

**MY DEBUT IN
JOURNALISM AND
OTHER ODD HAPPENINGS**

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My debut in journalism and other odd happenings by Walter P. Phillips

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WALTER P. PHILLIPS

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BY

WALTER P. PHILLIPS.



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1715
1871
1871

TO MY GALLANT COMRADES
IN THE RANKS OF
The United Press
THIS BOOK
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
My Debut in Journalism,	5
An Agreeable Saunterer,	23
Miss Britton's Romance,	45
An Evening Reverie,	65
Esther Romaine,	79
An Old Man's Exegesis,	111
Agnes Leigh,	121
Stage Coaching,	167
Old George Wentworth,	185

MY DEBUT IN JOURNALISM.

MY DEBUT IN JOURNALISM.

“IF you will come over and see Ferguson right away,” wrote my friend, the managing editor of *The Plantation Harbinger*, “I think you can obtain the position of local editor. Charlie Hurd has lit out.”

Ferguson was the proprietor of *The Harbinger*, and I was an ambitious telegraph operator eager to enter the journalistic field, so I went in pursuit of him. I met Hurd on my way over, and asked him what was the trouble, and where he was going.

“On the *Boston Globe*,” he answered. “Ferguson does not pay his help.”

“Why,” returned I, “his managing editor, Mr. Pickett, has just written me a note asking me to go and see Ferguson about the situation you have vacated. He said nothing about bad pay, simply stating that you had ‘lit out.’”

“Pickett is in the ring,” observed Hurd, significantly, and he hastened in the direction of the Boston depot.

It was with my enthusiasm considerably abated that I entered the presence of Mr. Ferguson. I knew him slightly, his rotund form and genial face, in connection with a stub-tailed horse and Concord wagon, being familiar to about every man, woman and child in town. He was a person who never wholly lost his *aplomb* under the most discouraging circumstances, as I afterward learned, and who, under ordinary conditions, was a perfect Chesterfield. It will be a good many years in the future before I shall have forgotten the cordial grasp he gave my hand, and the benignant smile which played upon his lips as he said :

“Mr. Pickett’s heart is set upon having you come on our paper as local editor. I have studied with great care such occasional work as you have done for us. It is exceedingly good. I am a man of few words, Mr. Phillips. I like you. I want you to like me. I do business on the square. I will pay you twenty dollars per week, and you get your cash every Saturday.” Afterward I learned that Ferguson never read a line in his paper unless his attention was called to something, and he read