

CHAPTER 26

FEATURE ARTICLE BEGINNINGS AND TITLES

WHEN a manuscript reader or an editor picks up an article submitted for consideration he is certain to be influenced to some extent by its outward appearance. That may not be altogether fair, but that's the way it is. The manuscript may have merit within, but if it is unattractive without, it suffers a disadvantage which sometimes weighs heavily against it. Editors are human and are unconsciously influenced by externals to favor or disfavor the manuscripts that come to their desks.

Successful writers, known as such to an editor, may get by with something less than a manuscript that makes a good appearance, but successful writers take no chances; they dress up their articles so that they make a good impression at first glance.

What are these external factors that help to set up an attitude of favor or dissatisfaction?

They are, briefly, the physical appearance of the manuscript, its title, its beginning paragraph or paragraphs. The first of these will be considered in a later chapter, but here we will consider the matter of feature article beginnings and titles.

What quality in a manuscript's beginning will make a favorable impression on an editor and the reading public?

Just one—it must be interesting. That is an old, much worn word, but there is no other way to describe what it takes to give the opening paragraph or paragraphs an appeal.

There are two ways by which you may make the beginning interesting:

1. By putting interesting material into it.
 2. By making it interesting by the manner in which you write it.
- The well-written article usually employs both ways.

Of the first, more need not be said than that it is inseparably connected with the choice of a subject. If you try to write on a

subject which is not inherently interesting to readers of the publication for whom you intend your article, you are seriously handicapped before you write a single word. It is sometimes possible to take an unpromising subject and "put it across" by sheer skill in writing, but not one writer in many can do it.

Consider for a moment two beginnings to a story called "Fit for a Queen—Worth a King's Ransom." The first of these beginnings is such a beginning as many amateurs put upon their stories. The other is taken from a well-known magazine. The articles tell the story of the scarcity of chinchilla and the successful effort to start a chinchilla farm in California.

Chinchilla, the rarest of furs, may, in a few years, become much more plentiful. For the little fur-bearing rodent—the chinchilla, a native of the South American Andes—is being raised on chinchilla farms in California, through the efforts of the late M. F. Chapman, who first imported live chinchillas and succeeded in breeding them.



Last winter, being momentarily in funds and wishing to give my wife a fur coat, I strolled into a furrier's on Fifth Avenue, New York. I told the doorman: "I wish to look at a chinchilla coat."

"Yes, sir."

He bowed and disappeared, but looked at me so oddly I thought there must be something wrong with my appearance. Checking up furtively in a mirror, I found my apparel in order, and then reflected that after all I probably wasn't this store's type. But when a suave salesman heard my brief announcement, and gave me the same odd stare, I began to wonder what this was about, anyway.

"Well," he said, catching himself quickly, "we don't have a chinchilla coat in stock at the moment; you see there's some little difficulty about getting the skins. But I could show you a chinchilla cape?"

"I had thought about a coat."

"Ah—would you step back?" the salesman inquired. "I could show you the cape, and then perhaps I could find out what could be done about a coat."

So we stepped back, and took seats in an alcove, and presently a model appeared, wearing the cape. I suppose you know what chinchilla looks like: the luminous, pearl-gray of the center of the skin; the rich, warm white of the edge, breaking into gray at each movement of the wearer; its depth, beauty and overwhelming voluptuousness. I knew as soon as I set eyes on it that I was looking at one of the great furs of the world. But I no sooner knew this than a certain discomfort began to creep in on me. . . .

I turned to the salesman. "And how much is the cape?"

"Twelve thousand dollars."

I drop a time curtain here, to denote the lapse of a painful ten seconds, and pick up at the point where we were all laughing merrily, ha-ha-ha, and I was saying no wonder my wife liked chinchilla and the salesman was saying as a matter of fact it suited them just as well to keep the cape in stock right now. . . .

So then we talked about chinchilla in general, and I asked the price of a chinchilla coat, assuming it were possible to get the skins.

"Sixty thousand dollars," said the salesman.

"Bid or asked?"

"Both."

"You mean, if you had a chinchilla coat just now, you could actually find somebody willing to pay you sixty thousand dollars for it?"

"My dear fellow, I could sell it, spot cash at that price, in one minute flat, simply by picking up that telephone."

"What makes it so expensive?"

"Partly the beauty of the fur, partly the demand for it among people able to pay any price for what they want, and partly the scarcity of the skins. The chinchilla is a small Andean animal that has been hunted so much, trapped so much, and protected so little that it is almost extinct. For these reasons, chinchilla has become a fur that makes Russian sable seem cheap. I assure you that this little cape represents our best effort in collecting skins, over a considerable period of time, and that it would be impossible, in New York City today, to assemble a much larger garment."

"It's a wonder that somebody wouldn't have the bright idea of raising these animals in captivity, the way they've done with silver foxes."

"Somebody has had that bright idea. It's being tried, I believe, somewhere out in California, though I don't know with what success."

After this harrowing experience, you may realize that I was rather vividly aware of the chinchilla, and likely, on my return to California, to try and find out more about it. So, in fact, I did. I tracked the chinchilla to the farm, just outside Los Angeles, where it is being raised; I invaded its cabinetmade, scientifically-insulated lair; I made its acquaintance and fell for it even harder than I had fallen for its fur.

The first contrast between these two beginnings is probably the one that came to you *before* you read them: that one is several times as long as the other. But this is a superficial difference. A feature article beginning should normally be just as long as is necessary to get the story away most effectively and interestingly. There isn't much question which of the two beginnings quoted here is more interesting. And the reasons—at least some of them—are that the longer beginning is dramatic, emphasizes the unusual,

contains human interest, has touches of humor—in short, creates a much richer and more vital atmosphere than the other.

Take another set of examples:

The housewife can save a great deal of time and worry over her cooking problem if she will follow the plan of frequently cooking two dishes for successive meals from the same basic material.



If I were asked to name just one thing that had made meal getting come easy to me, I should without hesitation say: It was learning the gentle art of cooking once and eating twice. By which I do not mean fiddling around with warmed-over stuff concocted of odds and ends—dear, no! I mean two entirely distinctive dishes developed out of a once-cooked basic material.

Here again the one beginning is more interesting than the other. We shall see as we go further some of the reasons for this discrepancy.

Functions of a good beginning: The impression should not be created by anything that is said about the feature article beginning that it is a separate entity from the story proper, that it is a problem aloof from the general problem of the writing of the feature article. On the other hand, the very first requisite of a good beginning is that it shall put the story under way. The beginning, in other words, must be an integral part of the story. It is just as illogical, just as great a waste of time, to write a beginning which is not an integral part of the story as it would be, say, for a salesman to try to sell stock in a company by talking about the weather. This may be a very interesting subject, even more interesting than the stock, and the salesman may know a great deal about it, but a discussion of it will not advance his business a jot. If you are going to write about cooking once and eating twice, that idea must be introduced very soon in the beginning of the story.

A second thing the beginning must do: It must set the limits of the story, tell the reader with some exactitude just what the scope of the story is. Every story is part of another, a bigger story. You are going to write about tractors. You may write about

tractors from the point of view of the experience of Horace Webber, a farmer; or you may write about them from the point of view of Adams County; or of a state; or of the United States; or of the world. Each of these possibilities represents a certain field with specific boundaries. Which one of these stories you are writing—the scope, in other words, of your article—must be made clear to the reader very soon in the beginning, for otherwise you will leave him groping without a chart of the territory that you are to describe, and he may get tired of such blind wandering.

Again, the feature article beginning must give some hint of the central idea which you have in mind especially to drive home by means of the article. This does not mean, of course, that the central idea must be stated explicitly as it is stated, for instance, in the question of a debate. So bald an exposition of the main theme of the article would usually be unattractive and defeat its own end—one doesn't as a rule read debates either for pleasure or instruction. But your task is, nevertheless, to present a central idea—just that—to get it across, to inform or convince your readers concerning it, or to entertain them with your handling of it. It is necessary then that this central idea should be foreshadowed very early in order that you may have a foundation upon which to build. Consider the following beginning:

Open up one of your latest school geographies and you will find therein a crop-production map of the United States showing a Corn Belt, a Wheat Belt and a Cotton Belt. There is no mention made of a Rice Belt, but some day it will also be included, and it will appear on the map as a narrow strip of land about sixty miles wide, extending from the Colorado River in Texas across Louisiana to the Mississippi River, a distance of about 500 miles.

What is this story to be about? It takes no great discernment to answer. The writer has taken care of that: He has informed his readers, by implication, what the central idea of his story is to be, and with this basis set he can go ahead without difficulty.

One further thing the good beginning should do: It should set the "tone," the atmosphere, of the article. By "atmosphere" is not meant the locale of the story, but rather the spirit with which the author approaches the writing of the story and the spirit which he wishes to evoke in his readers. There is a decided difference

between, let us say, the atmosphere of humor and the atmosphere of inspiration.

If you are going to write a humorous article you will not employ the same tone you would employ if you had in mind an article which would inspire and uplift your readers or give them detailed information on how to operate a piece of mechanical equipment. Successfully to "put across" a humorous article you must get your reader into a mood for humor just as soon as possible.

To inspire your reader you must get him as soon as possible into a state of mind which is receptive of inspiration. If an article is to carry information, make that plain, so that a reader looking for entertainment or soul uplift can pass it by.

In other words, the beginning must hold out a warning to the reader as to the posture of mind into which he must compose himself in order to get the most out of the story. This tone or atmosphere is indicated by the choice of incidents and the choice of words. The incidents and the words which introduce a humorous article must be humorous; the incidents and words which introduce an inspirational article must be inspirational.

Below is the lead of an article which had just recently been published when the first edition of this text was written. While the story itself is now history rather than news, it can still serve to illustrate a successful way for beginning a farm feature article that was to set forth a regional news event of considerable proportions:

On an afternoon in late September, just as the sun was casting half-mile shadows from behind a distant shelter belt, I watched a tenant farmer on a 640-acre farm in the Red River Valley of North Dakota drive a reaper around a seventy-acre field of sweet clover that he was cutting for seed.

As he stopped at the corner where I waited, to unhitch and call it a day, I introduced myself and stated my mission. A man past middle age, he was, hair touched with gray and face brown and wrinkled.

He listened to me, and as I talked a twinkle kept playing around his eyes. I paused for answer.

First, he tinkered with a loosened bolt. Next, he relit his cob pipe and blew a cloud of smoke into the clear Dakota air without saying a word.

Then his face broke out into a broad smile.

That smile was the miracle of North Dakota.

For it was as typical as anything I saw in 3,000 miles or more of travel throughout the Northwest in September and October, of a change that came over the states of Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota during the past summer and early fall.

It was symbolical of the miraculous something that almost overnight turned the spirit of the people in this vast inland empire from the bottomless pit of discouragement and pessimism engendered throughout four or five long, lean, bitter years, onto the upland and mountain top of optimism and hope.

You will note how it accomplishes all four of the things that we have specified:

1. It is a part of the story—so intimately a part that, although the rest of the story is not reproduced here, one knows what it will be about.
2. It sets the limits of the story, both geographically and as to subject matter.
3. It points directly at the central idea of the story, which we are able to phrase—(something like this: How Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota agriculture has got back on its feet)—without reading beyond the beginning.
4. The tone of the beginning—although this cannot be so well ascertained without reading the article—is in harmony with the material of the story.

And this beginning has other virtues. It is so definite and concrete that the reader can *see* the farmer and his smile. In turn, this farmer and his smile are used as symbols of the central theme of the article.

It has a mild but effective injection of human interest. The use of the first person introduces direct testimony as to the conditions under discussion.

The phrasing is original. In a fraction of a sentence—"the sun was casting half-mile shadows from behind a distant shelterbelt"—a vivid picture is presented of the prairie landscape. The unconventional construction of the sentence, "A man past middle age, he was, hair touched with gray and a face brown and wrinkled," is rugged and original.

The short paragraphs at the climax of the beginning give a tenseness to the narrative and by their very physical appearance heighten the effect.

Finally the epigram, "That smile was the miracle of North Dakota," completely catches attention, while at the same time it puts into concrete form the essence of the story.

In the *Saturday Evening Post* of November 15, 1941, was a story by Elsie McCormick, entitled "Death in a Hard Shell," that was unusually vivid and effective, both in its lead and throughout its succeeding paragraphs. It was a technical article in its essence, from the field of medicine and entomology, yet filled with both mystery and dramatic facts. It was told simply, plainly, and without verbal pyrotechnics. Written by an experienced newspaper woman, it is a model of reporting and writing of scientific material for the general reader. The story opens thus:

Down the length of a seventy-five-mile valley in Montana runs a river of mystery, though to the passer-by it hardly looks the part. It is an orthodox little mountain river, with shrubs and trees lining its banks and stony shoals reaching out into the narrow stream. On the east side of the valley rise the sparsely wooded hills of the Sapphire Range; on the west, the jagged Bitterroot Mountains. The river is shallow enough, in many places, for a child to wade across.

A hundred years ago Indians believed that the western side of this river and especially the mountain canyons were inhabited by evil spirits. When white settlers came they observed that, although dwellers on the east side were immune, those who built their houses on the west ran the danger of falling victims to a strange illness.

It began with chills, an aching head, and painful joints and muscles; then a raging fever developed, and a red rash flamed out on chest, back, arms and legs. Rocky Mountain spotted fever was the name that was given to this terrifying and usually fatal sickness.

When it was discovered that the disease was the result of a bite from an infected hard-shelled tick of the variety *Dermacentor andersoni*, the mystery merely became deeper.

On both sides of the river one finds the same vegetation, the same animals and the same ticks. Human beings go back and forth; cattle are driven from one side to the other; wild animals wade the shallow river. Yet this stream seems to prevent the passage of the sickness as effectively as if it were the Atlantic Ocean.

This mystery has never been solved, despite the efforts of brilliant and persevering scientists. In 1922, Dr. Roscoe R. Spencer, of the United States Public Health Service, stated: "One of the most hopeful signs that I know is the fact that the east side of the Bitterroot Valley seems to be free from the disease, though the same conditions prevail as on the west side. This would seem to indicate that Nature has devised an immunity. Once we have established what this is, we will be well on the road to success."

Exasperated research men admit that they still do not know why the ticks are harmless on one side of the stream and likely to be virulently infected on the other. In the words of a discouraged young laboratory worker, "It's enough to drive a man nuts."

But, in spite of the sickness, the beautiful Bitterroot Valley attracted settlers. On the safe and fertile east side, dairy farms, truck gardens and cherry orchards began to flourish. Here, over fifty years ago, Marcus Daly, the copper king, established a great horse farm which produced many champions of the American track.

The more rugged west side also drew settlers—men and women who laughed at the stories of an illness bounded by a narrow river. Though many of them lived cheerfully to a ripe old age, there were others who did not laugh long.

A child who fell victim to the Bitterroot type of spotted fever, known generally as the "hot strain," had one chance in two to get well; an adult's chance was less than one in five. Patients who were over sixty years of age faced a hundred-per-cent certainty of death.

The death rate for the valley is much lower now and the cases fewer, but the fight against spotted fever, there and elsewhere in the country, has been an extremely costly business. No infection has a more impressive list of laboratory martyrs, nine research workers having lost their lives in the fight against the disease. Before the development of the vaccine, the mortality rate for laboratory-acquired cases was exactly 100 per cent.

Research work on spotted fever is now centered in the million-dollar Rocky Mountain Laboratory, maintained by the United States Public Health Service and located in Hamilton, on the east side of the Bitterroot Valley. Here Dr. Ralph R. Parker, a pioneer in spotted-fever research, directs a staff of 114 men and women. His way of peering out at the world suggests gentle bewilderment. This expression is deceptive. Under his easygoing manner lies the fortitude that has helped him face, almost every day for twenty-five years, the risk of infection and possible death, and has kept the dangerous work going despite the loss of one staff member after another.

Probably his laboratory is the only plant in the world constructed with a special eye on the housing and thwarting of ticks. On the third floor. . .

Making the lead interesting: The beginning is so important that one feature writer has advised that, if necessary, as much time should be put upon the beginning as upon all of the rest of the story. It should be written over and over until it reaches out to the reader, grasps his interest, and pulls him down into the heart of the story.

But by what methods can one accomplish this end? How can one make a beginning interesting and at the same time make it

meet the requirements that we have already discussed? There are several answers. One is: Make the beginning specific, make it create in the reader's mind a picture—of a place, of people, of an incident. To accomplish this, one may make his beginning out of:

1. A description, of people, places, animals.
2. An incident, either real or imaginary.
3. An anecdote.
4. An historical instance.
5. A bit of conversation.

Of these, all but the first are not only specific but also narrative. They have life, action, movement, drama, and these factors heighten immensely the interest value. The following beginnings, as well as the one analyzed above, illustrate these points:

About seven years ago a German farmer by the name of John Kasmeier made his appearance in Pottawatomie County, Okla., bought a forty-acre tract of sandy upland and announced his intention of making his home there. When he further declared that he would make a living for himself and his family on the farm he had purchased there was a great deal of talk as to whether or not the man was in his right mind.

"The idea!" said one neighbor to another; "I wonder if he really thinks he can support that family of his on forty acres of land when it is all the rest of us can do to support ours on 160 acres. He will be thrown on the county for support."



"Mom," yelled Bobby, waving a green card. "Look what Teacher gave me."

Mother was all pleased interest. "Well, now, just what is it?"

"I got weighed in school," explained Bobby, with some pride, "and she said I was seven percent underweight—and it's because I don't get enough to eat."

"She said *that!*" Mother's face was very red. "I'll thank her, who never had a chick nor child, to tell me *I'm* starving my children! Why, every member of my family is thin as rails and you take after them. The idea! You can just go back and tell her whenever she's good and hungry she can come over to my house to get filled up."



Earthquakes are earth-surface disasters, for most of us. They wreck cities, set off avalanches, start tidal waves, all where we can see them—and perhaps suffer from them.

But not all earthquakes are surface affairs. Many of them are of the "deep

focus" variety, where the real center of the disturbance is scores or even hundreds of miles below the outer rind of the earth's crust.



Sodden curtains of rain lashed our coupe and blacked out all surroundings as we swished into Hattiesburg, Miss., one night this summer—and smack past a boulevard stop sign!

A steady red light began to glow through its misty halo a block beyond. As we stopped, I became aware of a slickered policeman sloshing toward us.

"Now we get it!" I muttered darkly to my wife. "He saw us run through that blinker."

The officer looked at our license plates, then tapped on the door. I lowered the glass. "So you're from out of the state," he observed. I nodded glumly.

Fumbling in his garments, he produced the thoroughly official-looking tag reproduced on this page.

Surprise and relief left me witless. The cop grinned and stepped back. "Watch the red lights," he counseled significantly. "They're mighty hard to see in all this rain. Go right ahead."

But we didn't go ahead. Normally we would have pounded along to a larger city. Because of that friendly gesture we stopped a day in Hattiesburg, finding it fully as hospitable as the introduction promised. In revenue to Hattiesburg's business establishments our visit meant less than \$25. That doesn't seem like much until you realize we are only units of a great and growing army.

With travel in America stimulated by Europe's *Visitors Not Welcome* sign, 60,000,000 of us—almost half our total population—are getting acquainted with our highways this year. We are traveling in 25,000,000 automobiles, enough to move our entire citizenry at once.

And we are spending as we go.—(*American Magazine*)



Twenty people were seated around the table in the county agent's office. They were engaged in a serious discussion of the agriculture of that county. Included as part of the agriculture of the county was not only the condition of the land, its fertility, its erosion, its drainage, but the level of living in the community, the health of the people, the condition of buildings and all the other things that go to make up rural life.

Instance after instance was related of the way the operation of the land and its present condition affected the ability to produce economically and of the way it affected the health and well-being of the people who live upon it.

One of the most startling instances related was that of a member of the . . . —(*Ohio Farmer*)



"Our government have keep on you the scrupulous eye." Both little men bowed and smiled. "Our government realize great vastness soybean will be in

world trade after war that is to come soon. You will please to show us records all experiments you have made."

It was a fall afternoon in 1936. The elm shadows were long across the campus of the University of Illinois. Dr. W. L. Burlison, chin deep in the complexities of the new schedule on Agronomy, looked up at the two Japanese officers standing beside his desk. They bowed again and showed their credentials. They made polite, pop-valve noises while they fingered the round snouts of the cameras in their coat pockets.

They admitted that Japan was worried about the potentialities of the Illini, the Chief, the Giant Green, the Funk Special and many another of the 660 varieties of soybeans that American scientists have developed during the past twenty years. They asked cautiously, but eagerly, about the goings-on in the two big rooms of the U. S. Soybean Laboratory at the other end of the hall where thirty young men punched and stewed the 19% of oil and the 40% of protein in the soybean into new industrial shapes even then threatening the dominance of the great Manchurian acreages just conquered by Nippon's army.

Dr. Burlison gave them little satisfaction. But this year they know the answers. —(*Farm Journal and Farmer's Wife*)



During the summer of 1914, just prior to the opening of that war in Europe, which, if memory serves me right, was to end all wars, the Old Chief had placed upon his broad shoulders the reorganization, care and management of two additional plants situated in nearby towns. These plants, together with their factories, had been acquired (or wished-on) the good firm that we worked for, by means and virtue of a control-merger, merger purchase or some other form of magic bookkeeping, whereby we handled production costs.

Both plants were approximately 300 hp and in each case the men who . . . —(*Power*)



Again, if one can put into his beginning a statement which is startling, striking, arresting, either through what it says or the way it is said, he will be able to reach out from the printed page into the center of the reader's consciousness. Often several such statements may be piled one upon another in the beginning. Such striking statements may take the form of:

1. Statistical material of startling dimensions.
2. Figures of speech.
3. Epigrams.
4. Analogies.
5. Quotations or paraphrases.

The following illustrations should be examined carefully for their employment of these devices:

White, Adrian of Hollywood says, brings men to women's feet. White, Paul Gallico says, makes you look like a trained nurse. White, Hindus say, purifies the soul. White, scientists say, reflects the sun's rays and, ergo, is a great insulator. (Put a white and a black cloth over ice in the sun and see how much more slowly the ice under the white cloth melts.) And white, say international fashion authorities, may not be news, but the new ways of wearing it this summer give it more character than any other color.



"Biddie doesn't live here any more!" Thousands of sad, serious poultrymen of the Midwest have been chanting that dirge as mysterious death losses of from fifteen to fifty percent mowed down the egg producers in their farm flocks. This in spite of improvements in the housing, feeds and management of growing stock.



A yearly national farm fire loss of \$100,000,000 is a pretty stout sum, and, unless you are better acquainted with this world's goods than I, that much money is just a lot of ciphers. I can't comprehend it, but I *can* understand that the huge total is the basis for my stock company's five-year building insurance rate of \$31 per thousand of valuation, and the reason why our mutual insurance company daren't give me coverage for more than two-thirds of the value of my place.

Just how much value to put upon shelter from Midwestern winds has been the object of investigation among 340 farmers in twenty-six Nebraska counties—how much in dollars and cents, that is, for they are practical and thrifty men. At least \$326 annual saving per farm was their answer.



A farmer operating several hundred acres got \$613.85 worth of cabbages from one acre at a cost of \$100.45, a net profit of \$513.40.

A farmer raised \$548 worth of cabbages and \$106.50 worth of sorghum sirup from the same acre in the same year, a total return of \$654.50.

A farmer, upon a fifty-acre field, in one year, raised 200 bushels of potatoes, 40 bushels of corn and 25 bushels of peanuts on each acre, the total value of the yield being not less than \$250 an acre.

A man who farms extensively grows $446\frac{3}{4}$ bushels of corn on two and three-fourths acres; and again 445.2 bushels of corn on two and two-thirds acres.

A farmer had a field that yielded 300 bushels of potatoes to the acre, worth at least \$225, and the same year also yielded 30 bushels of corn to the acre, worth \$22.50; 50 bushels of Spanish peanuts to the acre, worth \$37.50; and turnips and rutabagas for winter feed, worth \$25; making a total of \$310 to the acre for the entire field.

The same man did all these and is doing them now. He is not doing them as experiments, though they are in the nature of experiments, but as part of his regular farming operations. He is doing them upon cut-over upland in Bradley County, in Southcentral Arkansas. He is doing them in a section that is supposed to have a climate that enervates, that very quickly makes plants as well as people lazy. And he is not a man from another section with a more bracing climate and supposedly with more energy. He is J. W. Richardson, born in Arkansas.



Ganameda, or Hebe, as she is better known, was the youngest daughter of Zeus and Juno. According to the mythology of the Greeks she was the goddess of youth and cup-bearer to the gods. She has been celebrated in song and poetry as the bearer of the wine cup at the festal board and the personification of the graces of youth. But the Ganameda of this story is a grade Jersey cow. (Ganymede, or Ganameda, according to Bullfinch's "Age of Fable," was a Trojan boy, successor to Hebe, as cup-bearer to the gods.)



A hungry Indian catches a beaver and takes the skin to the dealer to exchange for supplies. If no other Indian appears that morning he will probably realize the value of his goods; but if ten trapper Indians appear simultaneously the price of pelts will notably shrink, not because the fur is less valuable but because of the dealer's advantage.

The farmer raises his crops and his animals and sends them to market upon exactly the same plan—that is to say, he has no advance information as to what others are doing, as to what will be the demand for his goods or as to the probable reward of his labor and investments. This is not business; it is barter, the foundation of which is faith, hope and hazard. This fact of itself, more than all other influences combined, tends to hold farming back among the primitive industries; nor will it emerge into a real business until it manages in some way, at least in certain particulars, to pass the barter stage.



This little apple went to market,
This little apple stayed home,
This little apple went with the culls,
This little apple rotted down,
The last little apple cried: "Oh, please use better market-
ing methods on me."

Having come through a season bespattered with five separate sprays, having attained a bright red color and size above the average, Red Apple had just cause to be proud of itself as it hung on the tree. More justifiedly this apple could be proud, for it was grown on a farm known as one of the most progressive

in the community. Farmer Jones was in constant touch with authorities on fruit growing and followed the best methods of getting larger crops.

Farmer Jones happened to be short of help last year so he betook himself into the orchard with a picking sack round his neck. Careful placing of the ladder and handling of the fruit were his end, but not his practice. Red Apple was in the way. Red Apple was knocked from the tree. The ground was disked and soft, so, brushing the dust from Red Apple, Farmer Jones put it with the rest. The picking sack was bumped against the ladder, but Farmer Jones could see no hurt.

Red Apple came to the sorting table.

"Sound as a berry," mentioned a sorter, for he couldn't see the crushed cells, under the skin.

"A peach," said the man on the grader as Red Apple fell into the bin with others of its size.

"I don't see why the Old Man doesn't grade his fruit a little closer," said the experienced packer who had been brought to the orchard at high wage. "There is a lot of stuff here that shouldn't go in. No wonder the Old Man gets lower prices for his stuff." This was said as he handled over Red Apple and a few more like it. "These bruises are the thing that spoils a package of fruit."



A summary beginning, not necessarily cast in the form of a news summary lead, may be an effective way to begin a story. Such a beginning may summarize:

1. Results of conditions or movements with which the story is to deal.
2. Causes of conditions or movements which the story is to trace.
3. Predictions as to future results of conditions or movements to be described in the story.

Five years of cow testing on the B. R. Lewis farm in Carroll County, Ill., have increased the annual production of his grade and purebred Holstein herd from 150 to 325 pounds of butterfat. Mr. Lewis' herd of twelve cows averaged 325 pounds of butterfat last year, with their main feeds alfalfa and silage and without any grain or mill feeds. The best cow produced 450 pounds of butterfat.

This increase in production is due to the York-Fairhaven cow-testing association, in finding out the low producers and selling them and also to better methods of feeding and care. One year three cows were sold because they did not produce enough to pay for their feed and care. Several other cows were sold at other times. A purebred bull, whose dam has a seven-day record of nineteen pounds butterfat at three years old, heads the herd.

Your face tells time—not in hours—but in years. Comes the fateful day when we first see, reflected in the mirror, the lines around the mouth, the eyes, and, yes, that frown that won't go away. They are the lines that betray age—and careless grooming.



This article is a chronological report of improvements to a steam power plant that started with an investment of \$500 for combustion instruments and ended with the installation of a top-pressure plant costing \$53,785.



This is the story of genuine mahogany and how it has grown and been utilized for generations under another name in the country which is the world's largest consumer of this wood. It is the story of mahogany in the United States.



"The best Percherons of the future—possibly within ten years—will come from the small farms."

I pricked up my ears at this, for I was sitting at the time in the parlor of a beautiful home on what is decidedly not a small farm—one doesn't call 1,600 acres "small" in Tazewell County, Ill. A. L. Robison & Sons are not small farmers. They have been importing and breeding Percherons for years. They have a large herd of purebred Shorthorns. They raise sizable crops of corn and oats.



A generalized fact lead is one that makes a general statement—and runs the danger of being little more than a platitude. This lead is usually a poor type to use, since, from the very fact that it is general, it lacks the qualities which arouse interest. Examination of hundreds of leads has shown this to be the method of beginning most used by college professors, technical men, farmers, and beginners. A professional writer will use the type about once a year. Both of the following beginnings might better have been handled in some other form:

Beef production in the Corn Belt, like most of our farming business, has been undergoing wide changes in the last few years. It still has its ups and downs, its problems and its worries, but the turn is ever toward a more stable business. Until recently the beef making business has been largely the feeding of cattle grown on cheap land. That has reached its limit. The amount of cheap land will diminish. Fifty years ago they were raising cheap steers here to be sent east to be fed. There is lots of country better adapted to growing feeder cattle than anything else, so there will always be a fair supply of feeders. It is not

a business, however, for every man. It requires no small skill, for the successful man not only must be able to feed right but he must buy and sell right.



Many of the general farmers of northern Ohio secure a part of their income from the sale of butter which is made from the milk produced by a few cows. Their small dairies do not furnish enough milk to make it economically profitable to send it to the cities as whole milk. Much of their butter is taken to the local country grocery and traded for groceries or sold for cash.



The novice is especially prone to use two other devices to bring the beginning into close contact with the reader: questions and direct address. Both of these methods can be used effectively, but they have their dangers, the greatest of which are that they are too obvious and too easy.

A story which starts, "Do you know that," or "Have you ever thought of," employing both a question and direct address, is apt to be the work of a lazy man. It is lazy because it is trite and because the transition from the question to the answer—which is the story—is too obvious. Good question and direct address beginnings can be written, as the following illustrations will show, but the beginner should be sure, before he employs it, that this type of beginning is best suited to his purpose.

What is it all the world is looking for? Why do we love fairy-tales when we are seven, tragedy at seventeen, realism at twenty-five, romance when we are forty, dreams when we are ninety?

Escape!

To the child of seven, the fairy-tale is a spinning, many-hued pair of wings to carry him out of this uncomfortable world into one more like his expectations. To the old man of ninety, dreams are the misty chariot that he slips gratefully into, to escape from a self grown too full of effort, too empty of beauty.

And all the way along, in between, we are trying to escape. From our dull or driven lives, from somebody, something, just a little hour of escape.

Into New York every day there pours a stream of people from all over the country. They come for many things, but one thing is common to them all, the belief that here they will find a little escape. To them this is the City of Escape. And the first pair of wings they reach for is the theater, that country that lies "east of the sun and west of the moon," the Land of Pretend.

For a long time the present writer has been watching the kind of time the seekers after escape have at the theater. It has been found that there are many

obstacles between the seeker and his happiness. He sets out confidently, in spite of the exorbitant price he has paid for his pair of wings at the hotel desk or the ticket agencies. But he rarely escapes. He has been tripped up by that gay, tricky back yard, Broadway.



Look at your feet—everyone else does! Then look in the mirror to see what they're doing to the rest of you. Is your face tired and drawn, muscles tense, mouth drooping? Do you slouch? Legs ache?

If your answer is "yes," you've started your quest for beauty at the wrong end. All the bleaches and creams in the world go for nothing if just one small corn decides to assert itself. If our feet hurt, we hurt all over—what's worse, we show it! When we handicap our feet with shoes that are too short, poorly shaped, or extremely high-heeled, we're punishing our whole bodies and making drudgery out of homemaking.



What is a college education worth to the young man entering business? How does the university graduate stack up against the self-trained man in the struggle for success and prosperity? At what value does a big employer appraise the A. B. or B. S. degree of a youth coming to him for a job?

These questions hit home with peculiar force today, as our halls of higher learning are emerging from the shadow of the depression and preparing for the largest enrollments in their history.



Have you got to the point where the morning coffee has lost its old-time flavor and aroma, where little worries annoy you unbelievably, and all your friends seem to be getting a bit "queer"? If so, don't be alarmed, for your case is very easy to diagnose. You are merely "roof ridden." What you need is a simple tonic that can be found only in the great outdoors. So pack up your troubles, real and imaginary, and go camping for a few days.



The feature story title: Unlike the writer of the news story, who does not usually put a heading on what he writes, the author of the feature article is customarily responsible for the title to his story. Only a second of reflection is necessary to see that this is a very important part of his task. The title is the first thing in the manuscript that strikes the eyes of editor and reader. If it is effective and intriguing, they are apt to investigate the story; if it is dull, uninteresting, commonplace, they are apt to turn the page.

The discussion of this topic also applies to the shorter news-experience and information story.

Different magazines use different kinds of headings. They vary as to length, style, and use of subtitles. It is important, therefore, before writing the title to your story, to study the titles in the magazine to which you intend to send your manuscript. It is also often well to give your story several alternative titles, from which the editor can pick the one that he likes best.

There is only one chief qualification of the material that should go into the title—it must give the reader as clear an idea as possible of the central theme of the article. But when it comes to the words that may be employed, the variety and interest of phrasing that may be given the title, the possibilities are unlimited.

As with the beginning, the title must be appropriate in tone to the nature of the story. An article that is straightforward and practical will want a straightforward, practical title, while a story that is unusual or fanciful should have a title harmonizing with these characteristics. Below are a few suggestions for making titles interesting:

1. The title should have in it the elements of a full sentence, although the verb may sometimes, as in the newspaper heading, be understood. In other words, avoid what are known as label titles. The following:

They Found Trees a Good Investment
is better than:

Trees For the Farm.

2. Titles for personal experience stories should usually, though not necessarily, have in them the first person pronoun, either expressed or implied:

Everybody's Going But Me.

I Tuck My Garden To Bed.

We Have a Fifty-Foot Lot.

Our Family Likes Frozen Foods.

Let's Pull Up Our Socks.

My Best Cake Recipe.

What Soybeans Have Done For My Farm.

3. Titles for third-person experience stories should usually have

in them the name of the person or thing concerned or the third-person pronoun:

That's Where Their Money Goes.
 They Rescued Themselves.
 Two Old Houses Take Their Medicine.
 John Fall Was Driven To Potash.

4. Titles beginning with "how" or "why" are sometimes successful in putting the gist of the story into the heading, though beginning writers should not get into the habit of using them too often:

How Finley Tops the Market.
 How the Smiths Feed Calves.

5. Articles of informational nature, especially those of a more technical character in engineering and technical publications, often have titles which express or imply in brief way the central idea of the article:

Preparing Baker Mountain Kyanite For Market.
 Stoker Licks Rival Automatic Heat In New-House Installation.
 Success With 2,500 Pounds.
 Five Months With Lilies.
 Chicks That Hatch Early.
 You Asked About Rayon.
 Here's a Hallowe'en Broil.

6. Quotation and paraphrase may be employed to good effect:

"Just Able To Be Around."
 "Shine, Mister?"
 "I Hear You're Working In Washington."
 "I am an Army Wife."
 "It's Just Good Business."
 "You're the Prettiest Mommy On Earth."
 Two Characters In Search of a Diet.
 It Did Happen Here.
 Such Is Wife.
 Meals That Make Cents.
 Fair Exchange Is an Adventure.
 All Quiet On the Fashion Front.
 Yes, We Have Some Tobacco.

7. Figures of speech may be used:

Soldiers of the Pines.

Green Country and Yellow Cheese.

Hot-Dog Manners.

8. Alliteration:

Hot and Hearty.

Tea Drinkers and Cattle-Ticks.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Find five feature article beginnings and analyze what makes each of them effective.

2. Write three beginnings to a feature story of your own and discuss the degree in which each of them fulfills the functions of a good beginning.

3. Find in magazines three beginnings which you think are ineffective. Rewrite them.

4. Make a list from magazines of twenty-five titles which you think are particularly good.

5. Rewrite five titles which you think are ineffective.