

Woman In Journalism.

By

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Not many years ago there were in the popular mind, but three professions, - law, theology and medicine, more recent thought however has added two more, teaching and journalism. The latter is included because the times demand that not only the pulpit and bar, but the journalists chair as well, shall be filled by men of education.

The reader of Mr. Frederic Hudson's entertaining history of journalism in the U. S. from 1690 to 1872 have learned, long since, what the modern newspaper is, how it originated, and where it is tending. It is a common saying in England that America is governed by newspapers and this by way of sneer. But long ago Jefferson anticipated and met this reproach, when he said, "I would rather live in a country with newspapers and without a government than to live in one with a government and without newspapers." Nowadays it has been found easier to overthrow a government at Paris-Madrid, Mexico, or Rome, than to stop a well managed newspaper. The steam press, the electric telegraph, the enormous development of commerce and industry in the last half century have given newspapers a position and a responsibility but little understood, even by those who have the most to do with them.

Journalism in America is something, has been nothing, and aspires to be everything. There is no limit to the ambition of enterprising editors, to the future power of the American newspaper. It must regulate the minutest details of our daily lives, be our school master, minister, judge, lawyer, and jury in one grand combination. We find it intruding and interfering everywhere. It does not, however, confine itself entirely to the past and present but deals largely with the future. There is a German play which represents in one of its scenes, Adam crossing the stage on his way to be created and much of the news gathered by our dailies is of this anticipating sort. Sydney Smith was fond of dating events before or after the invention of common sense, and certainly the common sense that controls the modern newspaper does not go back many centuries.

The field of research once entered on, we may expect to see a large amount of competition between rival journals, in the prosecution of startling enterprises having no special or necessary connection with journalism. It has hitherto been considered the proper function of newspapers to hear, see, and report; but competition is now driving them into producing proofs for the facts which

they record, - a process not unlike that which exists in all lines of business. The proudest position imaginable for a journalists is that of one who makes his own news, in the honest sense of the phrase. And there seems to be no limit to the prosecution of this peculiar species of undertaking. Mr. J. S. Mill years ago compared the relation of the newspapers to society, to that of the Hebrew prophets, and Mr. Froude has very lately compared it to the church of the middle ages. Further than this it would be hard to go. It is not surprising that the talk of educating young people for journalism should become louder and louder each year at the season when collegiate education is most under discussion. All the feeble colleges are anxious about this time to produce journalists and many of them give notice that they are busy inventing machinery for this purpose. The process may seem difficult to outsiders, but highly educated men declare that nothing is easier. Take an intelligent young man, give him a course in History, Political Economy, Meta Physics, and Logic and what more does he need? There is your journalist all ready for his office; and what could be more simple?

A young lawyer, doctor, engineer, or merchant

must work on for years in obscurity and isolation before he can win success. Their prosperity must be based on a good foundation of experience and character. The journalist may and often does find at the very outset his way thronged with highly educated men and the most profound of thinkers. He is likely to find his opinion largely sought and his approval largely counted, and in fact he may find himself carried into fame without any more honest labor on his part than it would take to conduct a single difficult case at the bar. This being the case, it is no wonder that the career, sometimes, looks attractive and the only thing that keeps it from becoming overwhelmingly crowded is that it is unproductive financially. There is probably no industry of modern times by which it is so hard for the laborer to climb to the position of the capitalist, and it is this fact which will prevent it from being a career for which men and women will prepare at college. If no one could practice law or medicine unless he were employed at a salary by a corporation with an enormous capital, we should find the ranks of these professions very scantily filled, and yet this is a condition which every journalist has to face.

Journalism is drawing into its ranks every

year more and more of the intellectual ability of the country. Clergymen are leaving their pulpits, lawyers their briefs, schoolmasters, their desks, scholars their studies, to ply the pen for the daily and weekly newspaper. Add to these the multitude who, without leaving their profession, are correspondents or occasional contributors for the press. The number is enormous. It includes not only the men, but women of genius and culture.

There is, however, no more a royal road to journalism than there is to any other profession. Success is based on hard and continuous work rather than on literary attainment. A high ability is demanded, but it is an ability to labor long and effectively. No profession demands such an accurate use of eye and ear, of speed and thought, of perception and memory. Set no one who can not if necessary toil twelve hours a day enter the portals of the press. But even in view of all this there is no happier calling for one who has the needed physical and mental energy. The office of a great daily is a first rate college or first graduate school. The dictionary, the cyclopedia and the latest scientific text books are in constant use. Politics, local, state, national and international, domestic and foreign, are discussed

year in and year out. It is a grand field for men; it is a grand field for women. It was not always thus. Time works wonders. Not so long ago bright women wished to enter the newspaper ranks, but there was little or no room for them. When Mrs Child wrote her letter from N. Y. and Margaret Fuller went to the same city to help Greeley edit the Tribune, how daring and strange their venture seemed to their countrymen. Now their successors may be counted by the thousands. Nothing so surprises and delights a young editor as to find what a rich store of not only insights and talent he can draw on to enrich the columns of his paper. Every editor now regrets for want of room an immense amount of material from feminine hands that 20 years ago would have been sought out and proudly printed - only 20 years ago it did not exist.

In the past thirty years a revolution has been wrought so peacefully as to be unnoticed. The press of today wants women in its service. Before this there were perhaps hundreds of brilliant thinkers and writers like Isabella Hamilton, Kate Field, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Alice Cary, Phoebe Cary, and Anna Dickinson whose work was exacted when offered; but they were never employed. But the growth of modern

society has made them a prime necessity, and there is hardly a morning or evening paper of any prominence that does not employ them in some capacity. From the lowest position, that of stenographer and typewriter, up to the highest, that of proprietor, publisher, and editor-in-chief, they are to be found in ever increasing numbers. Among many who have gained a world wide celebrity as publishers and editors-in-chief might be mentioned such as Madame Adam of Paris, Mrs. Jack Johnson of London, Mrs. Frank Leslie of New York, and Mrs. Eliza Nicholson of New Orleans. To the class of editors and editorial writers belong Mrs. Margaret Sullivan, Mrs. Mary Sove Dickinson, Miss Francis E. Willard, Mary Sargent Hopkins, and Ida Bradford Bell. There is a class of women writers whose highest talent is humor, wit, poetic or dramatic ability. This class includes such clever writers as, Mrs. Kate Masterson, Madeline Bridge, Miss Mary S. Huntley, Katherine Howard, Miss Beatrice Sluges, and Miss Petty.

Margherita Aulina Hamm deserves especial mention and credit, for she is one of the most successful women journalists that this century has ever produced. Though still a young woman, Miss Hamm is already recognized in the journalistic world as standing at the very

head of her profession. Her work embraces every variety of journalism from her everyday work for the leading newspapers at home and abroad; her humorous writings appearing weekly in *Sife*, *Truth* and other periodicals of humorous intent; her verse and more serious productions which are published in the best magazines of the month, to occasional articles in the scientific, legal and medical journals of the day.

Miss Hamm comes naturally by her chosen profession, as she is the granddaughter of Boschof Spencer of England, a well known writer, and is related to Herbert Spencer the great philosopher. Her natural gifts have had long and thorough training for she began her career as a newspaper woman at the age of thirteen, when she filled the position of proof reader in the office of a newspaper in Boston. Her first accepted article was published in the *Boston Herald*, when she was fourteen and her first poem in the *Youth's Companion* when she was fifteen. At the age of twenty she was filling an editorial chair on the *New York Sunday Times*. And now, although she has but recently attained the age of twenty-five, she has written for every important newspaper syndicate in the country, for many magazines, both English and American. She has capably filled

the position of editor and associate editor for various magazines, and is now the editor of the Woman's Arena of the New York Mail and Express, and her department in this paper clearly reflects the ability, energy, and capability of its conductor.

As an interviewer, Miss Hamm again stands at the top round of the ladder, and two notable interviews she conducted, one with the late James G. Blaine and the other with President Cleveland, exalted her to an enviable position in the opinion of newspaper editors.

With all her varied work which calls for more than the ordinary courage of a woman, Miss Hamm remains a sweet and gentle mannered woman, she is extremely attractive in personal appearance, with the charm and freshness of youth and perfect health. Most women would, justly, feel themselves more than ordinarily successful and deserving of special honor to stand at the end of half a century of life where Miss Hamm stands today. She has yet a life time before her with all in her favor and those who know her, either by personal contact or through her work, look for more than ordinary achievement from one who, in her short life, through the splendid use of the talents with which she has been endowed, has already borne

such rich and ripe fruit.

There is little or no comparison between the sexes in the newspaper world. Of late years woman's views have become a recognized feature of the press, and this alone requires an army of trained scribes to put it into good reading and readable form. Besides this there is a large field of woman's work and achievement which is of interest to the general public. It is quite evident that a woman can give a more comprehensive, if not a better account than can a man, of dress goods, fashions, household furniture, equipments and decorations of teas, receptions, weddings and other social events. On the other hand, a man is better qualified than a woman to report the proceedings of a convention or a presidential campaign. As the differentiation in social and educational growth is necessitating a similar differentiation in newspaper work and in newspaper workers.

To young women intending to enter journalism, a little special knowledge on the subject is of great value. Under this head may be specified familiarity with the signs and abbreviations used by the editor and proof reader. Any one can master them in a single day. Good newspaper English

is the best English. Brevity and precision are the skeleton of all good composition.

The rewards of the press are based on merit. In cities of the first class, the average earning of the newspaper woman is \$20 per week; in those of the second class \$15; and in those of the third class \$10. In the small towns and villages the wages fall as low as \$4 per week. Very high salaries are rare. The most prosperous newspaper women are those who hold a good position on a first class paper and readily sell special articles to weeklies and magazines. Besides earning a livelihood, a newspaper woman enjoys other advantages. She is independent and exercises an influence proportional to her ability and character. She can do good with the pen and with the voice. She can right many wrongs, she can aid struggling individuals, groups or movements. The higher her ideals and the more altruistic her life, the better is her work and the greater her power of furthering the right.