

HOW TO BE A
JOURNALIST

"I believe that in the years ahead of us the power of the Press in India will increase. Papers which are edited with wisdom and conducted with vigour, based on sound principles and the adoption of up-to-date methods of production, will be more and more indispensable as India advances towards self-government."

SIR SAMUEL HOARE
(Former Secretary of State for India)



PLATE I.—THE CREED TELEPRINTER.

A mechanical link between the sub-editors' room and the outside world. At the transmitting station (Reuters) messages are tapped out on machines resembling typewriters, which perforate tape in Morse. The tape then passes through a Morse transmitter, which sends out signals along the telegraph lines at the rate of 200 words a minute. In the newspaper office the signals are received on a Creed receiving reperforator, and the perforated tape passes through the Creed Teleprinter which transliterates the perforations and prints the messages in roman characters on a roll of paper. A message is just "coming through."

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BY

ADOLPH MYERS

OF

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INTRODUCTION

THE engineer may write about road-making, the teacher about teaching, the actor about acting; no-one will object. But let a journalist write a book on his craft and there is immediately an outcry. "Journalism cannot be learnt from a book!" "Journalism cannot be taught!" "Journalists are born, not made!" So runs the refrain.

Of course journalism cannot be learnt from a book. But no more can road-making, teaching, acting. Why then the distinction? It is the penalty that journalism pays for being an "open" profession, unique of its kind, against entry to which inability is the only disability.

For the result of this seductive case of entry is that most men and women, at one time or another, seriously think of "taking up journalism," either as a productive side-line or as a career. When they do so their first impulse is to buy a book about it; and there have not been wanting "journalists" to assure them that nothing more is needed.

Hence the confusion; because despite the fact that very much more is needed—which may be summed up in two words, ability and practice—I still maintain that a book of this nature can be of help. How? Divide men into three classes for assessment of native journalistic ability: those that are so devoid of it as to be beyond help; those that have so much of it that they do not need help; those that have just enough of

it to make help worth while. It is, paradoxical as it may sound, for all three classes that this book, as well as its companion volume, may be of help.

By showing just what is needed it may save the first class the anguish of repeated disappointment, lure the second class to success, encourage the third class to make the necessary effort.

This book treats for the most part of *what* to write and in what *form* to write for a newspaper, in English or any other language. For those who feel the need for instruction and practice in *how* to write for *English* newspapers I am preparing a companion volume to be called *Journalism Self-Taught*, with numerous exercises in English and Journalism. A key to the exercises will be published separately.

By including the illustrations, together with rather long explanatory captions, I have been enabled to give a description of some of the numerous and complicated mechanical processes involved in newspaper production, which otherwise could hardly have found a place in a book of this kind.

I am indebted to the authors of numerous books, pamphlets and articles which have been quoted or consulted. (A list is appended.)

Finally I must recall that much of the material of this book is based upon a series of talks, on "Journalism as a Career", which I broadcast from the Bombay Station of the Indian State Broadcasting Service. I have to thank Mr. C. B. Sethna, O. B. E., J. P., who has since become Director of the Delhi Station, for permission to publish this material in book form.

ADOLPH MYERS

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It would obviously be impossible within the limits of a short bibliography to give a detailed account of all the literature about journalism in its various aspects, the volume of which is daily increasing. The following are those works which have been of most direct and recent assistance to me in the writing of this book, and to whose authors I am therefore most indebted.

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