

Application of English Courses to Practical Usage

By

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Education

of the

University of Arizona

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PART ONE

WRITTEN AND ORAL ENGLISH.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

This thesis is not undertaken with the false, pre-conceived notion that radical changes must be instantly made in the curriculum of the English department. If changes are to come, they must of necessity come slowly. Advances into new fields should always be made only after careful study of the situation.

It is with a belief that the English department has sensed the need of some change in ^{its} their methods if their aims are to be accomplished, and it is in a spirit of cooperation that this thesis is undertaken, in the hope that a better understanding of the needs of the students may be gained.

That there is a diversity of opinion among our graduates as to the merits of the English courses given at this University may be clearly ascertained by a glimpse at the comments of a few business man writers: "There is no doubt of the great value of English to the business man. It is worth dollars to him every day to be able to express himself quickly and well." A lawyer expressed himself thus: "The legal profession is in need of the students of English. A lawyer makes a bad showing if he does not use the correct words, or if he uses some worn-out expression, such as 'awful,' 'lot,'

'bit,' etc. A man that uses good English has good society open to him." A superintendent of mines here in Arizona values his courses in English most highly and is free to state that: "My Freshman English course at the U. of A. (University of Arizona) was of more value to me than all my previous instruction through the lower schools combined." So we see that the English department does have its staunch defenders, and there are those who feel that the courses offered are all that they should be. At least, these people are satisfied.*

There is another group that feels a little differently about the worth of these subjects. Here is one graduate who recalled with no degree of pleasure those courses he took in this department. He says: "I was 'exposed' to one semester of Exposition, but escaped Argumentation and English literature. I cursed the course in Exposition from start to finish, derived no benefits from taking Freshman work as a Senior, and considered the three units as time entirely lost and wasted. Moreover, I still think so." Another alumnus takes rather a more considerate view of the situation, though he sees some good in the work. He informs me that: "In my opinion, the present-day method of teaching English is advantageous to a very small class of people. So much of it is purely a matter of words and construction, which are positively useless at the present; may I say 'ancient' and harmful."

*Quotations taken from remarks made unsolicited on the questionnaire blanks.

Then we have the viewpoint of one of our graduates now a student of law at Harvard. He does not mince words in his tirade against the present method of teaching English. He says: "I consider college English a failure. I have found very few college men and women able to speak the English language correctly. Considering the time spent in the study of the subject, every student should be faultless in his diction. Too much time is spent in studying major premises and minor premises and what not, but not enough time in drilling in the fundamentals of grammar. English courses in college are a failure when one compares the result with what might be accomplished. It is "a grain of wheat hid in a bushel of chaff." It gives a little of the outward show and form of learning yet neglects the substance."¹ In conclusion he goes on to state, that in his opinion the college men with an A.B. are the biggest examples of misapplied energy and effort that this whole world affords. He suggests that the English department exclude from the list of "required work" all courses in "Argumentation," "Narrative," etc., and replace them by courses in the fundamentals of grammar.

This student is supported in his views, in part at least, by a graduate who is now a special representative for a manufacturing concern. This gentleman takes this

1--Lawrence Searing.

stand: "I believe that English themes, as required of the Freshmen in the University of Arizona, have no practical value. I recommend a substitution of courses in letter-writing and commercial English."

This thesis aims to point out the uses made of written and oral English by the graduates of this University. It further aims to show the authors most read by these same alumni.

CHAPTER II.

WRITTEN ENGLISH.

TABLE I.

TYPES OF ENGLISH WRITTEN BY THE DIFFERENT GROUPS.

| Authors | A.B. per cent | B.S. per cent | Business Men per cent | Prof. Men per cent | Teachers per cent | Engi- neers per cent | All Graduates per cent |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Magazine articles... | 7 | 13 | 3 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 10 |
| Newspapers... | 5 | 1 | 10 | 8 | 12 | 0 | 3 |
| Translations | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Books..... | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Pamphlets... | 2 | 5 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 11 | 4 |
| Editorials... | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Total | 17 | 22 | 13 | 19 | 20 | 16 | 21 |

It is evident from Table I that only one-fifth of the graduates of this University ever write articles for publication. It is of interest to note that the B. S. students write for publication more than any other group. Among them are the specialists in their fields who write articles on scientific problems in agriculture, mining, and various phases of engineering.

TABLE II.

DISTRIBUTION OF LETTERS WRITTEN BY THE DIFFERENT GROUPS

| Letters per year | A.B. per cent | B.S. per cent | Business men per cent | Prof. men per cent | Teachers per cent | Engi- neers per cent | All graduates per cent |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 0-10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10-25 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 25-50 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| 50-100 | 11 | 9 | 11 | 9 | 8 | 0 | 9 |
| 100-250 | 37 | 35 | 21 | 30 | 34 | 45 | 35 |
| 250-500 | 26 | 25 | 31 | 39 | 48 | 17 | 26 |
| 500-750 | 8 | 13 | 21 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 11 |
| 750-1000 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 11 | 5 |
| 1000-2500 | 3 | 10 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 11 | 8 |
| 2500-5000 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 11 | 2 |
| Total..... | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Table II clearly indicates that all of the alumni are called upon to write letters for one reason or another after graduation. This is only natural in a social order such as the one in which we live.

Our University takes for granted that all of these graduates know how to write a good letter, both business and personal, before they get to college. For those who so believe I quote herewith the opening paragraph of a letter

received from the vice-principal of an accredited high school in California. "In the study that you are making in English, have you worked up anything along the line of a list of selections of English to illustrate the different standards of English, which you have individuals to rate in order to determine the appreciation of the individual rating?"

TABLE III.

BUSINESS LETTERS WRITTEN BY THE DIFFERENT GROUPS

| Business Letters per cent | Business men per cent | Professional men per cent | All graduates per cent |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 100 | 7 | 3 | 3 |
| 90 | 15 | 6 | 8 |
| 75 | 15 | 31 | 25 |
| 50 | 15 | 15 | 14 |
| 25 | 22 | 21 | 20 |
| 10 | 26 | 24 | 30 |
| Total..... | 100 | 100 | 100 |

As business letters make up a fair share of our graduates' correspondence it is interesting to note in what proportion it is used by the business men themselves, professional men, and the body of alumni as a whole.

TABLE IV.

PERSONAL LETTERS WRITTEN BY THE DIFFERENT GROUPS

| Personal letters per cent | Business men per cent | Professional men per cent | All graduates per cent |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 100 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| 90 | 27 | 27 | 29 |
| 75 | 23 | 18 | 20 |
| 50 | 15 | 15 | 13 |
| 25 | 23 | 28 | 25 |
| 10 | 8 | 9 | 8 |
| Total..... | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Comparing Table IV with Table III, it is evident that personal letters are more generally written by all groups than are business letters, even among the business men themselves.

CHAPTER III.

ORAL ENGLISH.

TABLE V.

TYPES OF ORAL ENGLISH USED BY THE DIFFERENT GROUPS

| Types | A.B. per cent | B.S. per cent | Business men per cent | Prof. men per cent | Teachers per cent | Engi- neers per cent | All graduates per cent |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Dictation... | 37 | 53 | 52 | 53 | 38 | 72 | 47 |
| Speeches.... | | | | | | | |
| Formal.... | 23 | 14 | 17 | 23 | 26 | 17 | 18 |
| Informal... | 67 | 74 | 60 | 80 | 96 | 56 | 69 |

It is interesting to note the wide-spread use that business and professional men make of oral English. The fact that so many of them make informal speeches is due in great part to their business men's organizations which meet frequently for dinners and luncheons, at which informal speeches are part of the program. The fact that teachers make so many informal speeches is accounted for to a great extent by their frequent appearances at assemblies and other school gatherings.

PART TWO

LITERATURE

CHAPTER I.

LITERATURE AS AN ART.

If there is any one thing we can say with a certainty regarding the graduates of this institution it is that they are intensely American. And this same trait that should perhaps be dominant in the students of this great western institution, if in any body of students, remains so in their literary as well as their political and social spheres.

In this, they run but true to form. What is true of our graduates in this regard is also true of the graduates of other universities, no doubt, and true of the people at large throughout the length and breadth of the land.

The easterner may pride himself upon his family lineage, on his accent and his other traits peculiar to his way of thinking and acting. The southerner clings tenaciously to a softened tone of voice that sounds like music when compared with the clear-cut and sharp articulations of the middle westerner, or the slow western drawl. Each may have his pet traits and characteristics of which he is justly proud, and which none of the rest of us envy him, but common to all is a taste for literature, -- American literature.

In America for the past thirty years our schools have been conscientiously at work teaching literature. From the time the pupil enters the school until he steps forth

to get his Ph. D. or what not, he is ever harkening to the learned ones who would have him know literature. They would teach him the mysteries of poetry and fiction, the problem of style, the technique of the novel, the short story, the drama and the essay. The student in high school and in college reads about Shakespeare, his life and his works. There is no let-up: the teachers seem determined he shall know about him.¹

One thing is noted, the literature courses are popular courses. Students seem to have a mania for learning, at least listening to the instructors' lectures concerning the literature. One of the most popular courses at this University is the course in English literature, and if we may take the word of writers on the subject, this same desire seems to be general. One Arizona alumnus makes this comment in speaking of the courses in English literature:

"Both courses were highly spoken of, especially the course in Romantic Movement. I value the work greatly. The understanding and inspiration that were made available to me in these courses have been of great value to me. They have contributed to a balance and a mental poise that I am sure would not otherwise have existed. I value my work in English literature at Arizona highly, and think it of practical use in a technical career."²

1--Bkm. 56: 1-7, S' 22.

2--Quotation.

Now the alarming, or at least, the surprising thing about this situation is that it has brought us little or nothing in the way of good literature. "Our drama is wretched, our novels are, with few exceptions, rather thin, our poetry, in spite of multitudinous efforts, is prosaic, and our criticism is feeble in idea and bad in manner."¹

Teachers are prone to blame the contemporary writers for this state of affairs and in turn the writers lay the blame on the teachers. It is possible that both are off the track. The writers perhaps waste much of their talent through ignorance of the art, while but little of the instruction in literature has little in it to correct the ignorance of the writer.

Literature is taught chiefly through the use of the English classics. This fact is probably due to the decline of Greek and to the tendency of Greek and Latin experts and the French and German teachers to teach only the language. The English classic then becomes the vehicle of teaching appreciation and understanding of the literature as an art. If taught as an art in itself, and if the student can be made to read himself into it with a feeling and an understanding that makes him a part of it, then literature is worth while to him. In the works of the authors there have been written lessons

1--Bkm. 56: 1-7, S '22.

of love, of courage, of sacrifice, all of the finest things in life are embodied in the beautiful passages that have come from the masters. But where does it go? How many absorb it? How many really understand and appreciate it? And when the answer comes, we find there are but a few. Then arises the question, what is the reason?

Literature to be taught must first be understood. There is a great difference between the methods employed by the several instructors in this institution. Each has his favorite way of teaching and interpreting, and the results of their labors bear fruit in accordance.

It does not seem possible that one could possibly come to a true appreciation of the art, or get much of an inspiration from the monotonous memorizing of dates and places. If a boy knows Macbeth by heart and can live in the great poem by sympathy and imagination, it makes no difference when the poem was written or by whom, and it is the instructor's duty to teach the boy that it makes no difference.¹

CHAPTER II.

ARIZONA FAVORITES.

American writers seem to have sensed the spirit of the "best sellers" and are striving to give the people what they want with a resultant poor grade of fiction adorning the shelves of our libraries and reading rooms.

1--Bookman, 56:1-7, S '22.

This is a busy world and the average man finds his day is crowded so that some few of us are even forced to admit that they "find no time" for reading. This is indeed a sorry declaration. The loss to one can not be measured in such a circumstance. Literature, whatever its nature or its theme, opens up new fields of thought. From it are gleaned new insight into the society about us and men become anew something different when seen in a new light. The entire social, economic, and political life of the day and of the past are delivered up to us, ours is the heritage of the labors of men of ages past, yet we have not time to read. It is well there are but few, and let us wish more power to that educational system that will devise a way and a means that even the few may employ.

While it hardly seems possible that one should be too busy ever to read, and here I refer to university graduates in particular, for I can sense the conditions under which some men labor and live that would not be conducive to reading for leisure enjoyment, it is not strange that of those who do find the time, and are so inclined, should turn to books that carry them far from their toils.

Books that stir with action and set the blood to tingling in the veins, books that satisfy the popular will and fancy, grasp the average reader. He doesn't want anything heavy that is hard to digest. He doesn't care for technique and finesse of art. He wants to be entertained. He wants to

let his imagination run riot and carry him into strange lands, among strange people where the unexpected happens at an unexpected time. For him this is rest. He enjoys it.

Do we wonder, then, at the popularity of Harold Bell Wright? How many people have pondered over the question of his popularity?

TABLE VI.

LIST OF AUTHORS IN ORDER OF POPULARITY

| Author | Rank | Number of Readers | Author | Rank | Number of Readers |
|------------------------|------|-------------------|-------------------------|------|-------------------|
| Harold Bell Wright... | 1 | 26 | Winston Churchill... | 13 | 3 |
| Edna Ferber..... | 2 | 19 | Robert Chambers..... | 13 | 3 |
| Victor Hugo..... | 2 | 19 | Brett Harte..... | 13 | 3 |
| Peter B. Kyne..... | 3 | 18 | A. S. M. Hutchinson.... | 13 | 3 |
| Jack London..... | 3 | 18 | Robert Keable..... | 13 | 3 |
| Chas. Dickens..... | 3 | 18 | Dana Norris..... | 13 | 3 |
| Sinclair Lewis..... | 3 | 18 | E. Phillip Openheim...: | 13 | 3 |
| Rafael Sabatini..... | 3 | 18 | Upton Sinclair..... | 13 | 3 |
| Zane Grey..... | 4 | 16 | Robt. L. Stevensen.... | 13 | 3 |
| Ibanez Blasco..... | 5 | 12 | G. Boeacio..... | 14 | 2 |
| Sir Walter Scott.... | 6 | 10 | Hall Cane..... | 14 | 2 |
| Mark Twain..... | 7 | 9 | H. Dana..... | 14 | 2 |
| Anna Douglas | | | E. M. Dell..... | 14 | 2 |
| Sedgwick..... | 7 | 9 | DeMaupassant..... | 14 | 2 |
| Joseph Conrad--Eng.. | 7 | 9 | Thos. Dixon..... | 14 | 2 |
| Lew Wallace..... | 8 | 8 | Fedor Dostoyenski...: | 14 | 2 |
| Emerson Hough..... | 8 | 8 | Gibbs..... | 14 | 2 |
| Alexander Dumas..... | 8 | 8 | Elinor Glynn..... | 14 | 2 |
| Anatole France..... | 8 | 8 | Thos. Hardy..... | 14 | 2 |
| Dorothy Canfield.... | 9 | 7 | Henry Sydnor Harri- | | |
| Gene Stratton Porter: | 9 | 7 | son..... | 14 | 2 |
| Thackery..... | 9 | 7 | Fannie Hurst..... | 14 | 2 |
| Willa Cather..... | 10 | 6 | Joseph Lincoln..... | 14 | 2 |
| George Eliot..... | 10 | 6 | Poole..... | 14 | 2 |
| H. L. Wilson..... | 11 | 5 | E. H. Porter..... | 14 | 2 |
| Owen Wister..... | 11 | 5 | Mary Roberts Rine- | | |
| Nathaniel Hawthorne.: | 11 | 5 | hart..... | 14 | 2 |
| Rudyard Kipling..... | 11 | 5 | Wm. Shakespeare..... | 14 | 2 |
| H. G. Wells..... | 11 | 5 | Walpole..... | 14 | 2 |
| Davidson..... | 12 | 4 | J. Webster..... | 14 | 2 |
| E. M. Wharton..... | 12 | 4 | Louise M. Alcott.... | 15 | 1 |
| Gertrude Atherton...: | 12 | 4 | M. P. Artsyboskev...: | 15 | 1 |
| Rex Beach..... | 12 | 4 | Austin..... | 15 | 1 |
| James Cabell..... | 12 | 4 | Tempo Bailey..... | 15 | 1 |
| James Oliver Curwood: | 12 | 4 | E. Belmer..... | 15 | 1 |
| A. Conan Doyle..... | 12 | 4 | Balzac..... | 15 | 1 |
| John Galsworthy-Eng.: | 12 | 4 | Florence Barclay.... | 15 | 1 |
| O. Henry..... | 12 | 4 | Sir J. M. Barrie.... | 15 | 1 |
| L. Kingsley..... | 12 | 4 | Frederick R. Becholdt: | 15 | 1 |
| Stephen B. Leacock...: | 12 | 4 | Bennet..... | 15 | 1 |
| Count Leo Tolstoi...: | 12 | 4 | E. F. Benson..... | 15 | 1 |

:(Continued next pg.):

TABLE VI.
(Continued)

LIST OF AUTHORS IN ORDER OF POPULARITY

| Author | Rank | Number of Readers | Author | Rank | Number of Readers |
|-----------------------|------|-------------------|-----------------------|------|-------------------|
| Conrad Bercovici..... | 15 | 1 | Theodore Dreiser..... | 15 | 1 |
| Bojer..... | 15 | 1 | Mary B. Eddy..... | 15 | 1 |
| Bourroughs..... | 15 | 1 | Waldo Emerson..... | 15 | 1 |
| S. Butler..... | 15 | 1 | Warren Fabian..... | 15 | 1 |
| Don Byrnes..... | 15 | 1 | Parker Fetch..... | 15 | 1 |
| G.K. Chesterson--Eng. | 15 | 1 | E. M. Forster..... | 15 | 1 |
| Wilkie Collins..... | 15 | 1 | H. A. Frank..... | 15 | 1 |
| Ruth M. Comfort..... | 15 | 1 | A. Fredericks..... | 15 | 1 |
| Crooke..... | 15 | 1 | Jacques Futnell..... | 15 | 1 |
| Cooper..... | 15 | 1 | C. W. Gibbert..... | 15 | 1 |
| Bennett Capplestone. | 15 | 1 | Oliver Goldsmith.... | 15 | 1 |
| Corcelli..... | 15 | 1 | Anna R. Green..... | 15 | 1 |
| Marion Crawford..... | 15 | 1 | John Hergesheimer... | 15 | 1 |
| C. W. Dawson..... | 15 | 1 | Stephen McKenna..... | 15 | 1 |
| H. F. Day..... | 15 | 1 | Arthur Train..... | 15 | 1 |
| Floyd Dell..... | 15 | 1 | Lew Wallace..... | 15 | 1 |
| DeMoyen..... | 15 | 1 | W. E. Woodward..... | 15 | 1 |

In studying Table VI, one is impressed first by the regularity with which Arizona graduates read the "best sellers," and by the absence of English authors among the most popular writers.

The fact that Harold Bell Wright is so frequently read by our alumni may be accounted for in part by the fact that he lives in Tucson, that he is a "best seller," and that there still exists a class of people who like to have the emotions laid on thickly, like jam; they revel in a sort of sentimentalized theology, and never weary of a hero or heroine who suddenly kneels in public places and bursts forth into fervent prayer.¹

With the other authors listed no explanation seems necessary. The American authors are all contemporary writers and are known by followers of modern fiction.

TABLE VII.

RANK OF TEN MOST POPULAR AUTHORS IN 1924.¹

| Title | Author | Ja | F | M | A | M | Je | Ju | Au | S | O | N | D |
|---------------------------|----------------------|----|----|----|----|---|----|----|----|---|---|---|----|
| If Winter Comes..... | A. S. M. Hutchinson: | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 6 |
| This Freedom..... | A. S. M. Hutchinson: | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | 6 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Helen of the Old House: | H. B. Wright..... | 2 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Her Father's Daughter: | Gene S. Porter..... | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Main Street..... | Sinclair Lewis..... | 4 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Babbitt..... | Sinclair Lewis..... | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| The Pride of Palomar..... | Peter B. Kyne..... | 5 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The Brimming Cup..... | Dorothy Canfield: | 6 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Rough Haven..... | Dorothy Canfield: | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | 10 |
| To the Last Man..... | Zane Grey..... | x | 6 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Brass..... | Chas. G. Norris..... | x | 7 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Three Soldiers..... | John Dos Passos..... | x | 9 | 10 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The Girls..... | Edna Ferber..... | x | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

In comparing Tables VI and VII, it is noted that in the selection of authors, Arizona's graduates read practically the same authors as the general run of the public the country over.

1--Bookman, 56: 233, 361, 520, 650, 776, 81, 205, 317, 431, 539, 651, 108.

Table VII gives the contemporary writers of fiction, prepared by a representative committee of authors, students, and critics. In compiling this list, a report is taken from 200 libraries in all parts of the United States. It is found that the best "circulators" are also the best "sellers," which is proof of the essential uniformity of the reading tastes of all sorts and conditions of Americans.

Therein, too, lies the proof of our democracy. There can be no rigid class distinction, no sharp divergence of interests, no irrepressible warfare or unbridgeable gulf between class and class, when all alike, worker and capitalist, highbrow and lowbrow, farmer, artisan, merchant, and manufacturer are reading "If Winter Comes," and "The Outline of History" with the same enthusiastic interest.

TABLE VIII.

PERCENTAGE OF ARIZONA GRADUATES READING THE DIFFERENT MAGAZINES

| Magazines | Graduates per cent |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Literary Digest..... | 79 |
| Saturday Evening Post..... | 71 |
| American..... | 68 |
| Business and Professional..... | 43 |
| Life..... | 41 |
| Cosmopolitan..... | 35 |
| Household Magazines..... | 35 |
| Atlantic Monthly..... | 34 |
| Review of Reviews..... | 25 |
| Judge..... | 19 |
| Liberty..... | 16 |
| Harpers..... | 13 |
| Geographic..... | 11 |
| Bookman..... | 11 |
| New Republic..... | 11 |
| Scribners..... | 9 |
| Movie Magazines..... | 7 |
| Colliers..... | 6 |
| Worlds Work..... | 5 |
| Science..... | 5 |
| True Story..... | 4 |
| Fraternal Magazines..... | 4 |
| Century..... | 3 |
| American Mercury..... | 3 |
| Western Stories..... | 2 |
| Travel..... | 2 |
| Religious..... | 2 |
| Time..... | 2 |
| Nature..... | 2 |
| International Studio..... | 2 |
| Asia..... | 2 |
| Sport..... | 2 |
| Smart Set..... | 2 |
| Mentor..... | 1 |
| Nation..... | 1 |
| | <u>less than</u> |
| Current Opinion..... | 1 |
| Survey..... | 1 |
| Adventure..... | 1 |
| Argosy..... | 1 |
| Hearst's International..... | 1 |

Table VIII shows the percentage of graduates of Arizona who read the different magazines.

PART THREE

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION.

WRITTEN AND ORAL ENGLISH.

It has been the aim of this thesis to treat of the subject in a fair, unbiased manner. In the comments quoted in the Introduction the ones that best expressed the writer's opinions were selected, with a view toward giving the reader both sides of the story before attempting an analysis.

In the content of the subject matter it has been the writer's aim to adhere as strictly as possible to the actual findings, inserting, now and then, an occasional example drawn from experience to make as clear as possible the idea to be conveyed.

It will first be noted that we are interested here primarily with the "practical" application of English courses to use in life after college.

The first attempt was to find out just what uses the graduates make of their English after graduation, and the findings have been set forth.

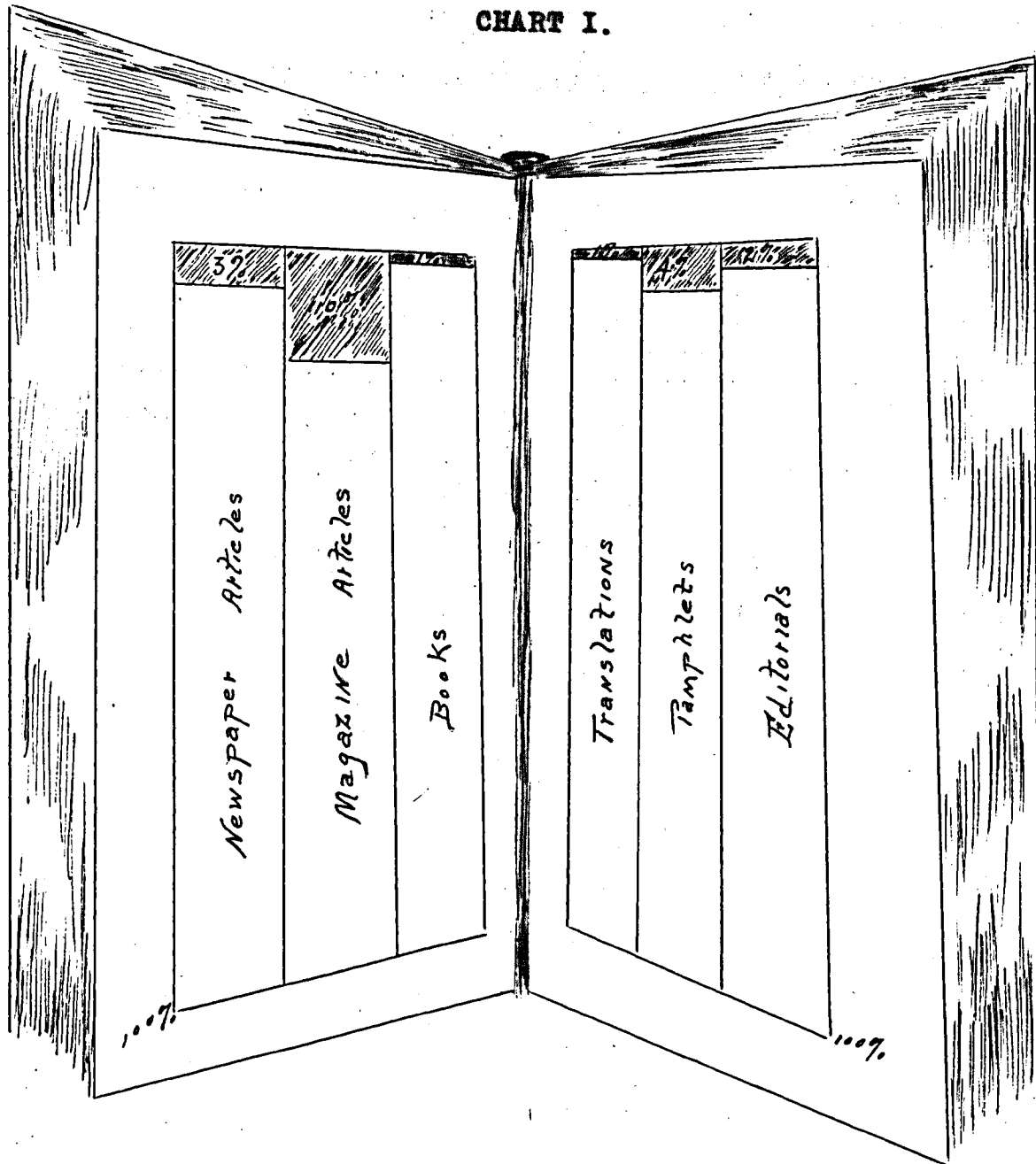
It is evident that but relatively few of them, 20 per cent, ever have written for publications of any kind. That leaves 80 per cent who have no use for training that would fit them for such work. The conclusion to be drawn, then, is that, "one should not aim primarily at the specialized need of literary amateurs, or the vocational needs of literary specialists, while arranging for the training of the total population."¹

1--Babbit -- How to Make a Curriculum."

A diagram has been drawn that represents roughly the amount of specialized training that is really applied to practical usage.² It will be clearly seen that there is but little need for training the entire student body along any of these lines of literary endeavor.

2--Charts I, II, and III are self-explanatory.

CHART I.



The shaded portion of each column represents the per cent of application of training in each respective literary field.

CHART II.

APPLICATION OF TRAINING IN WRITING THEMES

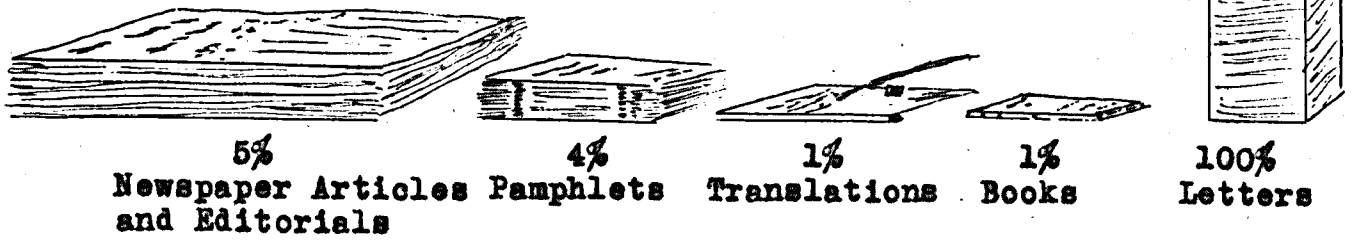
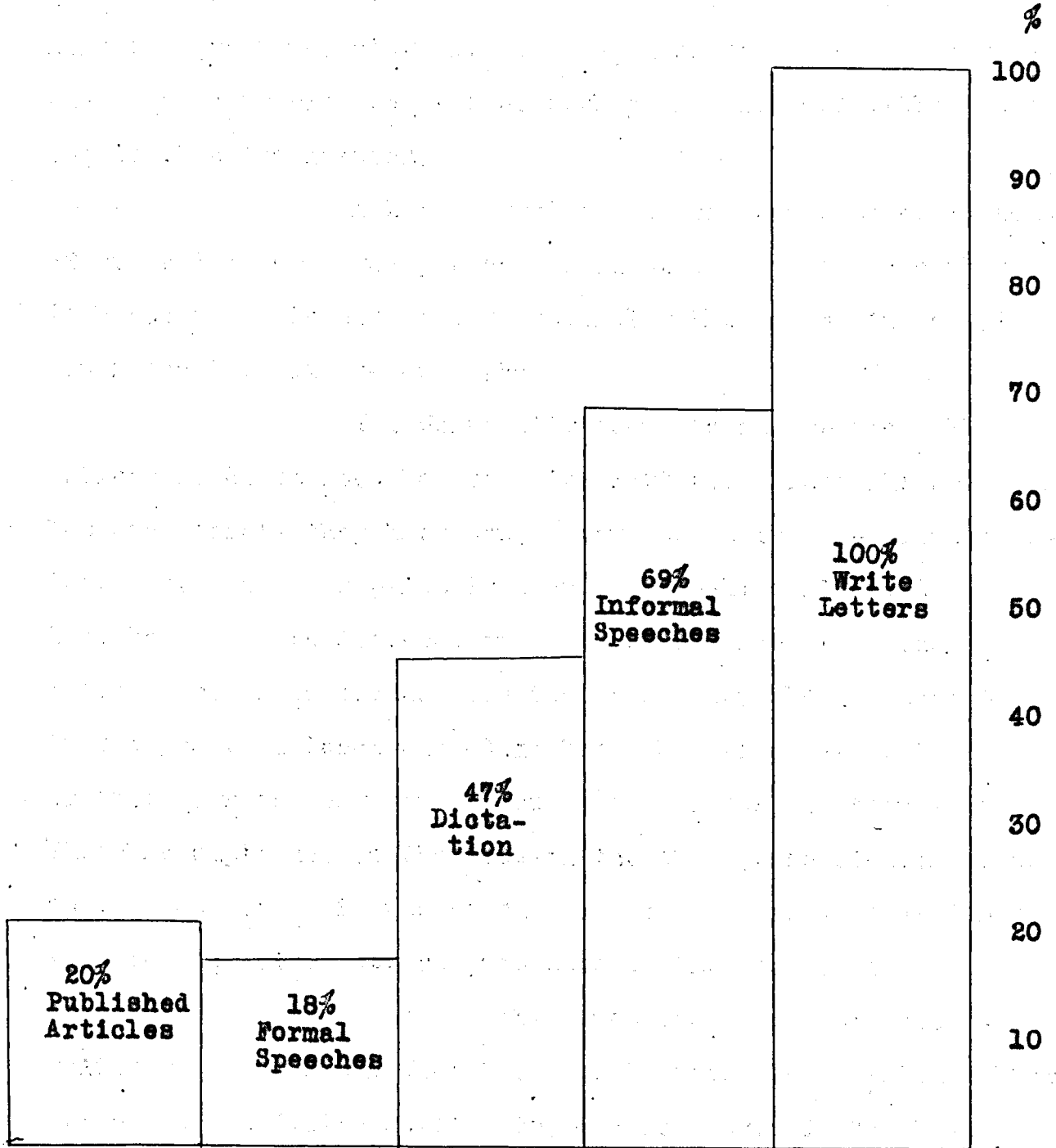


CHART III.
APPLICATION OF TRAINING IN ENGLISH



We have seen that only 20 per cent of the graduates of this university ever write for publications; that leaves a great majority with nothing much to write but letters, and they must write them as best they know how and without training in this institution.

All of us write letters, business or personal, after graduation. The present order of society is such that it becomes a necessity for us to employ this means in social intercourse in its several phases.

The University seems to assume that all college students know how to write letters. "They all write letters, surely they know how," seems to be the prevalent opinion. But this assumption is wrong. Not all college students know how to write letters, in spite of the fact that they do write them. We could not say that every boy who participated in the great national past-time knows how to play baseball, or that everyone who can sit on a horse knows how to ride one. These assumptions, on the face of the thing, are ridiculous and so it seems to me is the assumption that all college students know how to write letters just because they do write them.

What are the first essentials of letter-writing? I would say that business letters should embody clear expression, definite statements, and brevity. It has been pointed out in previous chapters the probable losses accruing from inability to write business letters embodying the three qualities mentioned.

Personal letters should be something different and apart from a business letter. They should embody clear expression, personal touch, and good, legible penmanship.

Everyone realizes, I'm sure, the difference in the missions of these two kinds of letters and can readily see how the two should be different.

I do not believe that theme writing is good training for letter-writing. It has its purpose in training for expression and technique, but such training is not directly applicable to letter-writing. In the matter of business letters, it does not train for brevity, nor does it train for expression in words, and expressions suited to business letters. In writing themes there is not a training in the natural, personal touch, that makes personal letters mean what they should to the recipient. There is a great deal of practice in hand-writing, but this is often of a careless type and the student's hand-writing often deteriorates during college years, rather than improving.

We can not say that the writing of themes is good training for the writing of letters. The ability to write good themes does not carry with it the ability to write good letters. There should be some definite training in the art of letter-writing.

The need for training in public speaking needs no further comment. It is evident beyond all range of doubt that the university graduate does find a definite need

for such training. The course is offered in this university and I believe it is well conducted; there should be measures adopted to get more students to take advantage of it.

In the training of a student to be able to "dictate" letters, treatises, and the like, but little training should be necessary, as it is merely a matter of adaptation after one has formed the ability to think clearly and in sequential order, and put that thought into verbal expression.

LITERATURE.

Three aims of the Department of English are: First, to acquaint the student with the authors; second, to teach the student how to interpret description and technique; and third, to teach the student to appreciate good literature. We are interested in knowing to what extent the department has accomplished its aims. One look at the results of our survey would tend to shatter all faith in the present method of teaching literature.

Among the authors who enjoy the greatest popularity with the general reading public there does not appear the name of one of the authors studied in courses in English literature.¹ We are primarily interested in the Arizona group and all we can say for them is that, in spite of their training, they are very much like the rest.² Their taste seems to be about the same, not much better, not much worse, than that of the general public, the trained and the untrained, the high-brow and the low-brow; but as one authority says, "therein lies the proof of our democracy."³

1--Table VII.

2--Table VI.

3--Bockman, 60.

Why do we teach literature? We have read the Department's answer to that. Why should we teach literature? Because literature widens the range of one's observation. It widens the range of one's participation in the affairs of men. It widens the range of one's thought. It elevates one's thought. It enables one to live. And because it does these things, readings should be so diversified as to cover the vast field of phases of life essential to the full-orbed man. Following such a plan, the curriculum in this field will be a rich program of vital experiences, satisfying in itself as experience, and yet a major means to the achievement of most of the abilities, attitudes, interests, appreciations, and the like which a man should have.¹

Men and women are educated for fifty years of responsible adult life; not for the four years of relatively irresponsible college life. Literature is to educate for life. Reading habits are to be formed in ways and under conditions in which they are expected later to function.²

Do we not turn rather a deaf ear to our college training after we get out into the work-a-day world? It would seem so, after reviewing the reports of our graduates. If our tastes are elevated and we have been taught to appreciate

1--Babbit -- How to Make a Curriculum, pp.76-80.

2--Same, pp.85.

good literature, and to interpret description and technique, how can we justify the place of Harold Bell Wright at the head of the list of authors most often read by our alumni? And how can we account for the almost total obscurity of William Shakespeare, of whom we were taught so much in high school and college? Does such lack of popularity among college graduates speak for the success of the present method of teaching literature? Is it to the credit of our institutions that Micheal Arlen, Hall Cane, Thomas Dixon, Fannie Hurst, Elinor Glynn, and Mary Roberts Rinehart are all read as often as William Shakespeare and more often than Oliver Goldsmith or Ralph Waldo Emerson?¹ If so, then surely the method is wrong, for it would seem that to train students in English literature only serves to make them closer adherents to our American authors.

Our graduates have signified their preference for American literature over the English authors. How much has their training in English literature helped them in selecting their authors of contemporary literature -- the literature they read almost exclusively? Very little, if any, if we can believe the reports of these alumni. How, then, can we justify one or two years of required work in English literature for every student who hopes to graduate? For more profitable, it seems to me, would be a course in contemporary American literature.

1--Table VI.

The instructor, in giving a course in American literature, would have an advantage in having at his disposal a host of material, good, bad, and indifferent, from which to choose. He would find in his classes a material interest which should make the course the more pleasant and profitable. But above all else, he would have the opportunity of acquainting the students with the writers of novels, of romance and fiction so that they might have chosen before graduation some good American authors, whose books they would really enjoy and from whom they would derive the benefits that good literature can give. Under the present system, I believe many students leave school absolutely ignorant of the contemporary literary artists, and for that reason are forced to pick at random from the bulk of offerings thrown on the market. Little wonder, then, that they fall for the cheap artists; titles and book covers can be made alluring, and I wonder how many of us select our books in many instances solely on such criteria? When one may go four or five years to a university and never once hear mentioned in the class room the names of our American writers, then something is wrong.

It is time we began to appreciate our own art and look for the good in it. Every graduate of an American university should have at least a speaking acquaintance with the works of American writers, he should know who some of the good writers are and what they write. There is no literature more American than our own. Nowhere will we find

American life, temperament, society, habits, customs, traits and characteristics more frankly and openly pictured than in our own literature, fiction, novels, and romances. Our universities are for the training of Americans; let them see to it, then, that the future Americans know and understand America. The Department of English can do its share in requiring that students know American authors, their works, and read them.

In the list of authors the graduates read most, it will be seen that the training in English literature has not developed for them a desire to read the best literature. Instead, they read the "best sellers." It may be that through generations of training, a taste for English literature may be developed, but the results to date seem most discouraging.

Why require English literature of every student whether he be interested or not? The answer of the Department is: "To develop an appreciation for good literature, to teach students to interpret technique and description, and to acquaint the students with the authors.

From all indications the student's appreciation of "good literature" is not materially bettered; his interpretation of technique and description seems to be of the works of the contemporary authors, while it seems that his acquaintance with the authors is but a passing acquaintance.

Would it not be better to leave the courses in English literature open to those who manifest an interest in them, and seek among our own American authors for literature to require all to take?

American universities should, first of all, be training Americans. In the literature of American authors is to be found the true spirit and life of America. In no other literature can one find the true appreciation of our country and our people. Surely among our authors can be found many whose works are worthy of study by our students. We are not striving, it seems, to create an interest in American art, or an appreciation of our own geniuses with the same zeal that we would have students appreciate the art and genius of foreigners.

But Americans are Americans, and regardless of training they turn to their own authors for their reading. It would be far better for these graduates to have some knowledge of the American authors and their works so that they might know the contemporary writers, at least, before leaving the University.

In conclusion, these suggestions are made:

1. Twenty per cent of our graduates write an occasional article for publication; none write for a living.
 - (a) General training of the whole group for the needs of the few is undesirable.

2. There is a definite need for training of all students in the art of writing business and personal letters.
3. There is almost a universal demand for public speaking.
 - (a) More students should be taking such training.
4. A course in American literature should be required.
 - (a) A study of the contemporary authors and their works should receive consideration.

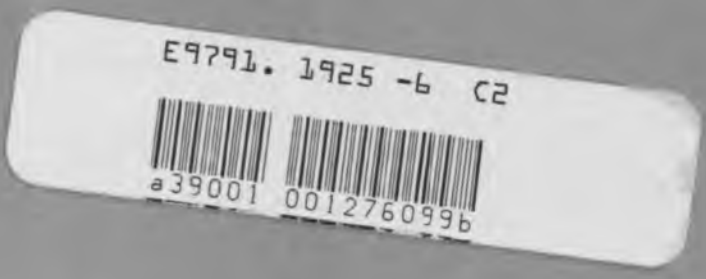
PART FOUR

APPENDIX.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

- 1 -- Questionnaires sent to 500 Arizona University Graduates.
- 2 -- Bookman: 56, 40, 60.
- 3 -- Babbit: How to Make a Curriculum.

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