

SATIRE FOR FRESHMEN

MUCH has been said about methods of making theme writing in colleges interesting and of doing away with the drudgery usually attached to such work. By giving students a chance for real creative writing, much can be done to relieve the boredom.

The papers required of many high school students are predominately biographical, the material of which the student gets from the encyclopedias, with a small amount of narrative or descriptive writing. Now, although he has not mastered these types, still he is ready to try others. The critical essay, satire, verse writing, familiar essay, editorial, character sketch, interview, and others give ample opportunity for creative writing. No student ever does any one of these with perfection, but he does learn to understand and appreciate the various types. In my own classes I have found that a great many students had never read a critical essay of a book until that type was studied. Then they realized that there was matter for discussion, since all critics did not agree in their estimates of books. They learned that books worth reading were worth discussing, and they learned to show their appreciation or their disapproval in other words than simply "I like it" or "I don't like it."

My best results have been obtained in the study of satire, one of the most difficult of types. Students like to write this type because it gives them a chance to give vent to their dislike of certain customs, conventions, and mannerisms.

The following is the method of procedure in the study of satire. The textbook used in the study of types is *Writing by Types* by Baugh, Kitchen, and Black. (The Century Company, 1924.)

- I. The chapter in the text on satire is studied, noting chief characteristics.
 - A. Definition of satire
 - B. Its chief characteristics
 - (a) It must be amusing
 - (b) It must be useful
 - (c) It must be destructive
 - (d) It is not permanent, though the spirit of it is.
- C. Examples of famous satires
 - (a) Dryden—*Mac Flecknoe* and *The Hind and the Panther*
 - (b) Byron—*The Vision of Judgment* and *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*.
 - (c) Swift—*Gulliver's Travels*.
- D. Steps to be considered in writing satire
 - (a) Choose a subject from things you dislike.
 - (b) Consider the form that will best suit your subject (The form usually chosen for the satire is the familiar essay, though a few choose verse.)
 - (c) Be sure your criticism is based on truth
 - (d) Your attack must not be direct—use irony and indirection
 - (e) Be sure to maintain satire to the end.
- II. One or two examples of satires by authors of note are read, at least in part.
 - (a) Part of Byron's *The English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, probably the passages dealing with Southey, Scott, Coleridge, and Wordsworth
 - (b) Parts of Byron's *The Vision of Judgment*, generally considered the greatest satire in the English language.
- III. Several themes written by students of previous years are read to the class.
- IV. Now the students are ready to write their themes. They have known from the beginning that they will write a satire, so they have been planning this theme for several days.
- V. The best of these are read to the class.
- VI. One or two of the mediocre ones are read and discussed and suggestions for improvement are made.
- VII. A poor theme or two may be read so that the weak students may enter into the discussions—the errors being so obvious. Often the subject will not have been chosen carefully.
- VIII. After the especially poor themes have been revised, they may be read to point out improvements.

The method outlined will take from three to four recitation hours for a type. The result obtained is not perfect, but the study arouses interest and stirs up enthusiasm and appreciation of the type as used by famous writers.

The following satires and familiar essays are printed just as they were handed in for class work without revisions except occasional misspelled words. Familiar essays with a tinge of satire are included in this group.

MODERN ART

A Satire

There has never been a more important invention than that of antique furniture. It has untold possibilities as subject of conversation. In fact, it entirely eclipses the weather topic in most social circles. Its chief value, however, is the fact that it forms a most convenient rack upon which to hitch a family feud, which no self-respecting family is ever without.

It is perfectly obvious why this industry has grown with such rapidity, but there is another important possibility which cannot be overlooked. There is the antique hunter himself. He has invented a most graceful manner of carrying on charitable works that cannot be surpassed by a diplomat. At one time it was the noble privilege of certain titled ladies to provide themselves with a huge basket of groceries and to go about through the streets doling them out to the poor. Such a blatant method is unthought of in this advanced age. Now our altruistic ladies combine duty with business and pay their charity calls in a much more tactful manner. They gently convey the idea to those poor unfortunates who are unable to keep the wolf from the door that certain pieces of dilapidated furniture are a nuisance for the family to stumble over. After a great deal more intelligent reasoning, they are able to purchase a few pieces for a small amount, and each party is confident of a huge bargain.

At this point the titled lady of yore returned with a complacent feeling of duty well done and sat down with folded hands. Not so today. Fortified with a tube of glue and a book of legends, the antique hunter produces from his bit of furniture a remarkable creation whos history can be traced directly to George Washington's kitchen.

This art has a romantic fascination which leaves plenty of room for individuality. The quality of the product is based upon the creator's imaginative powers, but his income will never fail unless either glue or shellac gives out.

H. W.

OXFORD BAGS

A Satire

The designer who originated the style of Oxford Bags must never have been blessed previously with an idea of his own, and as a result of the severe mental strain probably died of a cerebral hemorrhage. But certainly that member of the stronger sex who wore the original pair of trousers with thirty-two inch bottoms deserves a front seat in the Hall of Fame. The male fares forth no more in painful consciousness of bowed legs and over-sized pedal extremities, but with each leg encased in a billowing skirt-like creation defies the world to know the hidden curvature of the tibia.

Undoubtedly civilization took a great step forward in the masculine world when the advocacy of longer trousers abolished the sight of socks forever. But Oxford Bags not only conceal the socks but the shoes as well, and shoe shines are fast becoming a thing of the past. Textile manufacturers revel in the huge demands for material necessitated by this fashion, while the boot-black groans in anguish at his dwindling trade.

Certainly the fashion that caused Grandmother to remark as she peered across the yard at George, "What strange woman is that?" is not to be despised. Astronomers say the Pleiades shine not so brightly from the ethereal blue. Can it be that overwhelmed with admiration for this fashion they leaned nearer to the earth, and were called away by a jealous Jupiter? Should Diogenes in his tireless search for an honest man have chanced across one of these meticulously clad Oxford Bag addicts, he would certainly have blown out his lantern and returned home contented at last.

F. H.

UNWEPT, UNHONORED, AND UNSUNG

A Satire

Most of us have cut our teeth to the tune of the story of "Stingy Davy" who hid in the hay loft and ate all of the jelly. Later we graduated to the story of the greedy one who could not get his hand out of the small-necked jar because he had all of the nuts in the jar tightly gripped in his hand. When we became more mature, the forcible story of the dog that lost its bone in the water was injected into us. These stories, dinned into our ears from infancy to man's estate, are supposed to expose the height of selfishness, but these stories become feeble and insipid beside the would-be pedant who tries to corral all of the classroom glory. If the instructor assigns six pages, the pedant goes without dinner to read ten. If there is in the library but one book on an assigned reference, this demure maiden sits up all night in order to be the first one to rush into the library when it opens. She then takes the book out, concealed beneath her coat, and in some secluded spot she reads the reference, chuckling at intervals about the frantic classmates who are pacing up and down for want of the book.

This modest flower is first to speak out of turn in class, thus depriving a bolder classmate of the privilege of reciting. She also has a list of technical questions with which she bombards the teacher before a test.

We are told that if we abstain from this, that, or the other, we shall receive a reward. If I am to receive a reward at any time, I should like to have it consist of a glimpse into a rather torrid region just to see if our precious pedant shovels fifteen shovelfuls of coal when his Satanic Majesty tells her to shovel ten.

C. G.

NOUVEAUX RICHES

A Satire

The newly rich, with their refinement and culture, are such an asset to society! It is amusing, as well as amazing, to see the rise of the Bourgeoisie of America; but, when we realize that their flight into Utopia is made on the eagle's wings, we do not wonder. They rush on in their ignorance, spurred by avaricious costumers who clothe them in purple and fine linen. They bedeck themselves with the jeweller's art until they are as tinkling symbols and sounding brass. All the artifices of the modern world are within their reach, and they become à la mode over night. As they believe that "apparel oft proclaims the

man," they arrive in the social world. Their entree made, we stand aghast!

With no back-ground, for they have neither inheritance nor environment, they lean on the crutch of imitation. Ye gods, what powers of selection they should have! Darwin's theory, the survival of the fittest, applies itself at this point, and we find the few on the proverbial tour of the continent. Some hilariously and pompously follow Clark on his tours; others, the more sophisticated, stop a day or two to do Paris and rush through the Louvre studying time tables. Italy is done when they stand bare-headed in the court of St. Mark's Cathedral and are photographed with the pigeons feeding from their hands. Greek lore lies tied up in chatelains and prints of the originals.

They rush back to Paris; a French maid is attached; French phrases are assumed; then they visit England, the land of tradition. So incased are they in their purseproud armour that the darts of ages fail to penetrate. The crude veneer of culture, poise, and *savoir vivre* which they smatteringly acquire makes one rebel at the cheap imitation of the real and beautiful.

G. K.

CRUSHES
A Satire

What could be sweeter and more touching than a school girl's crush? Paltry friendships dwindle into nothingness, fictitious lovers are put to shame, when a college girl is smitten with this malady. Surely Cleopatra with all her wiles could never have stirred the pangs of jealousy and hatred in the hearts of her court ladies as much as the idols of college stir the innocent passions of demented crushes.

Many are the hearts that have been left broken and bleeding; many are the lives that have been blighted by the heartless cruelty of the college vamp. Just girl lovers, but oh, those tender entralling glances, those little dove pecks on cupid's carmine bow, and those thrilling Valentino embraces that have been perfected before milady's mirror (for other purposes).

Sleepless nights and foodless days mark the course of this epidemic. The victim becomes shy and stammers when her idol passes by. She raves and writes poetry, and builds imaginary love nests for two. She becomes in thought a Dempsey, and her rival a Carpentier, whom she eliminates in one round, and then eulogizes in a funeral chant.

Living in a fool's Paradise, she watches the sands in the hour glass of time slowly trickle on to eternity.

A. H.

FORMAL TEAS
A Satire

Could one find a more fascinating diversion than attending a tea? To enter a large room full of ladies whom you do not know and who all seem, talking at once, is my idea of a most interesting pastime.

One is soon presented with refreshments. A plate is balanced in one hand and a cup and saucer in the other, while one endeavors to carry on a highly elevating conversation with several

loquacious women to whom your hostess has introduced you. The weather seems to be the chief topic of this conversation although you cannot be sure of this, for the general hubbub is not great enough to prevent every fifth word from being heard. The happy guest stands in that position until she is in a state of numbness, her arms and head aching in every fiber from the unaccustomed entertainment. However, with a few gymnastic exercises she manages to swallow an olive and gulp a sip of tea. Then some kind and benevolent benefactress relieves the torture by taking the plate and cup. One tells the hostess what a charming afternoon has been spent, bids her adieu, and escapes into the open air as quickly as possible.

M. W.

THE IDEAL STUDY HOUR
A Satire

Mournful tones of muffled records
Falling gently on the ear,
Tapping toes and stifled laughter,
Bits of gossip born of fear;
Scribbling pens and interruptions
Caused by shrieks of man-mad maids
Who attempt to drown each other
Arguing over frat pin raids—
What an atmosphere to live in!
How can words its bliss express?
What a help to weighty problems,
And to weary minds' distress.
How I love to study lessons,
And to strive to concentrate!
Jove protect me! or, bewildered,
I shall share Queen Dido's fate.

A. T.

TEMPERAMENTAL BRIDGET
A Familiar Essay

I have a car. At least I think it is a car. No one ever said it wasn't. It has the required number of wheels and radiator. That's why I think it is a car. It has a disposition. That's why I think it isn't. It also has a name, which makes a difference.

I was always brought up to believe that a name was something you must live up to. If you were christened Jane, your feet were automatically placed upon the righteous road, and it was your duty to keep on walking. If it happened to be anything as frivolous as Kate, you were just as firmly set upon the downward path, and sooner or later you would reach the inevitable bad end, although everyone hoped for the best.

In light of such training, it seemed like courting Providence to give my car any but the most practical name. I finally decided upon Bridget, which means strength. Bridget seized upon her name with joy and began instantly to live up to it. She abounds in strength—strength to stop and more strength to stay stopped. In fact, it is her main characteristic. Besides strength, she has a disposition. It isn't even a good disposition. She possesses all those traits which are collectively known as temperament, and she exercises them on all occasions. If the weather is bad, she runs like a top. If it is good, she barely manages a hill. An eight o'clock class is a challenge to do her worst, and she frequently does it. She con-

siders it a personal insult if I arrive anywhere on time.

I was once told that to drive a car was an education. It is. Mentally Bridget is three jumps ahead of me. Frequently she stops altogether and waits for me to catch up. This is humiliating to the human intelligence, but it is Bridget's way of showing me that she has a superior mind.

No, Bridget isn't practical, but neither is she frivolous. She has a thousand whims and fancies tucked under her rusty hood, but she keeps me mentally alert trying to decide what she is going to do next and whether she has at last found a reason for doing it.

H. W.

CARBOLIC ACID

A Familiar Essay

Isn't it the most grand and glorious feeling to drive a car? When I realize that I have a piece of mechanism under my control that could bring destruction, if I would but let it, cold shivers positively run up and down my spine.

I had never driven a car until the family made me a present of a worn out rattle trap when the sedan was purchased. I drive the excuse of a car. At least, I say that I drive it, but I've never taken it out yet and brought it back in the same condition.

By a unanimous vote my friends named the rattle trap Carbolitic Acid, because it was sure death to venture in it with me at the helm.

The family never ventured with me during my first mad attempts at driving. I have a sneaking suspicion that they doubted my ability as a driver. Just because they refused to risk their necks did not worry me. There were plenty of my own companions who were always ready for a drive. We always started out optimistically and ended with a flat tire. I say a flat tire; we were lucky to finish our nerve-racking ride with less than two of the nuisances.

All cars have flat tires during their career, but Carbolitic Acid was blessed, or cursed, with them. I honestly believe I can fix a flat tire with my eyes shut. They have become second nature to me. Finally, when the patches on my Kelly-Springfields completely obliterated the original rubber, I knew that I must have new tires. To gain this end, I invited the family for a ride one Sunday afternoon. I got the tires.

Carbolitic Acid has caused me a great deal of trouble. I've suffered with a broken arm, due to her stubbornness, a sprained back, and numerous aches and bruises. But, for all her faults, I love her just the same.

I repeat, isn't it a grand and glorious feeling to drive a car? I'll say so. When I start out on Sunday in my chariot of tin, I feel just as important and equally as happy as the fellow in the Pierce Arrow who always frowns as I whiz by. What do I care? Not a thing. I'm happy.

M. P.

BUGBEARS OF A STUDENT WAITRESS'S LIFE

A Familiar Essay

Silver to polish, table cloths to turn or change, soup and cocoa to serve. All my life Thursday will be associated with soup and cocoa, Friday with silver to polish, and Saturday with table

covers to change or turn. My weeks are merely two Thursdays, two Fridays, and two Saturdays. Sunday is merely an extremely pleasant dream. Soup alone is enough to contend with, but soup and cocoa are heart breaking. All day I dread the meals, and even at night I cannot escape. My dreams are filled with visions of truck loads of silver to polish, thousands of table cloths to put upon countless tables, and tanks and caldrons of soup and cocoa. When I possess a home of my own, I shall never have either soup or cocoa. Of course I cannot say I will never change table covers, or polish silver, for that would be absurd, but I shall take a separate day to do each in and, when the task is finished, I shall celebrate by doing the most outrageous act I can think of at the time.

Some times I wonder if there are any cold days in Heaven on which they could serve these two monstrosities. I wonder if they have tables to eat from, and if the angels use silver. If I'm good enough to go there when I die, I shall stop at the gate, and ask the angel Gabriel what their bill of fare consists of on Thursdays. If he says, "Frankfurters and potato salad," I shall go on my way rejoicing, but, oh horrors, if he answers, "soup and cocoa," I shall immediately turn around and march back to the earth, or the lower regions.

H. D.

MACHINES, HUMAN AND OTHERWISE

A Familiar Essay

I feel like a penny gum machine. You know how they work. You put your coin in the slot marked peppermint, push a lever, and out comes the gum flavored with peppermint. Or if you prefer wintergreen you have but to drop the cent in another groove to have wintergreen at your finger tips.

I am a human Writing by Types machine. The gum machine and I have many things in common. At times we both cease to function, despite all efforts on the part of the outsider. Our mechanism is similar in that my worthy instructor gives me a subject instead of a penny; my roommate, or Father Time, gives the needed push; and, if the push is sufficiently hard, or if I am headed straight on the right track, and if there are no switches or sidings, I will, like the faithful gum machine, give the flavor requested. Of course, we both have the same weakness. We both go astray. Sometimes when chocolate is desired, clove may come but, as I do not even get a penny for my thoughts, give me the benefit of the doubt and believe that I, like the machine, meant well. Try me again. "All things come to those who wait."

E. A.

MARIE LOUISE BOJE

More than 900 teachers of physical education are employed full or part time in Missouri. The American Legion, Rotary clubs, and other organizations are co-operating in promoting physical education and in providing larger areas for indoor and outdoor activities.