Belles Lettres and Bell Ringers

By KENNETH KAUFMAN, '16, '19

(From the literary page of "The Daily Oklahoman")

A NATIVE Oklahoman, Foster Harris has been writing since 1927. During that time his published stories have mounted to several hundred. He doesn't know himself just how many have thus far seen print. But three of them appear in current August magazines now on the stands, western tales in All Western, Lariat and Dime Western Magazine.

Born August 7, 1903, at Sulphur, in what was then the Indian territory, Harris's life has peculiarly fitted him for the old west fiction and the oilfield action story in which he specializes. His father, W. O. Harris, was then head of an Indian school for the Chickasaw na-Afterward, the elder Harris entered the oil game, as an independent operator. Young Foster was supposed to become an oil man, too. He was graduated from the University of Oklahoma, in 1925, with a degree in geology. But he immediately turned to newspaper work and magazine writing.

For a time he was a reporter on The Daily Oklahoman. Then editor of an oil newspaper in Amarillo, Texas. From there he moved to the editorship of Western World, oil and mining publication at Fort Worth. And a term on the editorial staff of the Des Moines Register, principal newspaper of Iowa, also was included before he finally settled down to exclusive magazine writing.

Among the magazines in which his stories have appeared are Adventure, Short Stories, Argosy, West, Star Western, Detective Fiction Weekly, Action Stories, Lariat, Dime Western, Wings, Action Novels, Frontier Stories, and All Western. Fact articles, some of them ghost written, have appeared in a wide range of publications, from the Manufacturers Record to the Monumental News. He has also written for International News Service and newspaper syndicates.

In 1932 Foster Harris's own story, "The Oil Pup"-partially laid in the Oklahoma City oil field, incidentallywas chosen as the best to appear during the preceding year in Short Story Magazine. Syndicated to newspapers by United Features, it was reprinted in papers from New York to the Philippines-"nearly everywhere," Harris grinned, "except in Oklahoma."

Just the same, Oklahoma is a preferable place to live, Harris thinks. He divides his time now between Oklahoma City and Norman. But he has tried other areas all over the west, from the Mexican border to Oregon and California and back again.

"To take his mind off his writing," Harris explains, he has a wife and 2year-old son, also native Sooners. H's hobbies are visiting every oil boom that comes along, gathering early western material-and pipes.

He has several hundred of 'em. All have been smoked at least once. With his favorites, he burns his tongue nearly every day-and solemnly swears off smoking nearly every night.

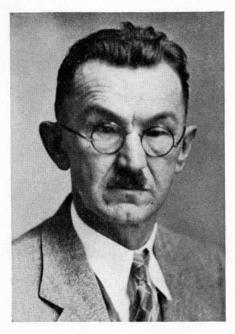
Through the Stratosphere

Twice he did what no man had not done Flying around the world, Once with a companion, Again—alone. Thrice he tried to do what man has not done-Cross a continent Through the stratosphere; Thrice defeated, repulsed By that unexplored, hostile space, Accepting his fate Like a Trojan, And with each defeat Gritting his teeth, resolving To try again And again Until he gained his goal-Oklahoma's greatest flying son, One of two greatest pioneers of the air, Wings his glorious way from earth

Through the stratosphere. -Waldo Wettengel, '23.

To the skies-

"Aw, Shucks-" Ambling along, his shrewd kindly eyes Shyly viewing the beauties Of a new land-Seizing the hand of an old crony, Or of. a president, fellow-ambassador, Or prince-Grinning wistfully-and humbly before his Creator Perhaps saving, whimsically: "Y'know. Lord, all I know is what I've read In the papers 'N' picked up as I gadded around Hither 'n' yon; But all this stuff that's in the papers Just now,



KENNETH KAUFMAN

Page on page--'n' all the pictures-Aw, shucks, Lord, I wish I coulda earned A little mite of it. They mean well, Lord-don't hold it against 'em, Let's just call it good-intentioned Exaggeration; They're just bein' kind To an ignor'nt ol' cowhand From Oologah. Y'know, Lord, that's a great bunch You've got down there, Senators 'n' all; I'm gonna miss 'em for a while, But they'll be comin' along. I had no idy They felt—that way—about—aw, shucks, Lord-After the way Ive kidded 'em, But I've never hurt 'em till now An' I'm just wonderin', Lord, If there ain't some way You can ease it up for 'em? Just tell 'em that-shucks-it ain't bad like that atall-An' that this round-up's just fine an' Prettier than the song. next to me, an'

Y'see, Lord, that down there gets right Shucks, there ain't nothin'

I c'n do about it;

So do what you can, won't you, Lord? Ive got lots of confidence in Your ability Along that line.

Well, there goes those bells-my time's

So I'll be moseyin' along. Say, Lord! Ain't that ol' boy over there From Claremore?"

-Waldo Wettengel, '23 Rush Springs. First published in the Daily Oklahoman