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## Qualifications for Newspaper Work.

THE elemental qualifications necessary to success in any of the so-called liberal professions are likely to bring advancement in the newspaper field. These are, in the first place, a sound understanding coupled with habits of industry and self-denial.

For the student, therefore, who proposes to go into newspaper work there are few other directions to be given than that he should follow those studies which enlarge his mind and strengthen and balance its powers of judgment.

A course of reading which will give him a view of history, which will reveal to him the motives of human actions, which have scarcely changed since history has been written, is necessary to his success. A knowledge of human nature, its tendencies and intuitions, its passions and its weaknesses, and its ceaseless striving towards ideals, which are constantly changing for the better century after century, is what a newspaper man should have as the basis of his equipment.

This is very general advice it is true, but it is about as particular as any that can be given. Nowhere is that course of reading whose results are summed up in the one word—culture more essential than in an editorial chair. There is less of special training necessary than in any of the professions. In Medicine there is the knowledge of drugs, and in Law the routine of legal procedure. In almost every line of life there are things like trade "secrets" to be learned by the apprentices, and not belonging to general knowledge, which occupy a considerable amount of time. The routine of newspaper work, on the other hand, is simply the stringing together of sentences so as to make clear the writer's meaning. The ability to do this is very widely possessed and its possession alone does not fit a man for newspaper work. The important matter is not the ability to write but the ability to write things worth writing and reading.

The essence of successful journalism is not news-vending, useful as that is, but leadership. A man to be successful, as he will ultimately esteem success, must cultivate the attributes of a leader. He must understand the world's affairs and problems somewhat better than those who follow. He must have looked over the paths which the generations of men have passed along. He must have been a spectator of their blunders so that he may tell his readers how to avoid repeating old mistakes, and he must have shared those triumphs of the past, whose records are our best inspiration and encouragement in the face of reverses and defeats. The whole range of history, biography, and human philosophy is the wide field in which a newspaper man should prepare himself. He should not be content with

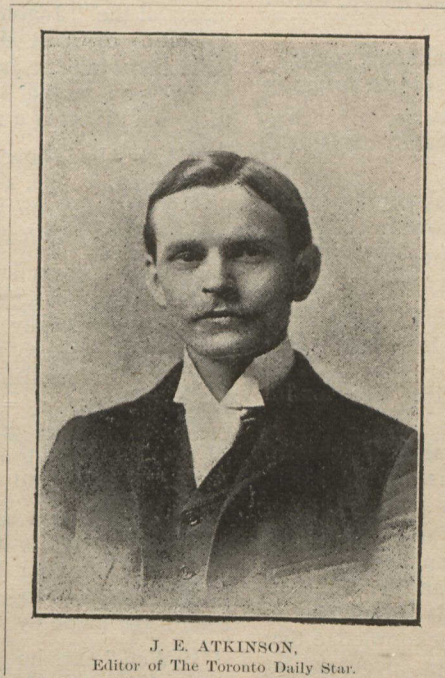
reading the occurrences of to-day. He must first find time for the yesterdays. There is danger of giving too much attention to passing events and reading too much "current literature." Most of the time thus spent is wasted—worse than wasted. Get back to the beginnings of things. Until a man has traced the stream of human experience and endeavor with more or less care from the clouded springs in which it takes its rise down to the spot at which he stands, and has from some high place caught a glimpse of the direction in which its further course lies, he must be set down as but a poorly-qualified guide.

All this has nothing to do with the news side of the business. I have intentionally left this out of my remarks, because there is not space in which to cover the whole question and it

has seemed better to deal with the more important. The news instinct, as it is sometimes called, is simply the gossiping or story-telling ability in a man. A man is useful on the news staff of a newspaper according as he knows what will entertain and interest the paper's readers and can write it so as to effect that end. Some men have the news instinct and some have it not, but the end in view is always chiefly the one thing—the entertainment of the buyers of the paper's news. Very few men are content with success as newsmen. If, however, that be a man's ambition, he can take no better course than the one which the editorial chair also requires. Many examples of the fact could be cited to show that the best editorial men are also the best news-men on their papers.

The entrance to the newspaper field is commonly through the news staff. This will be more and more the case in the future. It is work often of a very exhausting and not in its first years of a well-paid kind. But newspaper work, however trying its apprenticeship, has its compensations which make up for its

shortcomings. We have all in common a desire to write or speak what we hope will impress our ideas on our fellows. Newspaper work enables us to gratify this impulse. Like all the teaching professions it is not as well paid as industrial pursuits. But to this we can add that any young man in whose mind this fact weighs very heavily at the threshold of his career is not likely to be successful in any but a commercial life. Newspaper work is one of the most fascinating occupations in the world, and to a public-spirited mind its opportunities of service and influence are not to be weighed in the balance with any other considerations. In a word, a newspaper man's ideal must be a combination of fanaticism and philosophy, with the fire of the one and the mental poise of the other, with the dash maybe to take the initiative upon occasion and with patience to withstand discouragement.



J. E. ATKINSON,  
Editor of The Toronto Daily Star.