

Preface

The members of the creative writing group have come by plane from Edenton to Chowan College and by car from Suffolk, Courtland and Drewryville. They meet members from Ahoskie, Murfreesboro, Severn and Seaboard in room 104 Marks Hall. Visitors from Littleton, Ahoskie, Courtland, Weldon, Seaboard and from Florida sometimes join them. What happens? What does this creative writing project Chowan College sponsors really amount to? Who can say?

Dr. Bruce Whitaker stated at the outset that if a spark were found among even a small group of creative writers, Chowan College would be justified in its sponsorship. There is spark. It has been steadily kindling. Often it is a feeble gleam. Sometimes it is illumination.

It has been a productive semester. Members have written short stories ranging from adequate to excellent, publishable personal experiences (The News and Observer and The Literary Chowanian), one-act plays that should be produced for the enlightenment and enrichment of communities. An Irish comedy, a rest-home play that has as "happy" an ending as THE WORKHOUSE WARD of Lady Gregory, light comedies that present humanity's foibles and virtues, serious dramas on the poverty theme and on Riders In The Night have been completed.

While shorter material is desirable for The Literary Chowanian, it is the expressed plan of the Graphic Arts Department to present some of the more representative longer material later.

—Dr. Bernice Kelly Harris

All for Humanity

By STANLEY PIERCE

I had always dreamed of doing my part for mankind since I was just a small boy. My chance came when I found out that my voice could be utilized to exalt mankind. I was proud of my discovery. I say discovery, because I learned my voice could be used in a unique and clever way. The essence of my plan was to serve humanity with the echo of my voice.

There was something about the sound and timbre of my voice, especially after I had practiced projecting it through the mountain passes and over green valley floors, that told me I was doing my part for the dignity of mankind. My voice thrilled me to high elation every time I heard it lash the mountain ledges with its authoritative vociferation. I felt that projecting the echo was my ultimate calling and that I had to carry it out.

The opportunity to fulfill my purpose came when I vacationed in Switzerland. There I planned to climb a mountain and accomplish my glorious task.

On those sleepless nights before the big climb, I found myself bursting into sudden laughter and joyous thrills. My wife demanded the reason for my elated moods, and I told her I was only meditating and reminiscing about the past. . . the good old past, ha!

I never once hinted to my wife that I was planning to climb the mountain. She had not been able to comprehend my earlier schemes for the uplift of humanity, and I thought best not to tax her mental capacity this time. So I told her I needed one afternoon of our vacation for some personal business.

When the big day arrived, I sent her and the kids into the village to buy souvenirs. They would find me gone when they returned, but I knew they would think I was out taking pictures or viewing the scenery, so I did not worry.

After getting my gear, I hurried to the foot of the mountain. Even though I was inexperienced at mountain climbing, my joy at this opportunity gave me confidence and strength. I planned to be cautious, but still I

knew there would be a great deal of risk and danger in the climb. If one would exalt mankind with his voice, however, he must take chances.

It seemed that the summer day cooperated with my adventure and worthy purpose by summoning bright sunshine and warm atmosphere to my aid. Knowing how breezy it is in the mountains, I was pleased at the unusual calm that prevailed. I started early morning, a delightful time to climb and to serve mankind with my voice.

The mountain seemed to be divided vertically into about six plateaus. In my inexperience I expected at least a two-hour climb. Little did I know that not less than eight hours lay between me and the top. But what was eight hours when a man can serve humanity with his voice?

The first plateau I made without incident and the second also. But the third plateau gave me trouble. My rope had loosely caught the rock above and slipped when I put stress upon it, jolting me to the ground. I learned that this type of incident would be repeated several times before reaching the summit. My clothes were torn, and I found myself bruised and a little gory before the climb was over. But I counted myself sacrificed therein that I might bless mankind with my echoing voice.

The fourth and fifth plateaus conquered, I left some of my equipment on the fifth plateau. The sixth plateau was the hardest to conquer, but I made it. Finally I stood on the summit with ineffable joy. I was too tired to fulfill my destiny immediately, so I rested awhile, lamenting this waste of time.

I composed myself again, which was difficult in the thin air. I breathed deeply, preparing myself for the great event. The sound had to be supremely good. For that moment there on the Swiss mountain would never come again. I could not fail the human race. This was my destiny. I had to fulfill it.

It seemed I could not contain my elated spirits. Oh, the joy of the moment, the thrill and excitement! I stood in awe at

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The Literary Chowanian

Campus Editors: Nancie Allen and Donna Ellis
Town Editors: Ethleen Underwood and Billie Robinson
Faculty Adviser: Bernice Kelly Harris

All on a Rainy Sunday

By J. L. WALTER MOOSE

The Reverend Mr. Parrish stepped into the pulpit to arrange his notes and hymnbook in preparation for the morning worship service. He was wondering how much the rain steadily falling outside would cut into his attendance.

After putting his hymnbook in place, he glanced up and saw an elderly member of his congregation enter the sanctuary. She was carrying a dripping umbrella, quite unmindful, it seemed, of the trail of water it was leaving on the red plush carpet. She made her way to her accustomed place and leaned the umbrella against the pew in front of her, oblivious of the puddle of water collecting on the carpet.

The minister looked on in silence, but he was thinking, "Why didn't Miss Effie leave that messy umbrella in the coat room off the vestibule instead of bringing it into the sanctuary to soak the carpet?"

Almost as though in answer to his thought Miss Effie raised her voice to explain to Mrs. Lorsen why she brought her umbrella inside. Mrs. Lorsen cupped her ear and leaned forward to hear better. "I wasn't about to leave my parasol in the vestibule," Miss Effie was saying. "I've lost four in the past five years. And this one was sent to me by a pen pal in Holland. I value it highly." Miss Effie suddenly looked coy, as though there might be gentleman pen pals among the windmills overseas.

"How?" Mrs. Lorsen bent closer.

"I wouldn't lose this parasol for anything. If I put it in the vestibule, somebody just might walk off with it."

"How?" Mrs. Lorsen asked.

At that point Mrs. Wood broke into their talk with an explanation of why she was wearing her galoshes inside the church. The minister gathered from the subdued talk subsequent to her entrance that Mrs. Wood had lost galoshes recently.

Just then Mr. Walder entered and made his way down the middle aisle. Catching his eye, the minister greeted him with a nod and smile, opened the Bible at the morning lesson and left the pulpit. He dismissed the thought of umbrellas and galoshes from his mind. There were other things infinitely more important to claim his attention.

Mr. Marham came in and took his place near the front. He was carrying a dripping raincoat. From every crease in the plastic little rivulets were falling upon the carpet. Yet Mr. Marham threw the raincoat over the arm of his pew and settled down to enjoy the service. On an impulse the minister offered to take the dripping raincoat out to the choir room where his own wrap and hat were hanging.

Mr. Marham declined the offer. Within the last two years he had lost three raincoats — one at a Rutrian meeting in Linville, another at a supper rally over in Duberg and still another at a peanut gathering at Newtown. In Newtown, in place of his raincoat a plaid wrap had been left, evidently a woman's. "No thank you, Preacher," Mr. Mar-

ham said firmly, "I'll just hold on to this one!"

The minister was vaguely troubled by the implications of lost umbrellas, galoshes and raincoats. They had been taken from three of his members by some one to whom they did not belong. The losers had seemed to imply there had been theft. Worse, they had implied thieves might even be among the congregation of this church. They might be present at rallies and peanut gatherings and club meetings, but at church—? Surely church people could be trusted not to be light-fingered. Although the rain kept falling, people continued to come. Mr. Parrish was not too disappointed at the crowd. In fact, he thought as he shook hands with the last departing parishioner and saw her out into the rain, the attendance had been pretty good for such a rainy Sunday.

On that rather pleasant note, he made his way to the coat room at the back to get his raincoat. But the rack was empty! He remembered exactly where he had hung the raincoat, right on the end of the rack, for he was the first person to arrive at the church that morning. None of the choir members or teachers had yet left their wraps in the usual place at the back. They were all gone now, including his own.

He stood there a moment, thinking, then turned to leave. His eye spotted a coat lying on a chair in the corner. He picked it up and looked at it carefully. It was not his coat. As he placed it on a hanger, he thought, "Someone got my coat by mistake and left his. I'll hang it here and whoever it was will likely discover his error and come back."

A nagging idea entered his consciousness. Thieves? Light-fingered members in his church? He dismissed the thought as unworthy.

He dashed across the yard to the parsonage, and in the anticipation of Sunday dinner forced himself to forget about the raincoat.

The rain did not let up. It continued all afternoon and night and was still falling Monday morning.

Correction

THE JADE HORSES appearing in the November issue of THE CHOWANIAN was written by Freda Britt, a Chowan College member of the creative writing class in 1963, and not by Mrs. Robinson of Murfreesboro, as printed. The address of Sara Pope whose poem appeared in the November issue is Drewryville rather than Drivers.

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Editorial Note

Creative writing is not taught in our class; we sculptors in thought build our own bodies of expression. We are like the waves of the sea. Our minds give rise to Ideas and then . . . explosion—Imagination takes flight. Our class is a workshop in the finest art—CREATIVITY.

—Nancie Allen

Before beginning the Monday morning rounds, Mr. Parrish checked the coat room over at the church. His coat was not there. No one had come to correct the error.

Mr. Parrish hurried through the rain to his car. He needed to go to the post office and to make a few more stops. As the motor warmed up, he looked at the gasoline gauge. It registered near empty. "I must get gas before I do anything else," he decided as he backed the car in to the street and headed for the service station.

He pulled his car under the shelter in front of the service station and got out. Several men stood around, talking about the weather and the effect it was having on cotton and peanuts. Mr. Parrish knew them all, for most of them were his parishioners, including four deacons. Soon they were all engaged in light conversation.

Suddenly one of the most estimable deacons turned to the minister and said earnestly "Preacher, you're going to have to change your way of preaching a little bit next Sunday, maybe give us a sermon on the seventh commandment."

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Poets' Heaven

By STANLEY PIERCE

I was pondering sundry verse when I fell asleep,
And I dreamed I saw, as through a veil, a strange gate.
But as I ventured closer to the entrance
I recognized, oddly enough, Poe Milton.
He bowed low and swung the gate open,
And there before my eyes was a room full of poets.
All of them were writing odes or sonnets.
But I didn't care for a single one - not one.
Milton introduced me to everyone there (even Southey).
He introduced me to Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Shelly,
Byron,
Browning, and to some outright pseudo poets.
Will I searched heaven thoroughly for my buddy,
And when I didn't find him I asked, "Sir, where is
my buddy,
Edgar Allen Poe?"

Milton wasted no time in answering me.
Quoth Milton, "Nevermore."