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A Word to Correspondents.

Considering the general character of the work of the civil service, it is not to be wondered at that the service should include a large proportion of men endowed with the gift of writing readable English. There are many who, had their talents not been obtained for the direct service of the State, would have secured for themselves a respectable, and in some cases a distinguished, position in the journalistic world. Their transference to official spheres, however, occurring at an impressionable period, almost invariably produces a strong modification of such gifts. In many instances it is to be feared that the talent may be modified out of existence, dying through inanition resulting from its restricted opportunities for exercise. Persons who deal with forms are frequently inclined to think in forms, and their consequent lack of occasion for the use of style eventually produces the inability to cultivate it.

In spite of many such cases, however, a large proportion of officials retain their gifts of expression. These are not the men who acquired their accomplishment of forming grammatical sentences at college, but in whom the ability to write clearly and well arose from the development of natural gifts. They possess the faculty of marshalling their thoughts in order and sequence, and setting them down in proper language.

How, then, with such a reserve of literary potentiality, is civil service journalism to overcome those characteristic defects which serve to keep it from the higher levels of the art? The answer is that the journalism of the service must avoid the vices of

the amateur. With few exceptions, its exponents lack the training and experience which change a mere "writing man" into a journalist. But breadth of mind, the recognition of diversity in opinion, the correct estimation of expediency and of importance in facts, the renunciation of omniscience and infallibility, the avoidance of personalities, the perception of a common purpose, are qualities which are necessary if we would see sweeter and more wholesome fruit than can be gathered from the average civil servant who writes to *The Civilian* to-day. In the moulding of opinion the tools of art must never be abandoned for the unadaptable and useless weapons of strife; the brush of criticism become the bludgeon of abuse; or the palette-knife of irony be surrendered for the stiletto of sarcasm.

If some of our correspondents were humoured, this paper, instead of being a worthy section of the journalistic art, would become a monument of violent and fruitless discord. Throughout many pages we receive, the frequent failure to recognize the common aims of the service is all too obvious. A large proportion of its matter falls into the category of mere recrimination. There are some who have never written us a line save to blame or condemn. There is a crying need for unity—unity of method, unity of endeavour, unity of purpose,—yet the cry seems still to inhabit the wilderness. There is a need for fact, yet fancy serves as currency for argument.

Surely it is time for the service to realize how vitally its fortunes depend on united action, based on the recognition of a common objec-