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### MRS. FRANK LESLIE.

A WOMAN'S ENERGY, PLUCK AND RARE EXECUTIVE ABILITY.

*The Dying Wishes of a Great Publisher—Triumph Over a Long Succession of Difficulties and Obstacles—A Woman of Refined Taste and Femininity.*

"Go to my office, sit in my place, and do my work until my debts are paid," were Mr. Leslie's last words to his wife after hearing that he could no longer live.

It was in the winter of 1880 that Mrs. Leslie lost her husband. The great publishing house of Frank Leslie was at that time involved in a tangle of debt, and the business already in the hands of an assignee. Almost the dying words of the publisher were a noble testimonial to the good wife, the intelligent, ready help-mate, as he honoured her with a sacred trust. He told her to take his place at the desk, to finish the work he had left undone, to lift the reproach of debt from his name, and when that was done she was to continue the business of the publishing house herself.

She was a young and very beautiful woman, that sad-hearted widow, who turned from a grave to face difficulties the most perplexing, to begin a contest that many wise ones prophesied would end badly for her. But those sage, incredulous, head-shaking financiers did not know what a woman can do, who has energy and pluck united with rare intelligence and a mind formed for executive work. By a legal process and in response to her husband's wish, Mrs. Leslie abandoned her Christian names of Miriam Florence and became in the law and to the world "Frank" Leslie. To the business world she became even more than Frank Leslie; when the slender, sweet-faced, gentle-voiced woman walked into her husband's office, and putting back the sad announcing folds of her crepe veil, announced she had come to stay, her gentle, gracious femininity won the sympathy of those about her. But when she came the next day as early as the earliest clerks, and the next day and the next, something more than respect and sympathy for the brave little woman came into their regard for her.

### DEVELOPED A REMARKABLE FACULTY.

She sat at her desk like a Napoleon over his war maps. She developed a remarkable faculty for knowing news, for seizing upon the very things that caught and charmed the public mind. A thousand and one things in the history of illustrated newspapers originated in her brain, and were executed for her papers. All day long she bent to her desk, and was her own wise counsellor. The best of it all was that Frank Leslie was not afraid. Big contracts did not frighten her, notes to pay did not cause her to get nervous, reading interminable pages of proof did not fret her, thinking out new features for her paper did not perplex her. Always cheery in her speech, and with considerate words and hopeful for her employes, it is no wonder that both men and women fell in love with the new Frank Leslie and gave her the best work of which they were capable. The dying wishes of Frank Leslie have been carried out, but only after his widow has encountered and triumphed over one long succession of difficulties and obstacles.

Opening out of the main editorial room on the Park place front is the private office of Mrs. Leslie, the presiding genius of the entire establishment. A peep within its walls will discover a rare and attractive combination of the surroundings of a woman of refined and cultured taste and of active business habits. Sitting in her bijou sanctum in the mid-summer glory of triumph, Mrs. Leslie presents a thoughtful and unusually earnest face. Her wondrously expressive gray eyes seem to pierce to the inner humanity of sense and motive; a mouth extremely mobile in its play is added to the whole contour of regular features that at once arrest admiration and respect. One cannot help taking in also a finely-shaped head, that is abundantly stocked with brains.

She is a thorough woman of business. Every morning she is found in her office by 9 o'clock, and there she remains until five or half-past five in the afternoon. She signs all checks and money orders, makes all contracts for supplies of every sort, looks over proofs of all articles before they are published, and approves the make-up of every periodical before it is sent to press.

Mrs. Leslie is that most gracious and attractive of all human beings, a woman's woman. She has never been too busy to talk to a woman. She has ever been