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WOMEN IN TELEGRAPHY

she is rising gradually but is not at the front.

Occupying Places of Responsibility, She Does not Have the Physical Strength to Compete Fully With Men—Her Opportunities and Abilities.

The woman operator is gradually rising higher and higher in the telegraph service. When she first came to the fore the man operator wanted to oust her from the field. He resented her encroachment, and said frankly that his main grievance against her was that she cut prices in salaries and thus secured places which he might have had. He even went so far as to declare that she was taking the very bread out of his mouth.

The woman operator made a mistake when she consented to work for next to nothing, a mistake which she is slow to acknowledge after a dozen years or more. Men often estimate a man by the value he sets on himself, provided he does not overestimate his importance; then they are likely to give him less than his just dues. They judge women in the same way, and so, while the men telegraphers and their sister operators have grown more friendly, strike together and work side by side, the men still have a feeling that woman do not cut much of a figure in the telegraphic world. The women themselves take an opposite view, and some of them who hold responsible places have a right to take such a view.

In this field of work, as in every other field where women have entered, their inferior physical strength gives men the advantage. Organized womanhood may prate all it pleases about the foolishness of this fact, for fact it is, but every individual bread-winning woman acknowledges it sooner or later. Women telegraphers have not yet risen to the highest places in the service, and men in a position to know say that it is exceedingly doubtful if they ever will, though they frankly admit that the women are steadily advancing.

A. E. Sink has more than two hundred telegraphers under his supervision in the Western Union building. Of these 250 are women who are engaged in operating, clerical and messenger work. When asked about the work of these women and of women operators generally and of their chances of rising to high places and high salaries, Mr. Sink said:

"I have nothing to say about women operators outside of this division before you, but of them I speak willingly. There are poor, medium and good operators of both sexes, and their advancement depends entirely on their ability and opportunity. Women, however, do not have the same opportunity for advancement, and neither do they get the salaries as a rule that men do who make telegraphy a life work. Here a woman does not rise to a higher place than that of chief operator, and we now have six. There is also one woman here at the head of one of the five grand divisions. She has an assistant and four subordinates. Though there are women here who can stand as much work as the best men in the place, because of their strong nerves, this is not generally so, and we have to depend upon men exclusively to do the night work. Occasionally in a great rush the women work until 9 o'clock at night, and are always paid for overtime. Their hours are from 8 A. M. to 5 30 P. M. and their salaries for operating range and have been raised from \$6 to \$18 a week.

"Women are exceedingly valuable as operators for their faithfulness, and they are exceedingly trustworthy. Their merit as telegraphers is looked into before they start in. We have a test chief who tries their ability by operating with them for a sufficient length of time to get at their ability in sending and receiving messages, and their general ability; and they are graded according to this test. Their salaries are fixed by it, the salaries being flexible, as I've said. Nervousness is likely to show in one of these test examinations, as in examinations of all sorts, and allowances are made. If the merit of an operator is not fully revealed in the first test the chief reviews the operator later but experience has enabled him to tell pretty accurately the ability of an operator."

"How much knowledge of electricity must a woman have to be an operator or manager of an office?" was asked.

"When a woman operator first starts in," answered Mr. Sink, "she is not required to have any knowledge of electricity, but if she wishes to rise to the higher places in

the service, such as that of traffic or wire chief, she must become acquainted with the fundamental principles of electrical science to a degree that will enable her to do the simple work of switching and caring for traffic. It is of course necessary here to have an expert at the head of each department, and these experts are responsible and make hourly reports to me. A woman who wishes to advance should become familiar with the geography of the country, the location of wires in her department, and should understand all rules governing the transmission of telegrams such, for example, as the precedence which Government telegrams take over all others. She should understand what troubles might arise in handling traffic, such as diverting it from one channel to another, and a thousand and one other things. The chance for advancement for woman—and, mind you, I've been speaking only of those under my immediate supervision—is limited, I should say, but there are hundreds of other offices where woman may become managers, and in that way secure good places and salaries."

The next authority interviewed thought that the world wouldn't stop going round if there were no women telegraph operators, and gave the impression that they are more machine-like in their work than their instruments. He was William J. Ackerly, who represents the Western Union Telegraph Company at the Grand Central Station and is in charge of a division which takes in two railroads, on which a number of women are employed as operators. Mr. Ackerly knows a great deal about the general run of women operators and did not hesitate to hazard an opinion.

"A woman operator's work, so far as railroads are concerned," he began, "is confined to telegraphy and clerical work and I don't see any chance of enlarging the field. Women operators are not used to the full extent by railroads now, because they are not physically able to do more. The field would broaden if they could tend switches and signal lights and handle baggage and freight in addition to operating and selling tickets. Since they can't do these things, where a man gets \$50 a month a woman only commands \$35 or perhaps not that much. I should say their salaries are 15 per cent, less than those of men in the service of railway companies. In the regular telegraphic service they go as high as assistant managers and even managers of city departments, but in the railroad service they do not advance. A woman could never become manager of a division, for she was not made to take charge of so many men. A man in charge of a division has often more than a hundred offices under his charge."

"But if a woman does just the same work that a man does and just as good work, does she not then get the same pay?"

"No," answered Mr. Ackerly. "Take it right here in New York city where there are a great many women telegraph operators. Their salaries, I feel pretty sure will average 10 per cent, less than those of men. In the first place, they neither demand nor command as much as men. They are only fitted, by physique, to do the lighter work in the service, and of course they must expect lighter pay. In nearly every hotel in the city a woman operator is stationed. She is perfectly capable of doing the kind of work that comes to her well, and the companies use women for economical reasons.

"This city operators have to have quite an idea of electricity, but I've known a great many fine women telegraphers who could not adjust their instruments. In truth, very few women make good electricians. They don't take to it. The average woman seems to have no general idea of the action of electricity on her machine. Women operators are likely to be machine-like in their work, and I am sometimes forced to think that they do not display as good judgment as men with the same experience. Especially is this true in business telegrams, for they have not the same general ideas of business. When a man operator receives a business message and gets a word that makes no sense he reports it at once, while a woman would not see the mistake. In ordinary work women are good, but they will never attain to the highest places and salaries."

"Then why did the men raise such a hue and cry when they entered it?" asked the reporter.

"Because women offered to work for so much less, was the answer, and there is a large class of telegraphic work that they can do and do well. Up to the time of the last strike, which was in 1888, there was considerable feeling between men and women telegraphers, because the women consented to work for about one-half, but at that time the girls went right out with the men, and since then their relations have been more pleasant. When the men went back they carried the women with them, but the men have always filled the larger and better places, and have received better pay, while the women are content with lighter work and less wages, and I think

things will continue that way, though the women themselves may hold another opinion."

Miss S. L. Knapp, who is manager of one of the most important offices in the city, at 1398 Broadway, does hold another opinion, which is probably that of the average woman telegrapher. In ten years Miss Knapp has risen from an office in an out-of-the-way country hotel to the present responsible place. She hopes to deserve a still better one. She has eight operators and four clerks under her, and besides overlooking their work, attends personally to all of the banking and transfer business of her office and keeps the books.

"I believe that there are large opportunities before the woman telegrapher," she said in response to a question, "and I see no reason why she should not fill the higher places in the regular telegraph service as well as men. She is not physically able to take charge of railroad station offices where work other than operating has to be done, but there is no reason why she should not serve as a manager chief operator or division chief. So far women operators have never been allowed to do press work. This must be because most press despatches are taken and sent at night and women are not often used for night work."

"Perhaps that is because they are not able to stand the strain of night work," suggested the reporter.

"I think women quite strong enough to stand any branch of telegraphy which does not require manual labor," answered Miss Knapp. "I've been manager of this office two years and have lost only one half day on account of sickness, and the girls who are under me are always in their places. My experience has been that women are more careful, more accurate telegraphers than men, and they are certainly more interested in their work, and I think more ambitious."

"This is an agreeable, clean business for a woman, too. She is well protected and very well paid, and the work is not very hard. It is certainly not hard physically. The girls here are average operators, and I consider them experts. They take the message by ear and transcribe them directly on the typewriter. Last Saturday and Sunday we handled 1,442 telegrams without a hitch. This office is open day and night, including Sundays, and I don't see but that it runs as smoothly as if a man managed it and all the operators were men."

"A great many women operators learn telegraphy at Cooper Union, where they have an excellent six months' course, but one can acquire expertness only by actual experience. Many operators teach their brothers and sisters, and in that way the ranks are being constantly recruited with boys and girls, and I'll stake the latter against the former for good work every time."

THE BOYS CALLED HIM MIKE.

It Grieved His Mother, but the "Old Man" Thought It Was Smart.

"Where's the boy?" inquired Mr. Spadina, cheerfully, and it occurred to him that it was about time for his 7-year-old son to bid him good night.

"The boy," replied Mrs. Spadina severely, "is in bed."

"Not sick?"

"No he is not sick," said Mrs. Spadina, in a tone that implied something even worse. "I've been waiting for an opportunity to tell you all about it, but have not had a chance until now. It just means this, that we must move away from this neighborhood. It's no place to bring up a boy, and I just won't stand it. We must get a house in some part of the city where Harold will have nice children to play with."

"But what's the matter?" asked the husband with concern. "What has happened?"

"Well, I'm telling you just as fast as I can. This afternoon when the doorbell rang, I was in the hall and answered the door myself, for I saw a boy there. On opening the door the boy said to me: 'Please can Mike come out and play ball?' I told him that we had no Mike here, and said he had called at the wrong house. 'No,' he said, I mean Mike, you know—your boy Mike. I guess you call him Harold,' he said.

"Now, what do you think of that? Well, you may be sure I told that boy what I thought of him, and he began to whimper and said that Harold had licked him—that's just what he said—Harold had licked him yesterday for not calling him Mike, and every body called him Mike at school. And it's worse than that, for they call him Mike Spad—not Harold Spadina, but Mike Spad."

"Well, upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Spadina.

"I marched out into his dining room, where Harold was eating some bread and butter," continued Mrs. Spadina, "and I went for him, and do you know that child sat up in his chair and said that he'd rather be called Mike than Harold, and, that since his chums had started to call him

Mike Spad, the other gang's afraid of him. Well, I just sent him off to bed at 5 o'clock, and he's there yet. Mike Spad," she added with intense feeling on each word.

"The little scamp!" exclaimed Mr. Spadina.

"We have been talking of getting a better house in some other part of the city for a long time," said Mrs. Spadina, "and I'm sick and tired of this place. We can't send him over to that school any longer, with its rowdy names and its gangs and its fighting. Harold has clearly been fighting for the boy said as much."

The father was looking silently at the ceiling. He generally thought matters over before giving his decision, and Mrs. Spadina cautiously went upstairs, where she found the formidable Mike Spad sound asleep and with the clothing kicked off him.

And Mr. Spadina said: "At school they used to call me Bump." And presently he smiled and, knocking the ash off his cigar, he chuckled: "There's good stuff in Mike. I wonder how big the boy was that he wallowed!"

And the important point is that of the son, the mother and the father, one was as true to human nature as either of the others.

A DEAD HEAT.

Decision of a Referee That Rotted the French Canadian Narrator.

"Las' wintaire we have race on de hico. I have horse dat trots ver' fas', but I not be go to dem race yet. One day I go in de Hotel Chien Blanc an' I tek tree four wiskee blanc. Dare be some peop' dere an' one of dem say:

"I not see you h'at de race yet, Napoleon."

"Anoder he say: 'How dat? You not come to de race no more, Napoleon?'"

"Den Felix Leblanc say, 'Mon dieu! dey be too fas' dem race. Napoleon not got fas' horse no more.'"

"Wat dat?" I say. "I got no fas' horse? Sacre! I got de mos' fas' horse on dat hico."

"Den Felix say, 'Napoleon you drink too much wiskee blanc. It got your head. You not got so fas' horse dan me.'"

"Well, I say, 'mabbe so; mait, I bet fift' dollar my horse more fas' dan yours.'"

"I tek dat bet," Felix say. "Who we place dat money wit'?"

"Jacques Bernard, dat keep de Hotel Chien Blanc, say. 'Francois Savard here be ver' good man. You place dat money wit him.'"

"We both say, 'Sare he good man. He be all right.'"

"We give de hund' dollar to Francois Savard and we fix for that race be tro Sar'day. Sat'day I tek my horse on de hico and Felix tek his horse on de hico. Dare be plenty peop' dere. All my frien' they come; and Felix frien' dey come; everybody dat hear 'bout dat beeg race be come too. Dey mek plenty talk; dey mek plenty bet. Some say I win, sure; some say Felix win sure; and every one be ver' much h'excite' 'bout dat beeg race."

"By 'n' by we msk for start. We score for while, den de juge say 'Go! and de peop' dey halt shout D'y's hiff!' We come to de quarantine and we be neck an' neck. Den my horse be golek de win' too; mais Felix horse be golek the win' too. We come to de 'alf an' we be neck an' neck. D-n my horse be fly; mais Felix horse be fly, too; and den we go ver' fas'. We golek dat. D-n Felix be leete bit 'head. I be hon de hinside and Felix be hon de hout-side. D-n de hico m-k clack! clack! and Felix horse be hin de wa aire. I finish dat race."

"All de peop' run for try save Felix

horse, but Felix horse be drown. I go to Felix an' I say.

"I be ver' sorry Felix for your horse be drown, but I win dat race. I tek dat hund' dollar."

"Sacre! heavy; you not win dat race; dat hund' dollar not yours. Dat not my fu't my horse be drown."

"Bapteme! I say, 'dat not my fault, too!'"

"Felix tek an' I talk an' all our frien' talk, an' den I say: 'Felix, we leave all dat Francois Savard. S'pose he say I win, dat be 'rect. S'pose he say you win, dat be 'rect, too.'"

"Bien! he say; 'we leave dat Francois Savard. Wat he say be good'."

"We fin' Francois Savard an' I say, 'M'sieu Savard, I win dat race an' I want dat hund' dollar!'"

"But Felix say, 'He not win dat race an' you not be pay Napoleon dat hund' dollar.'"

"Den we talk some more an' all our frien' dey talk some more, too. Den I say, 'M'sieu Savard, we 'gree for lef' all dat for you. Wat you say be 'rect'."

"Francois Savard say, 'How dat, Felix, dat you say Napoleon not win de race? He come in fir's. He mus' win de race.'"

"Felix say, 'Well, my horse be 'head w'en de hico she brek an' my horse be drown. Dat not my fault de hico br'k.'"

"Francois Savard say, 'Sare! dat not be your fault. Felix an' Napoleon you both 'gree for lef' dat to me. Wat I say be 'rect?'"

"Oui, I say, 'dat be 'rect wat you say.' Felix say 'Oui!' dat be 'rect.'"

"Francois Savard say, 'Felix horse be drown. Den dat race is dead heat. I kep' dat money till she be trot ovaire 'gain.'"

"Sacre cochon! Damm scoundsel!"

Courtship in Mexico.

If the young woman favors the suit she gradually advances, from occasional glimpses of herself behind a half-closed shutter, to a position on the balcony at certain hours of the day. Then love is made in the most ardent fashion, either by the finger alphabet or by a little telephone especially manufactured and sold for the purpose, one part of which the young girl retains while she drops the other to the lover waiting below. When she has signified her willingness to enter the home and addresses the parents. If they have no objections to him he is then permitted to visit the house perhaps twice a week and see his sweetheart, always in the presence of one or more members of the family, until the day of the wedding arrives. The breaking of an engagement is the rarest of all rare things in Mexico, and an insincere lover is an anomaly. Plenty there are who are not worthy and who are unsuccessful in their suit, because, often, of the wisdom of the parents, but the Mexican lover has nothing to gain by insincere attentions.

The Origin of Scalping.

At the annual meeting of the Baltimore Folk Lore Society Miss Alice C. Fletcher gave an interesting contribution in a paper entitled 'The Significance of the Scalp Lock; a Study of the Omaha Tribe.' The Omaha Indians, like many other tribes, have peculiar ideas regarding a continuity of life and a kind of spiritual link between animate and inanimate objects. They believe a piece of any article connects them with the entirety. The hair is thought to have a close connection with life, and one possessing it may work his will upon whoever or whatever the hair belonged to. From this idea came the custom of scalping enemies.—Boston Evening Transcript.

Plain Proof.

"But ggs: 'I didn't know you were near-sighted.'"

"Griggs: 'Near-sighted! Why, I walked up to one of my creditors yesterday.'"

SKILL OF DOCTORS TESTED.

Fifteen Years of Suffering.

"I thought I should surely die."

When the stomach begins to fail in its duties, other organs speedily become affected in sympathy, and life is simply a burden almost unbearable. Indigestion and dyspepsia are so common that only the sufferer from these diseases knows the possibilities of misery that inhere in them. A typical example of the sufferings of the victim of indigestion is furnished in the case of John C. Fritchard. He went on for fifteen years, from bad to worse. In spite of doctors he grew constantly weaker, and thought he would die. He got well, however, and thus relates his experience:

"For fifteen years I was a great sufferer from indigestion in its worst forms. I tested the skill of many doctors, but grew worse and worse, until I became so weak I could not walk fifty yards without having to sit down and rest. My stomach, liver, and heart became affected, and I thought I would surely die. I tried Dr. J. C. Ayer's Pills and they helped me right away. I continued their use and am now entirely well. I don't know of anything that will so quickly relieve and cure the terrible sufferings of dyspepsia as Dr. Ayer's Pills."—JOHN C. FRITCHARD, Brodie, Warren Co., N. C.

This case is not extraordinary, either in

the severity of the disease or the prompt and perfect cure performed by Dr. Ayer's Pills. Similar results occur in every case where Dr. Ayer's Pills are used. "They helped me right away" is the common expression of those who have used them. Here is another testimony to the truth of this statement:

"I formerly suffered from indigestion and weakness of the stomach, but since I began the use of Dr. J. C. Ayer's Pills, I have the appetite of the farmer's boy. I am 46 years of age, and recommend all who wish to be free from dyspepsia to take one of Dr. Ayer's Pills after dinner, till their digestive organs are in good order."—WM. STRENSKE, Grant, Neb.

Dr. Ayer's Pills offer the surest and swiftest relief from constipation and all its attendant ills. They cure dizziness, nausea, heartburn, palpitation, bad breath, coated tongue, nervousness, sleeplessness, biliousness, and a score of other affections that are, after all, only the signs of a more deep rooted disease. You can find more information about Dr. Ayer's Pills, and the diseases they have cured, in Ayer's Cure-book, a story of cures told by the cured. This book of 100 pages is sent free, on request, by the J. C. Ayer Co., Lowell, Mass.