

Writing the novel

BY ISABEL CAMPBELL, '19

I HAVE been asked to talk on "Writing the Novel." And as I thought over the subject, I was led to ask myself why people read novels. I asked several of my friends and received various replies. Some of them are: Because I am interested in life and people; I am interested in literary style; I want to see how authors attack their problems; I am interested in the author's attitude toward life; I like to recall experiences that I have had; I read for ideas; I read for escape from life; I read for the repetition of agreeable emotions; I read for the understanding of current thought of the generation; It is the easiest form of reading; I read for diversion; I don't have to apply my mind the way I do to poetry or biography; I read novels because I like a good story, particularly glamorous novels because of the contrast with life at Norman. Such are the replies I received to my question.

Now I have a theory of my own as to why people read novels, and it is this: Man's whole history has been an attempt to arrange his universe and integrate himself with it. At the best this activity must be a compromise, due to his defective comprehension of his universe. But in art, he may find this integration, due to the necessity of a pattern. Particularly in the novel, he is aware of the sequence of cause and effect, a satisfaction he does not always get out of life. The sequence is there in life—but he is not always aware of it. Due to the necessity of a beginner, a middle and an end and the relation of one act to another, the reader of a novel becomes a little God, comprehending the whole of a small universe. Thus chaos is reduced to order and the reader's desire for unity is satisfied for the moment. This is my theory of the function of all art. The satisfaction of the human desire for a pattern in life.

The novel satisfies this desire better than any other form of art, because it deals with complex human character. Painting satisfies the eye, music the ear, sculpture the tactile sense, the short story the intellectual sense of form, due to its rigorous pattern, but the novel gives the illusion of life imbued with meaning and importance.

The novel is more difficult to write

than the short story exactly because there are rigid rules for the short story, and one is forced to work within definite limitations, which is a distinct advantage. There is no standard for the novel, no real definition outside of the demand that it deal with character. Therefore each novel is almost a rule unto itself. The important thing is to recognize material suitable for a novel and not for a story. Some material lends itself to a rapid treatment, other material demands a more leisurely pace. But character is the essence of the novel. Aristotle said that character is that which leads a man to choose or avoid something. A good novel offers opportunities for making choices.

There are many kinds of novels. We have the picaresque novel, the romance of adventure, the comedy of manners and character, the extravaganza, the historical novel, the novel intensely domestic, the stream of consciousness, and the reportorial novel. This last exemplified by Ernest Hemingway and his imitators.

I object to the reportorial method because of its lack of emotion. It is not what I call creative writing, though the form may be perfect, and the diction excellent. When you read of Sir Toby Belch you see only a drunken man you might view from across the room, but when you read of John Falstaff, you see more than a drunken man across the room, you become that drunken man. You are, in a way, putting yourself in two places at once. This, to me, is the difference between reporting and creative imaginative writing. This does not mean that I think a writer like Ernest Hemingway, who uses the reportorial system, is not a creative writer. No one could read the account of the death of Katherine in the last chapter of *A Farewell to Arms* without being stirred to pity and remorse. But how Mr Hemingway does it is his own little secret. None of his imitators succeed in bringing any life to their newspaper accounts. Now that I have made this statement, I am inclined to think that Mr Hemingway has varied from his usual style in this particular novel. Perhaps that accounts for the successful presentation of a very emotional story.

Even though characters are based on

real people, the exigencies of the story change them. And in like fashion, "the transcript of personal experience is not only a legitimate, but an almost invariable part of the novelist's resources. But the novelist cannot, like the poet, look in his heart and his memory, and write exclusively. The result, save in a person of almost supernatural experience, and quite supernatural character, must be monotonous, and can hardly fail, even in its monotony, to be scanty. Every life (it has been said in many forms) will give one book if the liver knows how to write it; but few lives indeed will give more than one."

Anne Parrish is a fitting example of this idea. *The Perennial Bachelor* was an excellent novel, both in conception and execution. The characterization was sound, the emotion was real, and the climax left nothing to be desired. But what do we find in the novels which follow, *Tomorrow*, *All Kneeling*, and others. We find that she has only one list of characters, we find that she has no new tricks, we find that she has very few situations. Taken one at a time, her novels are interesting and readable, taken as the works of Anne Parrish, they are a distinct disappointment, exposing pitifully the lack of any breadth of observation and experience. Reading her novels in a group is like listening to the exuberances of someone who has taken a satisfactory summer vacation and can't get over it.

Though I was asked to talk on Writing the Novel, I feel that I know more about Writing a Novel, or to be more exact, Writing My Novel, and if you are willing, I should like to tell you a little about my own personal experiences in this delightful and satisfying occupation.

I make voluminous notes for a novel and I have my own particular method. I do not keep a notebook, but make my notes on small cards, about three by five inches. I keep these cards all over the house, so that if I have an idea I don't have to overcome my natural laziness by looking for something to write it down on. No matter in what part of the house I am, I can find a card without too much effort. I note down scraps of conversation, descriptions, ideas for scenes, an interesting sequence of words, anything that might be valuable. From time to time, I collect all the cards which have been written upon and stack them in a drawer in my desk. In this way I get the idea down while it is hot and fresh—it is not left to be remembered in tranquility when some of its significance may be lost.

I collect literally hundreds of cards in this way, and when I finally feel ready to write, I get out the cards, sort out any that may be of use to the particular project I am interested in and put the

(TURN TO PAGE 198, PLEASE)

of San Antonio, Texas; Charles Cope, Tyler, Texas; and Casper Kite and G. A. Hinshaw, Oklahoma City.

A brother, C. C. Geyer, lives in Norman. Mr Geyer was married twice, his first wife, Mrs Cora Abbott Geyer and a son, F. Park Geyer, jr., living in Oklahoma City, and his second wife, Mrs Adeline Randal was with him at his death. He was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon, social fraternity.

Harold Keith, '28 journ., gives the following summary of Mr Geyer's sports achievements:

It all started back in 1908 when Oklahoma graduated its powerful team of that season and began drawing light material. Bennie Owen, young Sooner coach, decided that despite its unpopularity the new-fangled forward pass might be just the weapon the Sooner teams needed to successfully combat the superior weight and numbers of their foes.

That was break No. 1 for "Spot" Geyer.

Then there was the fact that Claude Reeds, Oklahoma's great fullback of 1913, was graduating and Owen was looking around him that fall for someone to serve as alternate to Reeds and eventually succeed him as the pass-thrower in Oklahoma's indispensable aerial attack. Another break for Geyer, then a gangling big-handed Norman high school boy weighing 160 pounds.

So when "Spot" enrolled at Oklahoma he unwittingly selected the one school in the southwest that enthusiastically used and endorsed the forward pass, and moreover was graduating its key man in that style of play. And as those were football mechanics for which Geyer had a natural adeptness he arose to quick fame under Owen's teaching.

His baptism of fire came in the Oklahoma-Missouri game of 1913 at Columbia, a contest which Reeds was unexpectedly barred from because of the Missouri interpretation of the three-year rule.

Missouri won, 20 to 17, but only after the Sooners, fired to a high pitch by what they considered the injustice of Reed's disbarment, had worn themselves out. Geyer played every minute of that contest and his unerring right arm accounted for the final score of the game when he drilled a short pass to Lowry for a touchdown. And in the last moment of play he nearly gave the Tiger rooters apoplexy when he spun a 30-yard pass to Courtright who was downed on the Missouri five-yard line as the game ended.

In 1914, Geyer's passing and kicking began to attract attention. In the Central game he pegged a pass 50 yards on the fly to Homer Montgomery. In the memorable 16-16 tie with Kansas he fired most of the 11 throws Oklahoma completed that afternoon for total gains of 240 yards on passes alone. Against the Oklahoma Aggies he threw two of the four Sooner touchdowns and against the Haskell Indians the final Oklahoma touchdown was his 45-yard shot to Montgomery. Oklahoma lost but one game that year, thanks to her spectacular use of the pass, and the boys elected "Spot" captain.

The following season was Geyer's best. Against Missouri, his deadly raining of forward passes demoralized the Tigers, Oklahoma winning 24 to 0. In the Kansas game at Norman, Oklahoma completed 11 of 24 passes for 288 yards with Geyer throwing most of them and rifling one amazing touchdown heave to Howard McCasland that measured 55 yards from the scrimmage line to McCasland's arms. He also kicked a 25-yard field goal against Missouri and a 42-yard one against Kansas, crossed up Texas with a short pass when they expected a long one and then kicked the goal after point, a difficult attempt, that won that game for Oklahoma, the Sooners completing 10 passes for 230 yards against Texas.

Geyer was named fullback of the all-southwestern team, and selected as one of the seven outstanding fullbacks of the nation by Parke

H. Davis in *Outing* magazine. He ranked first in number of points after touchdown with 50, missing but four goals during the season.

After the Missouri game of 1915, "Kid" Nichols, who from 1891 to 1898 was the famous pitcher of the Boston Nationals, approached Coach Owen in a Columbia hotel. "Gee, Bennie," exclaimed Nichols, who had known Owen at Topeka, "That ain't fair! That Geyer throws that football around like I throw a baseball!"

ETHLAND MOORE VICKERY

Mrs Albion Kent Vickery, née Ethland Moore, ex '22, died February 12 at her home in Denver, Colorado, following an operation. Mrs Vickery is survived by her husband, a six-months old son, her parents and a sister, Mrs Nowland Halcomb. Mrs Vickery was a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma fraternity.

YEAR BY YEAR

1907

Plans should be made now for the twenty-fifth reunion of the class of '07. If you have not already begun to make plans to return to the campus for commencement, write Frank Cleckler, executive secretary of the Association, for details of your quarter-century reunion.

Mrs Walter Ferguson, ex '07, columnist, is quoted in "The Mental Approach to Love," a department in the February *Golden Book*. The quotation was: "No man marries for the good of the race. He should but he doesn't."

1910

Fred E. Tarman, '10 arts-sc., editor of the *Norman Transcript*, was elected president of the Norman chamber of commerce for the coming year.

1914

John Rogers, '14 law, of Tulsa, was elected president of the Tulsa Young Men's Christian association board January 17.

1917

Ralph Shead, '16 arts-sc., '17 fine arts, has been engaged by the Indiana Historical Society to paint portraits of public men and other state notables from the beginning of Indiana history down to the present time. The portraits to be painted include six life size portraits and sixty smaller ones. Mr Shead has been connected with advertising firms in Fort Wayne and Indianapolis for the past ten years.

1922

Claudia Denzelovna Carr, daughter of Denzel Ray Carr, ex '22, is not only a linguist but also a musician. She plays Paderewski's *Minuet in G* on the piano at the age of four and a half years. Mr Carr's address in Plac Kossaka 2, Cracow, Poland where he is a lecturer in Japanese and Chinese at the University of Cracow.

1923

Lynn Riggs, ex '23, was speaker at the National Drama Conference which met February 18-20 at Iowa City.

1926

Marvin E. Tobias, '26 journ., is the president and general manager of the Ridgeway Co., advertising agency, 1901 Locust street, St. Louis, Missouri. Mr Tobias previously has been in the advertising department of Rice Stix, dry goods, St. Louis.

1928

Mrs Virginia Billups Green, fine arts, '28, and Miss Helen Lord, both of the Bernice Rice

studios in Oklahoma City, gave a two-piano recital in the university auditorium January 24 under the auspices of Mu Phi Epsilon, national musical fraternity for women. About two hundred university students and visitors attended.

James W. Batchelor, '28 arts-sc., '29 law, has recently moved from Bennington to Durant where he is practicing law.

1930

Foster Windham, '30 law, is claimed by Po-teau to be the youngest city attorney in Oklahoma. More than a year ago, then at the age of 23, Mr Windham took this office.

Ross Taylor, '30 arts-sc., Snider, is the author of a sketch appearing in the January 23 issue of the *Christian Science Monitor*, entitled "The Morning Train." The article has been receiving much favorable comment according to Kenneth C. Kaufman, assistant professor of modern languages. Some of Taylor's articles concerning southwest Oklahoma were published in *Folk-Say*, 1930.

1931

At the beginning of the second semester, Paul Thurber, '31 eng., accepted a position of teaching mathematics and surveying in the Murray state school of agriculture at Tishomingo.



WRITING THE NOVEL

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 179)

others away. Then I run through them and roughly classify them A, B, C, D, according to the chronological place they might take in the story. Then I go through the cards marked A, which will be the first fourth of the story and rearrange them in chronological order. When I have done this for all of A, B, C and D, I find that I have a rough first draft. The material arranged in this manner is easier to handle than notes made in a book where sequence is already established. The cards are mobile and flexible, they may be shifted and rearranged and the story is constantly in a fluid state, not fixed, which is a great advantage to me, for I find that once a story becomes more or less fixed in my mind, it is only with the greatest difficulty that I am able to rearrange the material, therefore, it is absolutely necessary for me to keep my material in a state where it is easily manipulated.

After I have the cards arranged, I begin making more cards—to fill in the gaps. Then finally I get down to the first draft on paper.

I never make carbon copies, only of the final draft, because there is a great deal of manual labor connected with writing a novel. When you consider that it takes fifteen minutes to fill a sheet of paper with single spaced writing—that makes four pages an hour, which is about 2,400 words—and there may be not less than 60,000 words in a novel, what with the numerous revisions and copying—the mere physical work of pounding a typewriter all those hours amounts to something.

And because of the fatigued attendant

MEDICAL SCHOOL DEAN

Dr L. J. Moor-
man, a member of the medical
school faculty since the in-
corporation of the school into
the university, is carrying on
the traditions of the medical
school as dean. Dean Moor-
man became professor of
clinical medicine in 1910



upon such work, and because humanity is very prone to deceive itself when its own comfort is at stake, I find that I must resort to mechanical devices to buttress my weakening will. Therefore, instead of tempting myself with a nice fair copy, double-spaced and neatly margined, with two clean carbons, I deliberately single space my revisions with no carbons. Then, when I am absolutely sick and tired of the thing, and feel that not another word or line could be improved by revision, I find that I *must* make my fair copy, double spaced, etc. It is *then* that I *don't* make my final copy. I do it over again single spaced and find so many things that should be revised that I wonder I had the effrontery to tell myself that I had finished my work.

When I first tried to write, I felt that I had to do it in the morning when I was fresh. And moreover I was somewhat afraid of the written word, somewhat afraid that I would not be able to say what I wanted to, and I was in a feverish excitement to get at the typewriter and get the words out of the way for the day. But now, I prefer to get my housework out of the way for the day, the meals planned, and things going. I write now in the afternoons between four and six. Two hours religiously each day will get a lot of work done, and with the housework behind me, there is not that constant and ineffective effort to push down into the unconscious all those little things that have been left undone, and which gnaw at the mind and divide the attention.

After a novel is written, there is the

problem of marketing it. Any good piece of work will be considered by a publisher, but of course, before the editor sees it, it must go through the hands of the readers. The reader sends in a written report to the editor and if it is favorable, then the editor will read the book and give his final decision. Very often the business manager must take a look at it also to see what market possibilities it has, for publishers are not in business for their health, though some of them claim that is all they are getting look at it also to see what market health at that.

After the novel is accepted, then comes the business of reading proof, which is no fun at all. My novel was so familiar to me that I practically knew it by heart and I could read the proof without seeing it. I found only one typographical error in *Jack Sprat*, and that was on the last page, where the phrase "steaming earth" was printed "streaming earth." It distorted the meaning, of course, but was perhaps not of any great consequence. Some of my facetious friends even suggested that the meaning was improved, but I cannot agree with them. I am not so arrogant as to think that my last chapter could not be improved, but not by a typographical error.

I am greatly influenced when I am planning a piece of work by music. That last chapter I visualized, as if the action were taking place on a stage, while I listened over the radio to a concert from the Philharmonic Orchestra in New York. We were spending the winter in Montclair, New Jersey, the summer before we went to Connecticut. It

was a nasty, rainy winter with an epidemic of mastoids running through the city. Our children had the flu and Mr Campbell was in bed six weeks fighting off mastoid trouble. There were no nurses to be had and all of the doctors were overworked. I was tired and worried, and one Sunday afternoon, when they were all asleep, at the same time for once, I went into the sitting room closed the door and turned on the radio very softly so I would not disturb them, and heard that lovely symphony. It is a strange thing and I have remarked it on other occasions, but great fatigue, at least in my case, seems to lower the barrier between the conscious and the unconscious mind, and as I sat there and listened to the music, the last chapter of my book began to form. I saw a park, and a girl standing under a cottonwood tree. I knew what her problem was though only a third of the story had been written and the girl was a baby at the present stage of the book. Even the last line of the final chapter stated itself, and when the afternoon was over and the music was finished, I knew what I was going to write as soon as I had the opportunity to do so, which was the following summer.

As to the beginning of a book. Different people are stimulated to write by different things. Sir Walter Raleigh, professor of English literature at Oxford university, said that a writer needed to read only three kinds of books: First, a model, second, a source book, or a book from which he got material, third, a book which makes him feel like writing.

My husband says that George Bird Grinnell inspires him to write. Coleridge was inspired by Bowles, a much inferior poet to Coleridge himself. I am always inspired particularly by women writers of the first rank, Virginia Woolf, Ellen Glasgow. The books of men leave me a little untouched, because of their alien philosophy. Wars, conquest and adventure are not my province. I am interested in the domestic relations of men and women, in social problems as they affect women, in wars, conquest and adventure only as they produce problems of interest to women. This preference for women writers is not sex-antagonism, but a feeling of being a little outside of the inner circle of men's minds, and a feeling of kinship with the female mind. I have no patience with unenlightened people who claim intelligence is a masculine virtue and that any intelligent woman approaches the masculine norm. Anyone who meets the problems of his life satisfactorily is intelligent.

We are too prone to think of intelligence as a strictly literary virtue. The problems of women being different from the problems of men, necessarily develop an individual attitude of mind.

It is the things taken for granted that differentiate people, and it is exactly the things that women writers take for granted and do not take the trouble to write down that admit me to their inner circle. I pride myself that I can read a novel, without knowing who the author is and tell whether it is a man or a woman.

Virginia Woolf has written a charming book in which she claims that a woman who writes should have an income of five hundred pounds a year and a room of her own, which is an ideal that few of us can realize in the early stages of our writing, at least as far as the income goes. We might manage a room of our own, but hardly the five hundred pounds.

The latest market gossip from New York is that publishers are eager for extra long novels of family life, like the *Calendar of Sin* by Evelyn Scott. The public seems to want a big thick book for its money, and the publishers, if not the public, are becoming interested in American life.

As to style, books are made of words. A sensitiveness to the qualities of words is the first requisite for lasting literature. Ideas are very fleeting and when all is said and done, all that remains is the words.

These are only my impressions on novel writing. There is no formula, no definition. If there were, the original artist would probably strike out a new one anyway.

▲ ▲ ▲

THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AS I HAVE KNOWN IT: A MESSAGE TO ALUMNI

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 185)

Association, delivering the dedicatory address. In a preliminary address I briefly summarized the progress of the school, my remarks terminating as follows:

"In an address at a meeting of students just after the school of medicine was advanced to 'A' grade in 1920, I referred to the custom in ancient Greece of bringing together Grecian youths every four years to take part in the foot races at Olympia. Only free born Greeks of unblemished reputation who had spent a prescribed period of training in a gymnasium could enter, and before the contest began each one had to swear that he would race fairly. And then, after the swift struggle down the long stadium, the victor was conducted to the feet of the statue of Zeus where he received the greatest gift that Greece could bestow. Not money or lands or houses, but a simple wreath of branches cut from the

sacred wild olive tree. The contestant at Olympia did not run for sordid gold or crumbling wealth, but for an ideal. And then, after the ideal had been attained, he had the right to build a monument in the sacred grove.

"We, too, had an ideal. It was attained in 1920 when the olive wreath of 'A' grade was laid upon the altar of our school. Then we claimed the right of the victor to build a monument in the sacred grove. It has been done, and we are here today to dedicate it. In this solemn hour I pledge the best efforts of this faculty to maintain our ideal, and to see to it that the work done in this house shall be useful to the people of the state."

●

The statements put down here are based upon my knowledge of events during the period from May, 1915 to August 12, 1931. At the beginning of this period there was an insufficient number of full-time teachers, because there was no money with which to pay them. The equipment in both the pre-clinical and clinical years was most meagre. The school did not own any real property at all.

At the end of this period the faculty meets the requirements of "A" grade rating. The equipment is adequate. The school owns a campus of twenty seven acres in Oklahoma City and on it are the medical building and two large hospitals, and, in addition, it has a ninety-nine year lease on old City hospital and a half block of ground at Third and Stiles streets.

The future of the school will depend very largely upon the alumni—a powerful body which can, if united, absolutely determine its destiny. It remains with you, alumni of the school of medicine, to support its work and its ideals. It remains with you to make of it a lasting monument signifying our part in the progress of medicine in these days.

▲ ▲ ▲

OKLAHOMA MEDICAL EDUCATION

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 183)

paying \$1,000, with which the Angelo hotel on the northwest corner of Sixth street and Broadway was purchased for \$19,000.00, rebuilt and equipped for the medical school. Members of this corporation were Doctors A. D. Young, R. F. Schaefer, A. K. West, E. F. Davis, A. L. Blesh, L. H. Buxton, H. C. Todd, L. A. Riely, C. W. Williams, U. L. Russell, J. W. Riley, E. S. Ferguson, W. J. Wallace, Horace Reed, W. J. Jolly, R. M. Howard, J. M. Postelle, F. C. Hoopes, W. J. Boyd, and the Hon. A. H. Clasen, and Mr C. B. Ames.

After the purchase of the building at Sixth and Broadway, which was remodeled with class rooms and laboratories well equipped for teaching, the Epworth college of medicine grew with rapidity. None of the students' tuitions was paid as salary to any of the teachers. Their services were given free. All the money from tuition was put into equipment so that the school became quite creditably maintained in its laboratories and other appointments.

The task of operating and administering the school, however, was becoming a great burden to the men who had already given it so much of their time and effort.

A partial two years course was still being maintained at the University of Oklahoma. While Epworth college of medicine was graduating men with the degree of M. D. Not one of the graduates of the school ever failed to pass any state board examination. In 1910, a committee, composed of Doctors L. Haynes Buxton, A. K. West and H. Coulter November, 1931.

Todd, was named to confer with the authorities of the University of Oklahoma, to ascertain if the Epworth college of medicine could not be affiliated or taken over by the university. This arrangement was consummated by the board of regents of the university and the Epworth college of medicine became the school of medicine of the University of Oklahoma in 1910. The property of Epworth college of medicine reverted to the original incorporators and was sold for \$30,000.00 and the corporation dissolved.

The men back of the Epworth medical college were men of high ideals and had but one purpose, namely, to build up a creditable medical school in Oklahoma. They succeeded well and were able to turn over to the state university, over twenty trained medical teachers, and a student body of forty-seven. Some of the graduates of Epworth college of medicine are filling prominent places on the faculty of our present university school of medicine and are on the staffs of our leading hospitals.

In this brief sketch it has been our purpose to deal only with the work of Epworth college of medicine in the hope that the story of this first school of medicine in Oklahoma may not be lost. Becoming affiliated as it did with the school of medicine of the University of Oklahoma in 1910, the history of medical education at the state university, and in the state of Oklahoma would not be complete without this statement.

The records of the University of Oklahoma contain an account of medical education as it has been carried on in Oklahoma since 1910. It is a record of progress and achievement.