

A Prophet Is Honored at Home

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YOU have heard the story about the prophet who was never honored in his own home town, and if it could be said that Mrs. Walter Ferguson, Tulsa writer and president of the Tulsa Symphony association, is a prophet—which she is not!—the old saying would fit this story nicely.

To the women of Pittsburgh and Columbus and Birmingham and Fort Worth and Albuquerque and Evansville and Denver and many another city, Mrs. Ferguson's name is a household word. She's as well known as Boake Carter or Walter Winchell or Westbrook Pegler because Mrs. Walter Ferguson has been a nationally syndicated columnist for 16 years—yet has never had her column printed in her own home town.

Her record, however is near an end. For the Tulsa Tribune has added both of the daily columns which Mrs. Ferguson writes—one of them under her maiden name of Lucia Loomis—and the woman who made good away from home will "make" the home town paper.

She has been a columnist for so long that, when Boake Carter heard that she is joining The Tribune, he mailed her a photograph of himself and on it he wrote: "May you continue for many more years; from merely an embryo who wonders how you stood it so long. Boake Carter."

To tell the story of how she became a newspaper columnist requires a few facts about her life. She was born in Boggy Depot, Oklahoma, educated at a convent at Denison, Texas, and when she went to the University of Oklahoma she roomed with Adelaide Loomis, no close relation.

Two young fraternity brothers courted the Loomis girls. George B. Parker married Adelaide; Walter Ferguson, son of a territorial governor of Oklahoma, married Lucia Loomis. Mr. and Mrs. Ferguson moved to Cherokee to edit the Cherokee Republican, and then, in 1920, moved to Oklahoma City where George Parker was then editor of the Oklahoma News.

In 1922, Parker asked Mrs. Ferguson to write a daily piece from a woman's viewpoint—not a newspaper woman's viewpoint, just a plain housewifely view of things. Other Scripps-Howard newspapers asked for Mrs. Ferguson's piece, and soon it was published from coast to coast. And when Mr. and Mrs. Ferguson moved to Tulsa in 1926, the column writing came with them.

So that's the story of how it all began, but it isn't the story of the regard with

which Mrs. Ferguson is held in other cities.

For example, Edward J. Meeman, editor of the Memphis Press-Scimitar reported that a letter naming Mrs. Ferguson as the "favorite feature" in that newspaper won a contest which the paper ran last year. The letter was written by Mrs. Bertha Quillen, whose husband had been killed in a traffic accident. It read:

"After my husband's tragic death last September I felt that there was nothing left for me to live for. I was drinking the cup of despair to the dregs when Mrs. Ferguson's 'Inventory' appeared. She made me conscious of my cowardice and gave me a more wholesome attitude on life. She is so thoroughly human and writes with such sympathetic understanding.

"Why shouldn't she be my favorite writer? She drops in every evening and breaks bread with me mentally, leaving me refreshed. She rekindles a spark of hope that I may be of service to humanity and grow old gracefully."

A. C. Bartlett, editor of the Houston Press, made a prediction that men also would like Mrs. Ferguson in Houston, he says, she "is constantly interesting and

provocative to male readers also." Frank Ford, editor of the Evansville Press, quotes a male subscriber of that paper as writing: "Mrs. Ferguson appears to be a regular human being, intelligent, fearless, informed and genuine. She gives one renewed faith in journalism and the enfranchisement of women."

Walter Morrow, editor of all Scripps-Howard newspapers in the southwest, says this about her column: "Mrs. Ferguson is a great and understanding person. She is tolerant without being sentimental; wise without being evangelical. I think her daily feature is the best balanced and human daily article produced, anywhere by anyone."

"Women folks up here like her column," writes Carl D. Groat, editor of the Cincinnati Post. "It's so 'homey,' so sane, and so kindly that it hits lots of responsive chords in this confused year of 1938."

But that's enough of the comments to show how Mrs. Ferguson stands away from home. What about in Tulsa?

She says that she is a "natural joiner"—claims to have belonged to almost everything a woman can. Her reason is a sound one: "If I'm writing from a wo-

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Mrs. Lucia Loomis Ferguson, '07 ex, nationally known newspaper syndicate writer.

Belles Lettres and Bell Ringers

Southern Plainsmen, by Carl C. Rister. University of Oklahoma Press, 1938. \$3.00.

The lives of the southern plainsmen, differing sharply from the lives of people in other distinct regions of the United States, are described vividly in this new book which came from the University of Oklahoma Press in October.

Southern Plainsmen was written by Dr. Carl C. Rister, professor of history in the University, author of *Southwest Frontier, 1865-1881*, and, in collaboration with R. N. Richardson, of *The Greater Southwest*. He is a frequent contributor to periodicals.

The ways of life among the settlers of frontier regions from Colonial New England to the Mississippi, and of early Spanish

and subsequent white settlement of the Far West, have been described in numerous books.

But the folkways of the pioneers in the vast inland region extending from the Platte to the Rio Grande, and from the Mississippi to the Rockies, are less well known to readers. The absence of forests, the arid climate, the huge buffalo herds, the presence of Indians that often were hostile, and the development of the cattle industry resulted in a folkways pattern that is colorful and unique.

Dr. Rister has carefully studied a large amount of source material and has pictured authentically the lives of the southern plainsmen, as they were tied up together in the development of the Southwest.

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man's viewpoint, why shouldn't I know what women are thinking."

So it seems that Tulsa women's groups have unconsciously formed her laboratory for a long time. Mrs. Ferguson is now president of the Tulsa Symphony association. She holds membership in the Tulsa Peace council, the Town Hall council, the A. A. U. W., the Business and Professional Women's clubs, the alumni groups of Kappa Alpha Theta, the Panhellenic council, the League of Women Voters, a former president of the Y. W. C. A., member of Theta Sigma Phi, an informal group known as Tuesday Bridge club, and honorary member for Oklahoma of the American Women's association, the National Council for Prevention of War, the Oklahoma Historical Society, Tulsa Art association, and the Southwest Writers' conference.

Oh yes, and she is listed in Who's Who in America, and last November was named to the Oklahoma Hall of Fame at the statehood banquet in Oklahoma City.

She's proud she isn't like the New Yorker, to whom people have at last become meaningless—merely unidentified parts of a throbbing, monotonously-moving human mass.

On a recent visit to New York, she complained of the congested areas and of the crowded residential sections.

"Oh," said her host, "you would soon become accustomed to that. If you lived here long, those people would seem like so many trees to you."

"But," answered Mrs. Ferguson, "I don't ever want to feel that people are just 'so many trees.'"

And that's why Mrs. Ferguson stands today in the front rank of newspaperdom—because she takes time to know people. She found more inspiration for column material in the homely, simple lives of the general store owner and the farmer's wife and the

butcher back in Cherokee, Oklahoma, than she could have in sprawling, sophisticated New York City.

"And besides," she laughs, "you couldn't have the fun there that we have here."

To Mrs. Ferguson, the middle west is the real America. From here, she believes, will come the great social reforms that will mould the nation's tomorrow.

Mrs. Ferguson would rather be a good mother than have all the acclaim humanity might give her. It's true, her work has never suffered while she took time to practice "bring-up theories" on her two sons, Benton and Tommy, and daughter, Ruth. But it's just as true that those sons and that daughter haven't been forgotten a moment just because their mother is a "career woman."

Mrs. Ferguson's home is her office, and even though she's trying to read a book or dictate a letter or finish a column, she will always listen to anyone who drops in, her son or daughter, or a neighbor.

Benton, the eldest son, who attended the University of Oklahoma is a member of the advertising staff of the Texas Network, Fort Worth, Texas. He is married to the former Maxine Brown of Tulsa, and has one small daughter, Lucia Lee. Ruth, 21 years old, pretty, brown-eyed and blonde, attended the University of Oklahoma where she was a member of her mother's sorority, Kappa Alpha Theta, and this year graduated from the University of Tulsa. Tommy, 15, is in high school.

One book which Mrs. Ferguson treasures above many of the valuable volumes in her home is a big, bulging, blue scrapbook, filled with comically-illustrated poems which Benton has sent to her.

Tulsans have long known Mrs. Ferguson as a good mother and a good citizen. Now they're going to get acquainted with her as a newspaper columnist getting her stuff printed in her own home town!

A New Book For
Sooner Libraries—

Southern Plainsmen

by
Carl Coke Rister

Here is a colorful, readable new book by a University of Oklahoma Professor, which covers an important phase of Southwestern history. It tells about the picturesque life of the southern plainsmen, who led a life entirely different from the pioneers of any other region of the United States.

Hostile Indians, huge buffalo herds, droughts, cattle drives and other unique features of the early days on the southern plains region made every-day living an adventure.

Mr. Rister has described this kind of life in detail—gathering up the threads of source material in a way that no other author on the Southwest has ever done. The result is another fine book in the list of the University of Oklahoma Press. It is a book worthy of a place in every Oklahoman's personal library.

\$3.00

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