

"Can a man hope to make a living by writing for the magazines, Mr. Gilder?" I asked.

"A number of persons are now doing so," was the reply.

"What advice would you give to a young writer who is anxious to succeed?"

"To always write the very best that is in him, and to be never satisfied with anything less than his best."

"What is the chief trouble with new writers? Why do they not last?"

"I think it is because they write chiefly for the sake of getting their matter into print and not to do the best that is in them. The amateur often seems to think that if his articles can be published, that that is all that can be desired. He feels also, that after he has had one or two such publications, the magazines are open to him, and anything that he may write is good enough to publish. So he dashes off something and sends it on the rounds. Instead of putting all the inspiration, study and thought there is in him into his article to produce a work of art; instead of keeping the matter by him and working it over, he sends it off at the close of the first draft, content with mediocrity or at least with much less than the best work that is in him."

"But after all, Mr. Gilder, only a very few articles are accepted out of those which the magazines receive."

"Yes," was the reply, "that is true. We can use only between four and five per cent. of the articles which are sent to us. The manuscripts which we annually receive amount to about 10,000. We can print only about 400; so you see we must reject many very good articles. As it is, we buy more than we should. There is a never-ending temptation to purchase new matter, and the result is that we have a great amount of literary capital stored away upon the payments for which we receive no interest, and some of which we shall never be able to use."

"You have been with the Century since its beginning, Mr. Gilder; will you please tell me how the magazine was started?"

"What is now called the Century Magazine," replied Mr. Gilder, "was, during the first ten years of its existence, known as Scribner's Monthly. It was founded by the Scribners, J. G. Holland and Roswell Smith. The idea originated with the Scribners. They had been publishing an illustrated monthly under the title of Hours at Home. Then Mr. Scribner proposed to Dr. J. G. Holland that he should come to New York and together they should found a magazine with illustrations. J. G. Holland had been very successful as one of the editors of the Springfield Republican, and his book had had a very wide sale. The Timothy Titcomb letters, which first appeared in the Republican, had been published in book form by the Scribners and had had an enormous circulation. Holland's Life of Lincoln had been very widely read, and so also had his poem "Bitter-Sweet." When Mr. Scribner asked Dr. Holland to join him in the founding of a magazine, Dr. Holland replied that he would do so, provided Mr. Scribner would allow him to choose a partner. To this Mr. Scribner consented, and Dr. Holland chose Mr. Roswell Smith, who took a third of the stock, and became the business manager of the new enterprise. Before Dr. Holland

died, Mr. Smith bought a large part of his stock, having already bought out the Scribner interest. The principal workers on the magazine and on St. Nicholas, also became stockholders. The name of the magazine was changed to The Century."

I here referred to the editorial features of the Century. It is, you know, the only magazine of the world which takes sides upon leading questions and which aims to discuss the great movements in art, science, society, politics and religion. I asked Mr. Gilder where this feature of the Century originated. He replied:

"There were editorials in the magazine from the start. Dr. Holland had a department entitled "Topics of the Time," which expressed the opinions of the editor upon things which were uppermost. We have the same department today."

"Do you think such editorials have much weight, Mr. Gilder?"

"I think that a magazine like this can do a great deal to help along in the work of reform. The Century has done what it could to bring about an un-partisan victory for sound money. I think we accomplished something in aiding in the overthrow of the Louisiana lottery. The War Series and the Life of Lincoln have done much to moderate the feeling between the people of the North and South, and there are other similar things I might mention."

"What do you consider the leading issue before the country today?" I asked.

"We believe," replied the editor of the Century, "that one of the greatest movements going on in Christendom is the growing interest in the government of cities. We are helping to arouse public sentiment in this matter. We have published papers by Dr. Washington Gladden, Dr. Shaw and others relating to it, with a view to increasing civic patriotism among the people. We are advocating the separation of city politics from national politics, and we shall oppose the political machine wherever it interferes with civic development."

"What success are you having?"

"I think," replied Mr. Gilder, "that the people are now beginning to realize that our cities are behind those of the rest of the world in honest, efficient and progressive municipal government. The bosses have already discovered that their selfish and monopolistic distribution of patronage is being interfered with, and they are now making their last attack upon civil service reform."

"Do you mean by that, Mr. Gilder, that the days of bossism are numbered?"

"If by numbered you mean that bossism is about to die, I would say that I believe that it will be a long time before the system will entirely pass away. I do think, however, that our people are beginning to wake up to the fact that the political machines are mere labor bureaus, each having its respective clientele, the members of which it tries to keep in official work without regard to merit. If, on the other hand, it is said that the merit system may also be called a labor bureau, it can be asserted that it is one working for the interests of the whole people, and especially for those of the poor man."

Frank G. Carpenter

THE OVERLAND MAIL.

As the approaching Pioneer Jubilee awakens recollections of scenes and events incident to the early history of this country, and as the Overland Mail and Pony Express are to have no special representation in our Jubilation, perhaps it will not be uninteresting to recall some reminiscences of those times.

Many articles on these subjects have been written by authors eminent in literature, obtaining their inspiration through the window of a Palace car. The callow college graduate in his sensational and frantic efforts to point a Faber and adorn a tale, has given us bloodcurdling particulars of something he had no experience in or opportunities to learn.

Previous to 1857 our mail facilities were meager and its arrival irregular, especially in the winter. The deep snow, the absence of stations on the route, provisions and feed for animals making it extremely hazardous to attempt the trip. But even these difficulties were overcome by the hardy men who braved the storms and perils attending the passage of the mountain ranges in the winter season, often having to drag the mail on rawhides for miles over the snow, and the hardships endured by Charles Decker and "Eph" Hauke are proverbial among old-timers in the State.

In the spring of 1857 Hiram Kimball secured the contract for carrying the U. S. mails between Leavenworth and Salt Lake City and sub-let it to the B. Y. Express company. This company equipped its route with light wagon, mules and herd animals, erected stations at convenient distances, provisioned them and prepared for successfully carrying the mails and passengers. They made but two or three trips when the postal authorities refused to deliver the mail to this company for the reason that the military expedition had been ordered to Utah. The contract was taken from the B. Y. Express company and without any compensation to them for their loss was given to Hockaday & Burr, who continued to carry the mails between Leavenworth and Fort Bridger until the army moved and then to Salt Lake City. This concern was represented here by P. K. Dotson and George Merrick. This company disposed of its route to Major John Kerr, McGraw and others; Kerr succeeded by Fickland as superintendent and William Ashton as agent of the first division, and this company was succeeded by Russell—Major and associates with A. B. Miller as city agent "Old Ben" Fickland, succeeded by Clute as superintendent and James E. Bromley, agent of the first or mountain division and the notorious Blade, agent of the next division east. This company was soon absorbed by Jones, Cartwright & Co., and in the winter of 1861-2, Ben Holiday took possession of the road with Col. Eaton as superintendent, Holiday having had a chattel mortgage on it for some time before.

The rebellion breaking out in the spring of 1861, the government became apprehensive of danger to the southern overland route, liable as it was to interruption from the confederates, especially in Texas and New Mexico, and considering it of great importance