

THE MAKING OF A JOURNALIST

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649130566

The making of a journalist by Julian Ralph

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JULIAN RALPH

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A JOURNALIST**

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MAKING OF A JOURNALIST ·

BY JULIAN RALPH

AUTHOR OF
"OUR GREAT WEST" "ON CANADA'S FRONTIER"
"PEOPLE WE PASS" "ALONE IN CHINA"
ETC.



NEW YORK AND LONDON
HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
1903

914
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Published November, 1903.

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I

CHOOSING THE PROFESSION

FOR a dozen years there has not been a month in which I have not been asked by friend and stranger to point out a course of study by which they can enter journalism. Boys and girls have been in the majority; but the interest in this outlet for talent and energy is by no means confined to them. Recently it was an officer in the British army who came to me for such advice. Still more recently it was an artist, who said that he needed the wonderful training of newspaper life, which forces men to disregard their inclinations and necessitates instant readiness for whatever work is demanded. While I stopped in London on my return from India the other day, a shrewd publisher assured me there was a great

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demand for such information in England; and, finally, in an American magazine, I read that there has not been attempted in America any effort worthy of the subject.

By drawing from twenty-five years of the most active experience in the newspaper business in America and Europe, varied by magazine work in the lines of travel and descriptive work—which is closer than a cousinship to newspaper work—I am going to tell what I know upon the subject. I will give the advice which I believe to be best for those who wish to enjoy and suffer the good and trying phases of this field of endeavor. It has its "grind," and that shall appear here. It has its dash and danger, its spice and glow, and these shall be described for all that they amount to. It has its honors and prizes; it carries with it importance to some who should stick to it and drudgery to others who should leave it—and this I will explain. And through all that follows the reader shall have incident, example, illustration, and story to clarify and illuminate the text.

Newspaper life, with its prizes and disappointments, is not a narrow field or a little subject—not if one realizes how wide one can stray without losing touch with it. Napoleon not only depended upon the press to prepare France for his

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plans and to execute many of them, but he directed and worked the newspapers in a way which was instinct with the spirit and genius of journalism. Bismarck's death leaves him revealed to us as an editorial manipulator of newspapers in a way and to a degree which assures us that the spirit of the newspaper man, as well as a correct view of the power and processes of the press, was his. Both of these great men showed that newspaper methods, when sublimated, reach far towards the realms of genius.

The Marquis of Salisbury was once a writer for the press—on editorial lines, to be sure—and yet these brought him into contact with the men and machinery of newspaperdom, and his ampler, mightier career cannot but have been affected by the experience. These examples reflect the spirit or genius of newspaper work; but how many know that there is even a monarch on one of the grandest thrones with whom the journalists half seriously claim a sort of mental kinship? His recent journey to the Holy Land was very like such a "sensation" as a modern millionaire-journalist might conceive and carry out to "increase circulation" — or popularity, in the case of an individual. The hasty ending of the trip, when it was found not to produce the stir that was expected, was also journalistic. Journalists see