

THE VARSITY

A Weekly Journal of Literature, University Thought and Events.

Vol. VIII.

University of Toronto, Feb 18, 1888.

No. 13.

WOMANHOOD.

A maiden scarcely twenty-one,
Stood by the sea at set of sun,
The wave so wild not long before
Now murmured gently to the shore.
The maiden too, erst while so gay,
Was silenced by the dying day.
Pensive, she looked far out to sea,
Wrapt in a solemn reverie.
Flushed was her face as the evening skies,
A look of sadness was in her eyes.
Life, she thought, is like the sea,
Full of depth and mystery.
And must I so soon leave the strand
Of this my happy girlhood's land,
And join Life's earnest, busy throng,
Where, carried by the tide along,
I'll see this happy land no more,
But journey to an unknown shore!
Perchance the perils of the deep
Are followed by eternal sleep:
And as the sun sinks in the west,
I, too, shall sink in endless rest?
But no,—the waves say "Never fear,
The sun shines in another sphere,
And you, too, if you steer aright,
Shall reach a land of endless light."

ANTIQUA.

THE UNIVERSITY AND THE PROFESSIONS.

I. JOURNALISM.

Many readers of THE VARSITY are doubtless aware that to "those about to marry" a misogynist once gave the laconic advice, "Don't." It is probable that two out of every three journalists, requested by a young man about to choose a profession to give their opinion as to the advisability of his selecting journalism, would tender the same advice. To discuss, or even to state, the reasons for such a reply would be a breach of privilege in a paper on the subject assigned to the writer, namely, university education in its relation to the profession of journalism. It may not be wholly out of place, however, to say, by way of brief explanation, that, while journalism is, to those who have a natural taste for it, one of the most fascinating of professions, it is, at the same time, one of the most exacting in its demands upon both the physical and the mental powers. "The calling of journalism," says a writer in the *Nineteenth Century*, "shares with the sister calling of literature this peculiar distinction, that only those engage in it who feel 'called' to it." This is undoubtedly true, but, unfortunately, many mistake their calling, and to such the daily toil of newspaper work cannot but be the veriest drudgery. It is scarcely to be wondered at, then, that journalists, as a rule, refrain from encouraging those who evince a desire to adopt the pencil—and the scissors—as their weapons in the battle of life.

It is but a comparatively short time since journalism first received recognition as a profession. In the glorious days of "Merrie Englands," says a leading American paper, artist, actor and editor figured simply as "humble caterers

to gentle tastes for an idle hour." It was at a later period in the last century that the publication of the letters of Junius in the *Public Advertiser* first gave the press political importance, but even then, and for years after, the proprietors and editors of the comparatively few newspapers published in England were regarded as suspicious characters, over whom governments thought it advisable to keep strict watch, and to whose criticisms of administrative wrong-doings the most frequent reply was fine and imprisonment. The *London Times*, which celebrated the centenary of its establishment last New Year's day, was probably the first among newspapers to make the power of the press really respected and feared. The extent of that power to-day in its own case may be judged from the recent statement of so excellent an authority as the *Spectator*, that "an Englishman imprisoned in Timbuctoo and offered the privilege of writing to the Foreign Office or the *Times* would probably choose the latter." The "Thunderer," as it is frequently styled, was the pioneer of a new order of things in journalism, and its success cleared the way for a host of successful imitators. So rapidly did the power of the journalist's pen increase in the first years of the present century that even the great Napoleon respected it and declared that "four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets." But it was not until many years thereafter that newspaper writers became so numerous as to secure recognition as a class, and that the public began to perceive that the attainments necessary to the successful pursuit of the journalistic calling were of such a character as to entitle that calling to rank as a profession. All this came with the gradual change in journalistic methods consequent upon the marvellous increase, during the past half century, in facilities for the collection of news and for the manufacture and distribution of newspapers. By a process of evolution the newspaper developed from a mere chronicle of events into both chronicle and commentary, until it finally assumed the functions of a leader of public opinion. To-day it exerts a mighty influence, wherever civilization reigns, upon the social, political and moral life of the people, its power both for good and for evil being tremendous. The men who, through its columns, wield this power, are to-day many in number, and their qualifications for the task must necessarily be of a high order. For this reason their calling has, not unworthily, been accorded rank as a profession, and it is one which entails upon its followers responsibilities of no ordinary character. The means by which a university education may best be made preparatory to the efficient discharge of such responsibilities I understand to be the subject assigned to me for discussion in this paper.

Two difficulties suggest themselves at the outset. The first lies in the fact that the journalist is not made, but grows. It is impossible to teach a young man the calling. No general instructions can prepare him for its demands; he must learn to meet them chiefly through experience. Emerson once expressed this truth very concisely when he said: "If you would learn to write, 'tis in the street you must learn it." This being the case, it is evident that, while a university education may be extremely useful to the journalist, it is by no means indispensable. A man may have a fine education, and yet be wholly unfit for newspaper work; while another, who never attended a lecture at college, may be a model journalist. The second diffi-