Belles lettres and bell ringers

Journalistic vocations


If journalism is a profession (and Charles "Chuck" Rogers, '14 arts-sc., professor of journalism in the Kansas State Agricultural college, believes that it is one) then the beginner in the profession can ask for no better, no franker guide, to it than in Journalistic Vocations.

When the New York World went on the auction block, the editors of The New Republic declared that the fate of that liberal newspaper should prove a warning to the students of journalism now preparing for the professional schools of journalism. We are living in an age of newspaper consolidations. Henry Ford's remark that we will live to see the day when there are but eight great morning dailies is nearer realization than one likes to admit. The chain newspaper, with stereotyped policies, is making rapid progress. There are some of these chain alliances, like that of Scripps Howard, that exemplify the highest ideals of journalism. Others are frankly the converse. Two thousand employees were let out almost in a day when the World was absorbed by the Telegram. The latter newspaper took care of as many of these as it could. But of course, there was a limit to the number that newspaper could absorb.

Apart from this tendency towards consolidation, there has been a tendency also on the part of those engaged in the vocation to question the classification into which the newspaper worker falls. Is he a professional man? or is he a hired hand, without any ethical responsibility? Professor Rogers is neither too optimistic nor too pessimistic. There is much of value for the old head in the game, as well as for the fledgeling about to see what the whole thing is about. There are defects to the game and there are advantages. Mr Rogers sets them out with fairness. If he inclines to the favorable side of the ledger, why shouldn't he? What newspaper man has ever left the profession without secret misgivings?

Schools of journalism set out the ideals of the newspaper game; they teach of the ethics of the profession. The average student of such a school may obtain an impression which actual contact with the daily "grind" of the office will quickly dispel. Therefore there has been a need for a book like Journalistic Vocations to give an impartial view of the possibilities of all phases of journalism. Impartial, for there are features to newspaper work that some would well consider before entering the profession, and Mr Rogers considers these, as well as the opportunities.

Every phase of journalism is set out here for the beginner (and the old head, too, will find the perusal interesting and instructive) to consider. Even publicity, the belle noir of the city editor, is treated alongside of the free lance, the press association man, the editor. There are instructive chapters on women in journalism, the religious press, and a welcome chapter on the labor press. Charts and questions add value for those who would use the book as a textbook—J. A. B.

Crafts of the people

Mountain Homespun, By Frances L. Goodrich. New Haven. Yale University Press. 1931. $3.00.

The publication of Mountain Homespun is an event of double significance. It is of first importance to those interested in our native arts and is a literary contribution which fills an important place in the rapidly growing regionalist movement.

Members of both fields will receive gratefully this study of the peoples and crafts of the Southern Appalachian region.

The first part of the book is devoted to a study of the old crafts which were about to become extinct and to the revival of these crafts. Miss Goodrich tells of her first association with the mountain people in 1890 when she and a friend moved into the mountain district. The gift of an old coverlet, an act of pure neighborliness on the part of a mountain woman, opened her eyes to the value of the native crafts and stimulated her to the study of the old crafts which were to a study of the old crafts which were about to become extinct and to the revival of these crafts. Miss Goodrich tells of her first association with the mountain people in 1890 when she and a friend moved into the mountain district. The gift of an old coverlet, an act of pure neighborliness on the part of a mountain woman, opened her eyes to the value of the native crafts and stimulated her to the first steps in reviving the ancient handiwork of weaving, dyeing, and spinning.

She knew that the women of the community led monotonous lives and she saw that in encouraging a return to their arts she would be providing them with interest and a possible source of income. The result was the establishment in 1895 of the Allanstand Cottage Industries. The Allanstand Industries have been maintained successfully since that date and have been succeeded in like work by the Biltmore Estate Industries and the Toy Makers and Wood Carvers of Tyron. The development of these groups, working in allied lines and each establishing a criterion of finest craftsmanship, is a cultural trend which will undoubtedly influence the art history of our country for many years to come.

The second section of the book is concerned with "The People" and is a collection of sketches concerning characters and groups of the region which is very revealing. It would be impossible to convey the feeling of these stories for one must read them carefully in order to get the full portent behind their simplicity. In general they reveal the mountain people as unusually acute and often very acute and as personally generous and high minded. The fragments of dialect which are reproduced in the stories are astounding in the background of culture which they display. Many words have corrupted by frequent usage in the mountains, just as they are on the plains, but the root word discovered is almost invariably a highly literary and distinguished one.

The appendix to the book gives detailed illustrations and explanations of the tools of the weavers' and dyers' crafts and instructions as to how to carry out the drafts, or designs.

America's growing consciousness that there is native culture outside of the New England states finds confirmation in this book. The volume is handsomely illustrated.—Betty Kirk.

ALL FOR AMERICA

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