cleaning tools and kitchen utensils; and the children have ample space for storing their great stock of play equipment. In this home, interior decor is preserved with a kind of tidiness that can come only through constant "spit-and-polish." Indeed, many a primary-grade child would gladly exchange his living quarters for those pictured in his reading text.

Heading the family is Father, who might best be described as tall, slim, healthy, handsome, and young in appearance. This is not necessarily true of all male adults in Textbook Town. Uncle Dick may be paunchy and middle-aged; the butcher may appear bald and somewhat disheveled. But Father stands out clearly as among the most attractive looking of the male population. The reader can often see him stepping out of the family automobile on his arrival home from work, dressed in a neatly pressed suit, clean shirt and tie, and felt hat, with a newspaper or briefcase tucked under his arm. There are occasions which call for his wearing work clothes, but only when he is making minor repairs in the home. (Major repairs are never needed.)

Although many types of laborers are seen in Textbook Town, Father is never pictured as one of them. His children see only his briefcase and business dress which give them no clue as to the kind of work he does. Even the adult observer can go no further than to identify him either as a business executive, a member of one of the professions, or a white collar worker. But this can only be guessed at, for Father is never seen at his job.

In the home, Father will make repairs, help Mother with the dishes, relax in his easy chair and read, or simply spend a pleasant social evening with the family. He is evidently a generous person, often bringing gifts for the children, such as toys, sporting equipment, and pets. On occasion, he may herd Mother and the children into his automobile and drive off to the country for a family picnic, which is always a joyous affair. With such gracious little gestures he contributes enormously to the happiness of his family.

Mother is always the devoted housewife, having no outside occupation. Her job is to keep the house clean, prepare and serve meals, and generally care for the immediate needs of her family. Being at home all day, she is naturally in closer contact with the children than Father, who is out to work most of the time.

She too appears young and attractive and dressed in clothes that are properly tailored, yet never flashy. An industrious person, she goes about her tasks happily, without ever being confronted with serious mishaps. The only activities that call her away from her household routines are the recreational