

Commencement Thesis.

Subject - Woman In Journalism.

Fannie Parkinson.
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Outline.

I. Introduction.

1. Importance of Journalism.
2. Necessity " "

II. Female Journalists

1. Time and Place entered the field.
2. when " where " " "
3. what edited.
 - a. Papers, Magazines, Periodicals, etc.
 - b. Give description of editions.
 - c. Contents in general.
4. Names of Women Journalists.
5. Compare Man and Woman Journalists.
6. Results of women's work.
 - a. On the Public.
 - b. On their Character.
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III. Reasons why women should not enter the journalistic field.

IV. Reasons why she should enter the field.

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Woman In Journalism.

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"Blessed is he who has found his work; let him seek no other blessedness," says Carlyle. And may we not say as much for woman - Blessed is she who has found her work? Perhaps no one but the woman who toils daily for her bread knows better how disagreeable it is, what a burden life is, when she must follow an occupation which is displeasing to her; when she cannot be allowed to choose that profession which alone has its peculiar charm for her and make it her life-work. A popular writer on this topic has said, "How much happier that woman is, who can cheerfully take up the work she likes, than the one who toils daily at uncongenial employment."

The time has come when woman is expected to know at least one thing well, whether she be obliged to follow that vocation or not. Woman is no longer content with only a light knowledge of housework, a little of this and a little of that, in order that she may appear well in society. Society calls for more, yea, demands more, of our fair sex; and how quickly she does respond to the call.

The day has past and gone forever when a woman who enters any industrial pursuit loses caste.

In taking up this subject, it seems necessary to devote a little space to Journalism in general, giving its nature and importance. Helly Mackay Hutchinson, a special writer on the New York Tribune, has written a very liberal article on "Woman and Journalism" in the Galaxy Vol. 13. From that article we quote the following: "Journalism is an instinct, a genius, a gift, as individual as sculpture or painting. Any clever man who has the trick of expression may write for the newspapers, but that does not necessarily make him a journalist. Trained profundity of thought, exquisite literary art, humor the richest, judgment the broadest, do not of themselves insure success in this moral photographic profession. To seize unerringly, with keen clair-voyance the daily event or idea which is or should be of most public importance and interest; and to picture it in sentences short, terse, vigorous - perception, reflection, and execution in one happy flash - that is

journalistic genius in its highest and most serviceable manifestation.

Thirty or forty years ago a woman who wrote for newspapers was considered more of a curiosity than a genius. Nom-de-plumes were used to cover real names from public gaze. The following verse is a specimen of the ridicule of a woman who would so far forget herself and her position as to be known among the writers of stories and poetry.

To see a lady of such taste
So slatternly, is shocking;
Your pen and poetry lay by,
And learn to darn your stockings."

But to the woman who had the genius and the determination to become a journalist such petty discouragements had no material effect.

There used to be, and is yet, though to a lesser degree, a strange misunderstanding about the work and natural ability required of a journalist. An amusing instance is recorded of an excellent housekeeper who decided one of her boarders, a bright young lady reporter, was having a much easier life than she, so she

housekeeper determined to give up her regular work in the kitchen, in the garden and among her chickens, to "write" for the papers. Her productions were, as one would naturally suspect, miserably written and ill-spelled. The following is an example of her genius: "Dear Mr editor —

I stop my moping to Inform your readers how to keep young children from getting into Hot water." she then tells how to have the water "turpit," and if the child falls in, it will not "scalt." For all this valuable knowledge she demanded only five dollars. From this contribution, — and this is not the only one of its kind, — we see the necessity of first knowing that one has the natural ability and then making the needed preparations and studying to follow such a vocation.

Among the many woman journalists that have succeeded in that work, we recognize the names of Emily C. Chubbuck; Sarah Clarke, who wrote for many different papers and edited a magazine for children; Mrs Sarah Hale, editor of Godley's Lady's Book

for forty years, who was thought to have been the first to establish in this country a magazine devoted entirely to the many tastes and interests of woman; Miss Middy Morgan, the successful live-stock reporter for a number of New York daily papers, is certainly worthy of mention here. Though her work is a peculiar kind for women, yet she has purchased horses in France for the King of Italy's stables, and no one has ever molested her in any way; they rather commend her for her fearless pluck and her excellent journalism.

Woman reporters are now found in every large city, and in some smaller ones. The New York Sun has for years employed a lady reporter. The matter furnished consists of local news, sermons, short sketches, long stories, household notes, fashion letters, book reviews, art criticisms, etc. As a rule a woman reporter has bright, agreeable work, and often times her duty as a reporter is quite singular.

In Iowa, one of the daily papers employ a woman for base-ball reporter. Another paper, the Chicago Inter Ocean, has a

woman night reporter, Mrs Fitzgerald. She goes into the office at mid-night with police news and is never bothered or questioned.

The salary for such a position is about two dollars per week. Perhaps one of the best illustrations of paying journalism is the position held by Miss Mary Booth, editor of Harper's Bazar. Her salary is three thousand dollars yearly. Of course only a few could secure such positions, but there are always hundreds of others grades of places for the woman who has special genius for this work. Many women have planned to enter the journalistic field in order to replenish the pocket-book or to take a trip which otherwise could not have been taken, never seeing to ask, "Have I any talent, genius or capacity for this work?" Mrs Payne says of such women: "The one who seizes the work to relieve the emptiness of her pocket instead of the fullness of her mind, had far better save her postage stamps. Newspaper correspondence should be a work of significance. and the woman who regards it as an easy way of

earning money has of its scope too little comprehension to invite further discussion."

Elizabeth Mallet, a London woman, has the honor of having established and edited the first daily newspaper in the world. Her object was "to spare the public half the impertinences which the ordinary papers contained."

As early as 1742 we find women conducting newspapers in Mass. The illustrations in many of the ladies magazines were with steel engravings and fashion plates which were very creditably executed.

Frederick Hudson, in speaking of the modern class of publications for women says: "They are about fashion, about the small talk of the ball-room, or the gossip and envy of the reception room. Some of these papers are edited by strong-minded women, seeking a higher sphere for female labor and the right of women to vote, to buy and sell stock in Wall St., to fulminate from the pulpit, to visit sick rooms as physicians as well as nurses, to serve in Army and Navy, in Congress,

on school committees, etc., etc. There is now the "Woman's Journal" and the "Revolution" to urge these social changes on the world. They have taken the place of old lecturers, and talk to the millions. They are active and persistent workers, full of pluck and poverty, boldness and beauty, in pushing their plans of reform before the monster public."

Our Susan B. Anthony was for some time editor of the "Revolution", a woman's right paper. This was a very radical paper and took the pessimistic view of life for woman unless — more rights were granted to them.

In Baltimore, there is published a paper, "The True Woman", which opposes all the doctrines of the "Revolution" and makes its own policy, "To make woman more womanly, to elevate her and make her, in every way, good and noble."

In comparing the ability of the woman journalist with the man journalist, I would say, intellectually, she is equal. but not equal physically. This is of course not true of all women, but as a general rule men are more capable of enduring the hard strain of night and day labor.

Many persons hold the view that woman should not enter the journalistic field. The reasons given are numerous. Let us consider some of them. Perhaps the first one which would present itself is her physical inability. She cannot stand the nervous strain which must come. Also the sudden emergencies which only the strong journalist knows how to meet and keep going meanwhile are beyond frail woman. The anxieties of home and of the press become confused, and she is not able to compete with her brother journalist. And again, woman's very nature is against her in such work! Political experience is necessary to carry on a newspaper successfully, and this experience must be constant and up to date. The social position of woman will not allow her to carry on this work and keep her standing in society, still this latter point is not so much against her at present as it used to be. Some say woman should not enter this field because there is no necessity for such enterprise on their part, and that public sentiment is opposed to such work for

the fair sex. This does not seem to be a very strong argument against, yet to some it might have weight enough to keep them from the work. Lastly, we would say, by her position as a journalist she exerts an influence on her sex which is not for the best. She is thought to lose her womanliness, her loveliness, and her charms and hence, her power for doing good in the world. And now in conclusion of this phase of the subject, I would say, that while some of these reasons may be good ones, yet they are not as a whole stronger than the reasons why she should become a journalist, provided she first has a feeling that this is her calling and her duty.

In regard to some of the reasons why women should be allowed this privilege, the same as the privilege to clerk in a store, I would place first, her natural ability; second, the good done in this profession will over-balance the harm done. Education now gives her a special fitness for writing on social and literary topics. A conscientious

call to do this work and means I suggest, the desire to free her sex from many grievances and wrongs, and her desire to exert her influence on the public to some desired end also appeal to her.

Woman journalists are pure and bright; they are influential; many are beautiful, talented, experienced and useful. And can quite often do what men could not accomplish.

Then we would encourage women to continue the good work which is so important; for the newspaper is said to be the most appreciated of all human productions. The Journalist is truly the "Secretary of Time."

Bibliography.

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