

In many ways Mrs Walter Ferguson '07, of Tulsa, is the voice of American women seeking expression of their rights, through her daily column "A Woman's Viewpoint" appearing in the various Scripps-Howard newspapers. Some of her beliefs appear in the interview which follows

## What is good motherhood?

AN INTERVIEW WITH MRS WALTER FERGUSON

BY LUCIA GIDDENS

In the Birmingham Post



"A WOMAN can be a 'good mother' without knowing how to sew on buttons and make good biscuits.

"Parents shouldn't expect to be loved unless they make themselves lovable."

Mrs Walter Ferguson, who writes a daily editorial from the woman's viewpoint for *The Post* and twenty four other Scripps-Howard newspapers, paused in the midst of an old-fashioned family reunion at the Thomas Jefferson hotel Tuesday—to set forth these modern ideas.

She and her husband and 15-year-old Ruth and her eight-year-old Tommy had come to Birmingham from their home in Tulsa, Oklahoma, to be with 21-year-old Benton because it was his first Christmas away from home.

"Of course, I have plenty of theories for bringing up a family," she laughed, "but how can I tell how good the theories are until I see how the children turn out?"

She glanced at Ruth, reading in an arm chair, and Tommy flipping a coin on the carpet. He had just declared that he was going to be a doctor—if he could keep his hands clean—which he doubted at the moment.

"I think many parents make the mistake of imposing their love on a child. Sometimes they simply weight the child down with the necessity for displaying respect and devotion to them. They expect that it should be automatic—regardless of what kind of parents they are.

"I believe children should be treated as individuals from the earliest age. Their rights of privacy should be respected. They shouldn't be supervised too closely. They should be trusted. And the home should not be so sternly disciplined that the children don't enjoy it. A home is meant to be enjoyed."

At her home in Tulsa, the children have as much solitude as they want. But they like to do things together—for instance, looking at Mr Ferguson's great collection of early Oklahoma relics. Almost the entire third floor of their house has been turned into a museum, with more than 2,000 pictures of pioneers as well as roulette wheels and mustache cups and shaving mugs which came to Oklahoma in covered wagons.

"The younger generation is no worse than the one before. The older one made a world war," she said slowly.

"I admit that there were some good things about the old-fashioned upbringing of children. But I, for instance, was brought up to believe that no really nice girl ever looked in a barber shop because she would see a man without a collar on.

"It's easy enough not to pass on such notions as that. But I admit that I am perplexed about how religious opinions should be taught to children. How do I know that my own viewpoint at my age should be passed on to my children at their age?"

"Another thing that concerns me about religion is this: there're so many dumb Sunday school teachers. We're particular about requirements for public school teachers but we let almost anybody teach Sunday school."

Mrs Ferguson paused to answer a question of Tommy's. As she shifted in the velvet chair, sunlight fell across her dark red crepe dress and spilled into her calm brown eyes. The sunlight singled out a few grey hairs in her black hair.

"Freedom is still so new to women that many of them haven't learned how to use it for their own happiness," she

went on. "Women are going to learn that it is just as hard to work in an office down-town, and often much less rewarding, than it is to keep a home.

"Men, I think, would be more patient with a woman's business career if they knew how degrading it is for a woman to have to ask for every nickel she gets. Even if its from a husband who is good-natured about it."

In addition to writing a daily column, she plans the meals for her household. But she admits that she doesn't do much of the housework—except for "sudden levels of scrubbing."

She answers every letter which she gets from the subscribers of twenty five papers. She is taking three classes a week in modern literature. She goes to bridge parties, "just to keep up with what women are talking about." She is into the activities of the Y. W. C. A., Business and Professional Women's club and her fraternity, Kappa Alpha Theta.

Yet she goes to the door to talk to all peddlers. "Even if I don't buy their needles and hair brushes, I get an idea from nearly every one."

Then she added: "As much as I like to meet all kinds of people, my idea of a good time is a book and a rocking chair!"

Mrs Ferguson, soon after marriage, found herself assistant editor of *The Republican*, Cherokee, Oklahoma, weekly newspaper, of which her husband was editor.

She soon found that the assistant editor of a weekly newspaper must be a very versatile person—that she must cover all beats from courthouse to society as well as report the momentous opinions of important townfolk.

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to organic unity with the great scheme of higher education of the so-called extra-curricular activities. Just in proportion as we see the meaning of adolescence, youth, as of great bundles of instincts, hungers and thirsts, high and low, just as we recognize the legitimacy of every one of these instincts in its place, and in due proportion, has come the attempt to weave these trends and passions of youth, and lead them into captivity by the great intellectual condition of our race, to humanize and to intellectualize this heritage of the natural man.

And our youth of yesterday and until today fed on the current literature of the cave man, are turning unmistakably, of their own choice to that other great party in literature, the party of discipline, the party that recognizes that not only lust and anger and fear reflects the voices of extinction but triumphant generations that speak through youth, but also there is within us a regulative passion, a desire to put one's life in order, which comes down from a remote past. Man is the order-making creature. And this hunger for discipline is all about us, growing in intensity every since the backwash of the Great war.

This, then, represents the countermovement to the mechanization of life, and to the philosophy that grew out of it, and I cannot close without again quoting from that great representative thinker who represented the new freedom of this new country, Mr Emerson, who said, "We call these millions, men. They are not yet men, half engaged in the soil, pawing to get free. Man needs all the music that can be brought to disengage him. If love read love with tears and joy, if war with its scourge, if war with its cannonade, if art with its portfolios, if science with her telegraphs through the deeps of space and time can by loud taps on this tough chrysalis break its wall and let this new creature emerge erect and free, make way and sing paens, the age of the quadruped is to go out, and age of the brain and of the heart is to come in."

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### WHAT IS GOOD MOTHERHOOD?

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Mrs Ferguson's newspaper career was interrupted when the Fergusons sold the weekly and removed to Oklahoma City where Mr Ferguson assumed the vice-presidency of the city's largest bank. But during the years of enforced absence from the newspaper office which followed, she never lost her desire to write, and when G. B. Parker, now editor-in-chief of the Scripps-Howard newspapers, but then editor of the *Oklahoma News*,

invited her to write for that newspaper, she accepted.

So great was the success of her column that she was soon engaged to write for all Scripps-Howard newspapers—where it is read daily by thousands of men and women throughout the country. With the new freedom for which she used to campaign won, Mrs Ferguson has turned her attention to the manner in which woman has adapted herself to the new conditions and to the problems involved in the association of men and women.

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### STUDENT LIFE IN ZURICH

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men who are more or less serious about their work, for they come to the university to study more than to train themselves to live well; if they do both it's so much the better. But they fall down on one side as much as the Americans do on the other. My impression has been that the Europeans are better students, but poorer men. I don't think at all they are more intelligent than intelligent Americans, their book worms any wormier, or their Philistines any less Philistine. In fact it's as hard to get some one among the students to go to one of Schiller's plays here as it is to one of Shakespeare's at home. I have tried it and have had to go alone many a time.

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### BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

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"I felt that the growth of the university would continue after my time. I remember certain people proposed a plan to pave the road directly back of the Administration building. I did not want to do this because I felt that some day the space there would be needed and used for beautiful buildings. Someday someone would build real buildings on the campus, not the little bungalows I had been building. Your beautiful library now stands where the paved street might have been.

"Many of the old landmarks have disappeared. Buildings which stand in their place are worthy of a fine institution. By the way, where is that old gymnasium? I always meant to tear the old thing down, but never got to it.

"During the war when the Student Army Training Corps was stationed on the campus, regulations were very strict. A student sentry refused to let me pass a certain section. I argued with him but he was determined that I was not to pass to see one of the officers. Finally he said 'who are you? Aren't you just one of the fellows helping around here?'

"That pleased me exceedingly. I always tried to be just 'one of the fellows helping around here.' I wanted first of all to preserve and build for the future. That faith I had that the university would grow into a great thing has been justified. I am happy to see old friends. Many of the faculty members on the platform with me were employed by me, or were teachers when I came to the university. I feel happy to be here."

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### OUR CHANGING VARSITY

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ment of philosophic concept concerning the nature of the human self.

The project method is based upon the principle of purposeful activity. Pragmatism, a philosophy of experience, advocating a psychology of purpose, gives support to this method. But is the assumption that the child is actually or potentially a purposive being a valid assumption?

The research of this dissertation is concerned with the discovery of the philosophical foundations of the concept of purpose.

The thesis stated above is first supported through historical evidence. Certain aspects of conflicting theories of education are examined in their relation to the concept of purpose. It is shown that philosophies have their issue in psychologies and thus become translated into educational theories. The thesis then serves as a basis for the larger problem.

Evidence for or against the validity of the purposive nature of the individual is sought in the conflicting theories of life, reality and knowledge as leading to the problem of the nature of the self. The point is reached where it seems justifiable that the individual is purposive.

In its historical approach the thread of purpose is traced from the earliest Greek philosophy to modern scientific and philosophic thought. Further investigation consists in a critical analysis of experience as a basis for determining the validity of the concept of purpose. This analysis includes both a study of epistemology as based upon the philosophy of Critical Realism, chiefly as advanced by Sellers, and of the categories as applied to the theory of Emergence. Purpose is thus discovered as an emergent quality of the self.

In the field of philosophy is discovered the foundation of the fundamentally important educational concept of purpose. The research has thus made explicit, that which was implicit in the pragmatic assumption of the purposive nature of the individual.

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### Roland Lycurgus Beck

Roland Lycurgus Beck, who obtained his A. B. degree from Oklahoma Baptist university in 1923 and his M. A. from the University of Oklahoma in 1926, was awarded a doctor of philosophy degree by the university at the June 7 Commencement. His research subject was "The Reliability and Validity of a Natural Test in English Composition for High School Seniors and College Freshmen." Dr. N. Conger of the Oklahoma state department of education, was invited to sit with the examining committee May 10. Doctor Beck was born in Thomas, Oklahoma October 4, 1900. He has served as professor of education and psy-