

- - THE PLACE OF PERIODICALS IN LITERATURE. - -

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OUTLINE.

- I. Expression of Public Opinion.
- II. General Educators.
- III. Dissemination of Knowledge.
- IV. Fiction.
- V. Place in Libraries.

During the peaceful reign of Queen Anne in England, the social and intellectual activity of the people was quite marked. Coffee houses were established, and when the men met to sip their coffee and smoke, they discussed the topics of the day, criticisms were exchanged along political lines, sensations of the day were noted, as well as the latest productions in literature. This constant companionship made their minds more alert, witty and active to the newest things.

One of the direct results of this spread of intelligence is the periodical publications. The Daily Courant was started in 1702. Daniel Defoe began the Review in 1704. But perhaps the first real periodical - part newspaper and part magazine - was the Tatler, in 1709, with Sir Richard Steele and his friend Joseph Addison, as the editors. After two years, The Tatler was discontinued. In partnership, Addison and Steele edited the Spectator for two years. This paper was succeeded by the Guardian. Addison and Steele wrote as moralists, their methods of reforming the evils of the day are in keeping with the spirit of the times. With delicate tact and unvarying good humor, they made ridiculous the follies of the times.

The first real magazine, as we know it now, came out in the beginning of the nineteenth century. In 1802, the first number of the Edinburgh Review appeared, causing a great sensation in the literary circles. The authorship of the articles was kept secret. Jeffry, the editor for thirty years, was an "arch critic", in fact he set a standard for succeeding periodicals. Thos. Carlyle and Thos. B. Macaulay were contributors to the columns.

In 1817, Wm. Blackwood founded a periodical known as Blackwoods' Magazine. This periodical has published books in serial form as well as poems, that stand as peaks in the plain of literature. Other pub-

lications sprang into existence, and gradually the people came to think of periodicals as being useful in the dissemination of public opinion, until now, the scholars everywhere contribute articles upon the important questions of the times. "The journals, the echo and prompter of the public mind, is constantly enlarging its power and widening its scope." As a means of swaying the minds of men, as an instrument for elevating society, in the directness, strength and persistence of its influence, it has no equal among all the agencies of human utterance; so says Wm. Matthew. It is by sharp, terse editorials and criticisms that the statesman and the scholar influences the general public, much more than is possible by orations and open air speeches. The Wendell Phillips of today need not contend with a mob of unsympathetic hearers. Instead, in a quiet office, the articles may be written, and the publications will be scattered over the civilized countries. The immense audience read and ponder over the fresh thots of the superior mind. The true worth of periodical literature is porportional to the number of able and well informed contributors found busy writing for its columns.

We turn to the large daily newspaper to find the yesterday's happenings of the world. It is a contemporary history, not always accurate, nevertheless revealing in part, the ambitions, disapointments, morality, religion, and, in fact, the degree of civilization of the country. We read ^{with} ~~of~~ delight of some noble work; sorrowfully, of the death of a friend; joyously, of a needed reform being established. Periodicals bring the whole world in close touch and sympathy with each other, they tend to break down the barriers of national conceit, obliterate sectional strife and promote national unity.

Now, one important object of periodicals is the publication of opinions upon topics on which the people are especially interested. When an important question is being discussed, the opinions of thinking

minds are published in magazines and newspapers, criticisms and comments are made upon it. The reader unconsciously judges what he thinks to be the best opinion from the number published, and so learns to think intelligently upon the topics of the day. The time is past when the law makers and those especially interested are informed only upon a bill pending in Congress. The public knows the reading, the vote, and what effect is desired. The general public is informed in an unbiased way upon the great questions arising in the separate countries, and share in the disposition of them.

Closely associated with the interchange of opinions thru the medium of periodicals, is their value as general educators. The general information that belongs to the realm of the periodical publication is so wide and broad and deep, that it includes the less technical of all lines of education. It is by no other means other than periodicals, can this well informed education be obtained, and owing to the large number of publications in circulation, it is in the power of nearly every one to receive this if he so desires. They take the reader from his narrow every day life, to the grand castles, acquaint him with the monarchs of the world even allowing him for the time being to share the grave responsibilities of a great ruler. Or again, the traveler may take the reader to see grandest natural scenery in the world, permit him to stand upon the summit of that snow covered peak, and enjoy to his heart's content the huge peaks, the green valley and narrow mountain streams.

A writer from Alaska may instruct the readers by giving the life of the settlers, telling of privations undergone for gold. While upon the very next page may be an account of the famine in India.

Besides the latest inventions, the recent discoveries, in the sciences, and the newest attempts in art occupy an important part of

the subject matter of magazines and journals, while the dailies do not forget to mention them.

Immerging from the less technical to technical lines, there are publications devoted to science or art. They give the results of long experiments and long research along the special line of publication. The mechanical world is stronger, abler, and more abreast of the times for the publications relating only to mechanics and its appliances. This may be said to be the case of all the rest of the occupations, in which there are special publications. It would require quite a list of subjects to contain the classes of publications in existence. The mechanical, electrical, agricultural, and horticultural periodicals are found in the newstands. Those relating to the home, health, recreation and religion have wide circulation.

It is by this interchange of ideas that knowledge grows. In the magazines and leading papers, occur articles deep, well thought and scientific. The topics are hardly comprehensive enough for books, and many prefer the thought condensed. There is too much reading matter that is inviting one's attention, to spend a great deal of time upon a subject that is not especially important. The articles in many of the publications fill this requirement. They do not give profound knowledge in any department, but that is obtained by much study from books. Many of the best books are reprints of articles contributed by such as John Herschel, Louis Agassize, Thos. Carlyle, Ralph Emerson and hundreds of other writers, equally famous, to the newspapers and magazines of the day.

This is especially ^{true} of the works of fiction. Just as a horse gets tired of hay, and neighs for corn, so we become tired of the same kind of literature and long for a change. Long and short stories of fiction meet this demand. In a majority of the leading magazines and journals, there will be found a serial story by a well known writer.

These stories entertain the reader, rest his mind from the deeper literature, and often impress a great truth in his memory, by the fascinating illustration in the form of a story that is given. In these works of fiction often the latest book has its plot, the advantageous use of the recent discoveries in the arts and sciences. The actions of the people under some unusual condition or excitement often are truthfully told as a ground work for such interesting works of fiction.

Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* was first issued in a monthly magazine, in 1846. Dickens began his literary career for the newspaper press, and later contributed his writings to magazines. *David Copperfield* and *Domby and Son* may be especially mentioned. The same is true of our own beloved Washington Irving. But perhaps the National Era can boast of publishing a book that was an historical event as well as an historical novel. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* stands alone in depicting the times and conditions of the people during the years before the war. Francis Bret Harte used his knowledge of pioneer days of California in his contributions to the papers. Succeeding in this, he persevered until he was editor of the Overland Monthly. Many of our master pieces of literature have been published in the *Atlantic Monthly* which was started in 1857, with Lowell, Emerson, Longfellow and Holmes as contributors. The works of fiction of much note are usually the result of the excitement of the people; an injustice they wish righted, or the follies of the day, which they hold up for critical inspection, and a large per cent of these come before the general public in the pages of a periodical.

Perhaps some one is wondering what becomes of the vast amount of periodicals after they have been read. In the libraries, are bound volumes of the standard magazines and periodicals, with their valuable

indexes, they stand as ornaments to the literary activity of the time. Their contents are constantly being used again and again, as there is usually more references on any topic in the periodicals than in books. The magazine forms, type and paper, are being improved, so the periodical stands as a lasting monument in our literature.

The twentieth century may^{be} styled a newspaper age, never before has there been such a demand for reading by the public. Wm. Matthews styles the newspaper as the people's book, the only book which thousands feel able or willing to buy, or think they have time to read. And we all should praise those able and accomplished men and women who have made science popular, and brought journalism to its present high standard, instead of benefitting a few by writing a few big books.