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INSTRUCTION IN JOURNALISM IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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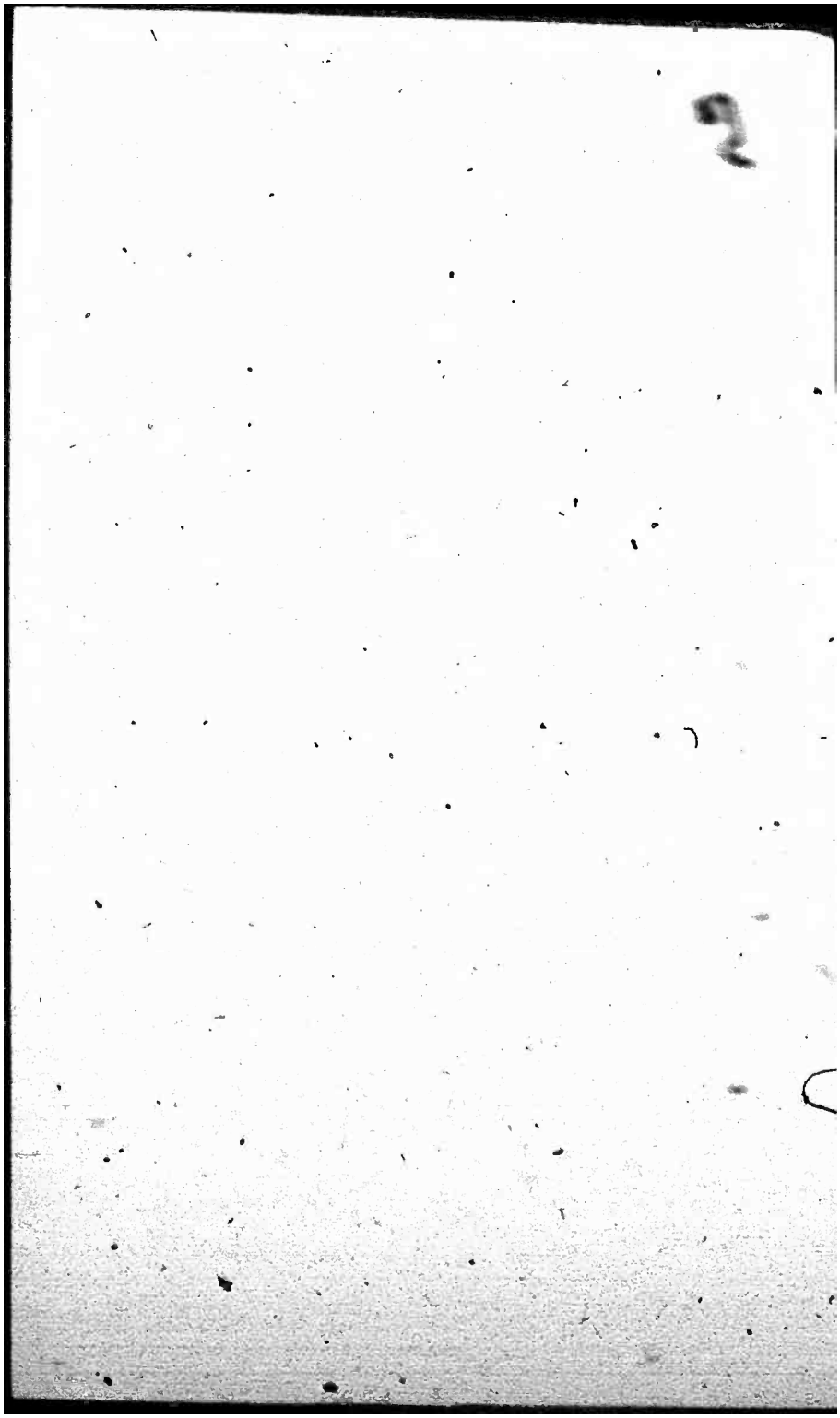

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
BUREAU OF EDUCATION,
Washington, D. C., July 15, 1918.

SIR: Probably the chief advantage which a democracy has over other forms of government and society lies in the fact that it constitutes within itself a great school, stimulating its citizens to the acquirement of information about public affairs and training them in intelligent thinking on all subjects of public interest. In this school the public press is to a very large extent both textbook and teacher. As a democracy advances toward its ideals the truth of these principles is increasingly apparent. As the public interests which depend on the public press for presentation and as a channel of discussion become more numerous and complex the art of making the newspaper becomes more difficult and exacting and the need for systematic instruction in it becomes greater and more apparent. It is out of the feeling of this need that the schools of journalism and the less pretentious courses of instruction in journalism have grown up in many of our institutions of higher education and have become so numerous as to justify the publication of the accompanying manuscript, "Instruction in Journalism in Institutions of Higher Education," which has been prepared at my request by James Melvin Lee, director of the department of journalism, New York University.

Respectfully submitted.

P. P. CLAXTON,
Commissioner.

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

INSTRUCTION IN JOURNALISM IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

The reconstruction period of American history saw the first attempt on the part of an institution of higher education to add technical instruction in journalism to the curriculum. Strangely enough, the attempt was made in the South, at what was then known as Washington College, but what is to-day Washington and Lee University. Gen. Robert E. Lee had been made president of this college, and was seeking to train the youth of the South, not in the ways of war but in those of peace. Convinced that the press could aid greatly in the solution of the problems then confronting the South, he sent to the board of trustees of Washington College the following recommendation on March 30, 1869:

> I beg leave to submit for your consideration several propositions from the faculty which would not have been presented until your regular meeting in June but for the fact that, should they receive your approbation, the necessary changes in the catalogue of the present session, now preparing for publication, will be made.
>
> The proposition recommending the institution of 50 scholarships for young men proposing to make printing or journalism their profession * * *.
>
> I will only add that all the foregoing subjects have been maturely considered by the faculty and have received their unanimous assent.
>
> Respectfully submitted.
>
> (Signed) R. E. LEE,
> *Pres. W. C.*

The board of trustees, upon the receipt of President Lee's letter, adopted the following resolutions, already passed by the faculty of Washington College:

> ***Resolved***, That the board of trustees be requested to authorize the faculty to appoint to scholarships, to be called _____ scholarships, not exceeding 50 in number, young men intending to make practical printing and journalism their business in life, such scholarships to be free from tuition and college fees on condition that, when required by the faculty, they shall perform such disciplinary duties as may be assigned them in a printing office or in other positions in the line of their profession for a time equal to one hour in each working day.
>
> ***Resolved***, That the board of trustees be requested, in order to carry out the foregoing provision into effect, to make such arrangements for or with a printing office as may afford practical instruction and, so far as practicable, compensate employment in their business to such young men.

At the June meeting of the board the faculty reported, on press scholarships, that "a limited number of boys can receive instruction in the printing office of Messrs. Lafferty & Co., in this town, for the present, without charge or cost to the college." Notices about such instruction in journalism appeared in the catalogue of Washington College until 1878.

Two points in this—the first announcement of any "school of journalism," deserve special attention: First, practical instruction was to supplement the work of the classroom; second, the use of the preposition "for," in "to make such arrangements for or with a printing office as may afford practical instruction," shows clearly that Gen. Lee had a vision of a printing plant that might, at a later date, be installed at Washington College.

The suggestion that technical instruction in journalism be provided at Washington College was not welcomed by the fourth estate of the time. Frederic Hudson, the managing director of the New York Herald, when asked, "Have you heard of the proposed training school for journalists?" promptly replied, "Only casually, in connection with Gen. Lee's college, and I can not see how it could be made very serviceable. Who are to be the teachers? The only place where one can learn to be a journalist is in a great newspaper office." E. L. Godkin, of the New York Evening Post, characterized "the establishing of a special chair or the opening of a special class of journalism in colleges" as an absurdity. William Hyde, editor of the Missouri Republican, when asked "Is a school of journalism possible?", replied, "For any practical good: no." The idea was too progressive for the time, when the only way to learn law then was to help an old lawyer draw up papers after the student had swept out the office in the morning; the only way to study medicine was to help a doctor of the old school to mix his pills and powders after the student had cleaned the horse and washed the buggy. Therefore, the only way to study journalism was to help a printer wash the type after the student had dumped the editor's wastebasket. But Gen. Lee had a vision, and he tried to make his dream come true.

At the time, the only great editor who favored a school of journalism was Whitelaw Reid, of the New York Tribune. He ventured the prophecy that "we shall see the time when the strictly professional education of journalists will be far better than it is now." He advocated a school because its training would tend to develop "a professional esprit de corps that will discourage the habit of perpetual personal attacks upon individual editors rather than upon the newspapers they conduct and the principles they advocate." In the early seventies he delivered, at the New York University, a lecture on Schools of Journalism, in which he outlined a plan for

such instruction. Clearly and succinctly did he state just what such a special department in a university might hope to accomplish. Mr. Reid said:

> West Point can not make a soldier, and New York University can not give us an assurance of an editor. But West Point can give the training, the discipline, and the special knowledge without which the born soldier would find his best efforts crippled, and with which men, not born to military greatness, may still do valuable service. This university may yet do as much for the embryo Bryants, Greeleys, Woods, Raymonds, Ritchies, and Hales, who are to transform American journalism into a profession, and emulate the laurels of these earlier leaders, with larger opportunities on a wider stage to more beneficent ends.

While these words were spoken of the proposed training at New York University, they are equally applicable to-day to the institutions of higher education now offering courses in journalism.

Andrew D. White, of Cornell, was another university president who wanted instruction in journalism added to the curriculum. On May 29, 1875, he wrote to a New York journalist:

> I have long wished to establish general and special courses in our colleges and universities with reference to those contemplating journalism as their profession in life.

Outlining the tentative plans at Cornell, he mentioned that one of the features was to be—

> practical instruction, but on the usual basis of laboratory practice in courses of scientific instruction in the university printing office, so as to give the students the advantage of a knowledge of the practical details of printing and the ability to take charge of any ordinary newspaper establishment at the outset.

He proposed to give, in addition to the baccalaureate degree, a special certificate to be known as "Certificate in Journalism." Unfortunately, circumstances prevented him from carrying out his program in detail. Yet, as a matter of record, mention should be made of this attempt at Cornell to offer courses in journalism, for some work was actually done by way of special lectures.

FAVORABLE OPINIONS.

In 1888 Eugene M. Camp, of the editorial staff of the Philadelphia Times, collected the opinions of a number of leading editors and publishers on technical instruction in journalism. Most of the editors interviewed saw no reason why journalism should not follow in the steps of law and medicine. Charles Emory Smith, of the Philadelphia Press, pointed out that, "while in law and in medicine there may be a substitute for this form of instruction, there is none in journalism." He emphasized also that the "direction and suggestion which will serve to guide the beginner and introduce him to journalism as a profession rather than a daily task must come

from oral instruction." Such oral instruction, provided that it be from a journalist of ability and experience, would, in the opinion of George William Curtis, of Harper's Weekly, "be quite as serviceable to the tyro in journalism as the lectures of the professor of law or medicine to the young student." William Penn Nixon, of the Chicago Inter-Ocean, knew "no reason why a young journalist should not be as much improved by proper training as the embryo lawyer or doctor, if the teacher sent "his pupils right out to practical work under his eye." Col. A. K. McClure strongly favored such special education. The opinion of Henry Watterson, of the Louisville Courier-Journal, was, in a certain sense, an echo of that of Whitelaw Reid: "Such a school would no more make a journalist than West Point makes a soldier. But it would lay the needful foundations."

These opinions show a most wonderful change in the attitude of editors toward a special department in a university for instruction in journalism, for not quite a score of years had elapsed since Gen. Lee laid his proposition before the board of trustees of Washington College. No more striking change in editorial opinion may be found in the history of American journalism.

In presenting these interviews, along with others, to the alumni of the Wharton School of Finance of the University of Pennsylvania, Mr. Camp quoted still further from the letter of Henry Watterson, "No better site for such a department of a university can be found than the city of Philadelphia," as an introduction to his plea for the establishment of journalism courses at his alma mater.

A BEGINNING IN REAL TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.

To the University of Pennsylvania belongs the honor of doing the first real work in technical instruction as that term is now understood. The courses were given by Joseph French Johnson, formerly of the Chicago Tribune. Prof. Johnson insisted that his work be known as "courses in journalism" and not as a "school of journalism." His idea was that a university should not profess to equip men fully for newspaper work, but merely to give them a certain training which would be useful in newspaper offices. He felt that, while the institution that would deserve to be called a school of journalism was both possible and desirable, the University of Pennsylvania was not then ready to create such a school and the public was not ripe for it. His work consisted of the following courses:

Newspaper practice.—This was really a course in news writing, where students were given various assignments to report university functions, ball games, etc. In this connection the city of Philadelphia was utilized in many minor ways as a news laboratory. The course also included a certain amount of copy reading and editorial revision.

Current topics.—This course, as its name implies, was a study of the questions of the day. Frequently various members of the university faculty were called in to discuss questions which naturally belonged to their departments. Students were required to prepare special articles on men and matters of moment and occasionally to write editorials on topics relating to current events.

History of journalism.—In this course the growth and development of the newspaper was taken up in detail by special lectures by the instructor. It was a one-semester course.

Art of newspaper making.—This course was devoted more to the mechanical side, with a discussion of the functions of the various editors, subeditors, reporters, etc. During the semester in which this class met trips were taken to the plants of several Philadelphia papers. The instructor did not regard this course as particularly important or valuable, but deemed it necessary in order that students should get some practical knowledge of the inside workings of a newspaper office—the business office as well as the editorial.

These courses, begun by Prof. Johnson at the University of Pennsylvania in 1893, were conducted until 1901, when he joined the faculty of New York University.

INFORMAL INSTRUCTION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN.

Before Prof. Johnson left the University of Pennsylvania the University of Michigan had made a beginning in the matter of journalism instruction under the direction of its university editor. At the start there were no separate courses similar to those at the University of Pennsylvania, but the university editor simply gave assignments to students who had matriculated for the work. For the most part these assignments dealt with the news of the university and the items were later printed in the local university newspaper. Special instruction was given in such matters as proof reading, editorial revision of copy, etc. Other practical experience was secured on the University News Letter, which was mailed to Michigan editors and gave the news of the State university. Some of the students secured additional practice by corresponding for metropolitan dailies. Later Prof. Fred Newton Scott, of the department of rhetoric, took up the work with marked success. Prof. Scott is now president of the American Association of Teachers of Journalism.

MISSOURI PRESS ASSOCIATION.

In 1896 the Missouri Press Association urged the teaching of journalism in the State university. It was unable to secure favorable action until 1908 when a school of journalism, the first in an academic sense in the use of that term, was established at the State university. Its first dean, Walter Williams, in an address before the Missouri Press Association at Fulton, Mo., in May, 1909, presented the results of the year as follows:

Courses are given in history and principles of journalism, ethics of journalism, newspaper administration, news gathering, reporting, editorial writing, corre-

spondence, newspaper jurisprudence, the law of libel, illustrative art, comparative journalism, and newspaper making, which includes all branches of newspaper work. Courses are given in history, English, sociology, economics, political science, government, psychology. While all knowledge is helpful to the journalist, that which best trains for the most effective leadership in his profession is emphasized.

The distinctive feature of the Missouri University school of journalism is the University Missourian, which affords a laboratory course in actual newspaper-making. Upon this small but well-balanced afternoon daily newspaper all the work other than mechanical is done by the students of the school, under the direction of the faculty. Thus is applied to training for journalism modern methods of education. As the hospital gives bedside instruction in training physicians, the practice court in training lawyers, and the practice school in training teachers, so this newspaper is used for the training of makers of newspapers. That it is not a model newspaper is manifest. It is entirely the work of freshmen journalists, of cub reporters. If they could in their first year make a model newspaper, the school would have succeeded even beyond the most sanguine hopes.

The course in journalism covers four years. It leads to one undergraduate degree, bachelor of science in journalism. It is not supposed that the awarding of this degree makes a journalist any more than the conferring of a diploma makes a lawyer or a doctor or an engineer. It is expected, however, that the man or woman who pursues faithfully the courses of instruction given at the University of Missouri will, at the end of four years, be better equipped for high service than the one who has not had such training.

COURSES IN OTHER INSTITUTIONS.

At the same time, other institutions were adding journalism subjects to the curriculum and organizing special departments for such instruction. On the Pacific coast, Merle Thorpe had organized the department of journalism at the University of Washington and had emphasized the State-service work which a school or department could render the State press. For some reason the movement had spread more rapidly in the West than in the East, which clung to more conservative policies about new subjects in the curriculum. In the West, especially among such State institutions as Wisconsin, Kansas, Indiana, etc., the universities were more willing to make the experiment. The remarkable growth of this technical instruction in journalism was due, in some part to the offer of Joseph Pulitzer early in the present century "to found and permanently to endow a college of journalism in Columbia University," but more especially to his able discussion of the training necessary for a journalist as printed in an essay in the North American Review. Over a decade passed before Columbia provided such instruction on the Pulitzer foundation, but during that period other collegiate institutions on the Atlantic coast, including its nearest neighbor, New York University, began to offer technical work in the subject.

COURSE PROPOSED BY DR. ELIOT.

Before the publication of Pulitzer's essay on "The College of Journalism" in May, 1904, Charles William Eliot, then president of Harvard University, had prepared the following list of "subjects appropriate to a course of study leading to the profession of journalism":

Newspaper administration.—The organization of a newspaper office, functions of the publisher, circulation department, advertising department, editorial and "reportorial" departments, the financing of a newspaper; local, out-of-town and foreign-news service; editorial, literary, financial, sporting, and other departments.

Newspaper manufacture.—Printing presses, inks, paper, electrotyping and stereotyping processes, type composition, typesetting and type-casting machines, processes for reproducing illustrations, folding, binding, and mailing devices.

The law of journalism.—Copyright, libel, including civil, criminal, and seditious libel, rights and duties of the press in reporting judicial proceedings, liabilities of publisher, editor, reporter, and contributor.

Ethics of journalism.—Proper sense of responsibility to the public on the part of newspaper writers; to what extent should the opinions of the editor or owner of a newspaper affect its presentation of news? Relations of publisher, editor, and reporters as regards freedom of opinion.

History of journalism.—Freedom of the press, etc.

The literary form of newspapers.—Approved usages in punctuation, spelling, abbreviations, typography, etc.

Reenforcement of existing departments of instruction for the benefit of students of journalism: In English, reporting of news, news-letters, reviews, paragraph writing, editorial writing; in history, emphasis on contemporary history, government, and geography; in political science, emphasis on contemporary economic problems and financial administration.

In commenting upon this outline, Mr. Pulitzer said in the magazine article already mentioned:

In the proposed course of study, drawn up with admirable quickness by President Eliot and widely discussed as if it had been definitely adopted, Dr. Eliot included instruction in the business administration of a newspaper. He mentioned specifically circulation, advertising, manufacture, and finance.

My own ideas upon many parts of the course of study are still uncertain, but upon this one point they are very decided. I am sure that, if my wishes are to be considered, business instruction of any sort should not, would not, and must not form any part of the work of the college of journalism.

The course outlined was made in a private letter of President Eliot, and was stated when published to be merely tentative. In spite of this explanation, many newspapers based their comment and criticism upon it as an accepted fact. I have the greatest admiration for the extraordinary genius and character of the president of Harvard, but nothing was further from my mind—nothing, in fact, is more inconsistent and incompatible with my intentions or repugnant to my feelings—than to include any of the business or commercial elements of a newspaper in what is to be taught in this department of Columbia College.

In view of Mr. Pulitzer's desire to keep the profession of journalism quite separate from the business of journalism, it is easy to un-

derstand his position taken in the preceding paragraphs. Most institutions, however, have not had the necessary endowment to make this distinction, and for practical reasons have offered courses similar to those outlined by ex-President Eliot. In the matter of academic qualifications necessary for matriculation in journalism courses, both Mr. Pulitzer and Mr. Eliot agreed. In a letter of the latter, written on May 5, 1903, conditions were thus outlined:

> I did not intend to indicate in my former letter that the instruction for intending journalists should be postgraduate instruction. On the contrary, I supposed that the greater part of this instruction would be received by candidates for the degree of B. A. or B. S., but that it might be continued in our graduate school. Let me point out also that this instruction might be made perfectly accessible to what we call "special students," who are not candidates for degrees at all. It often turns out that these special students ultimately obtain a degree, but they are free to enter the university without being candidates for a degree at all. There would, therefore, be no difficulty at Harvard in admitting to the instruction in journalism students who had taken no previous college or scientific school course.

At most institutions offering technical instruction in journalism, some provision is made for the training of students unable to meet the full academic requirements but prepared to take courses to advantage. Frequently such work is extramural in character. The State universities in the West often offer short-term courses for the benefit of State editors. At several of these institutions what is known as a "newspaper week" has become an established feature. On these occasions editors from all over the State gather at the university for an intelligent discussion of various problems connected with the editing and making of a newspaper and hear distinguished journalists outline the duties of the editor, not only to his community, but also to the country at large. Such gatherings are in striking contrast to the meetings of the official associations where only business problems are considered. Newspaper conferences held at Kansas, Missouri, and Wisconsin Universities have attracted much attention and promoted a more intelligent discussion on the part of newspaper critics toward certain weaknesses of modern journalism. Correspondence courses in journalism have been offered by a few State universities for the benefit of local editors and others interested in the subject.

Some of the by-products of this technical instruction in journalism may be noticed in passing. Of these, one of the most important has been the preparation by professors of journalism of a series of textbooks on various phases of newspaper work. Textbooks have been published by Profs. Bleyer and Hyde, of Wisconsin; Profs. Martin, Ross, and Williams, of Missouri; Prof. Harrington, of Illinois; Prof. Thorpe, of Kansas; Prof. Spencer, of Lawrence College; Profs. Cunliffe and Lomer, of the Pulitzer School, etc. The present writer has just published his History of American Journalism, in

which the growth and development of the American newspaper is traced for the first time from its beginnings in 1704 down to the present time. Several of the schools have done excellent work in publishing practical and helpful bulletins dealing with newspaper problems. The University of Missouri, for example, has issued "Missouri Laws Affecting Newspapers," "Retail Advertising and the Newspaper," "The News and Country Papers," "Newspaper Correspondence," "Building a Circulation." The University of Washington, through its extension division, has published similar pamphlets on such subjects as "The Making of a Newspaper," "The Better Newspaper," "Newspaper Production," etc.

Technical courses in journalism vary from the single class in news writing at many of the smaller institutions to a well rounded-out curriculum of several courses in the larger universities. At the latter will be found courses in such subjects as news writing, newspaper editing, newspaper making, newspaper advertising, current political topics, editorial writing, special-feature and magazine writing, short-story writing, history and principles of journalism, etc. This list of technical courses is typical of such institutions as Wisconsin, for example. Many of the State universities have technical courses in agricultural journalism and in the country weekly. At New York University special attention is paid to courses dealing with the editing and making of magazines, industrial papers, etc. Practically every institution has had to add special courses to meet the needs of the field in which it was located.

Lest the pedantic critic think that technical instruction has been overemphasized, it might be well to say that courses in economics, finance, law, literature, politics, sociology, etc., have not been neglected in the curricula of schools of journalism. True to its trust, the school of journalism has had in mind the training of the students, not so much for the position to be filled immediately upon graduation as for that which the graduate should hold in years to come. The school of journalism has realized more and more that it will fail in its mission unless it gives its students a cultural background based for the most part upon the regular academic course. A realization of the necessity of such instruction in cultural subjects has led several institutions to require two years of purely academic work before allowing students to matriculate for the technical instruction in journalism.

INSTITUTIONS OFFERING WORK IN JOURNALISM.

The writer of this pamphlet is indebted to Carl H. Getz, secretary of the American Association of Teachers of Journalism, for the following list of universities and colleges offering work of some character in journalism:

STATE UNIVERSITIES.

Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin.

STATE COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS.

Colorado Agricultural College, Delaware College, Fort Hays (Kansas) Normal School, Georgia Technical School of Commerce, Indiana State Normal School, Iowa State College, Kansas State Agricultral College, Kansas State Normal School, Massachusetts Agricultural College, Missouri State Normal College, Nebraska State Normal School, North Dakota Agricultural College, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical college, Pennsylvania State College, Purdue University, South Dakota State College, Wisconsin State Normal School.

ENDOWED COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.

Austin College, Beaver College, Beloit College, Billings Polytechnic Institute, Boston University, Bucknell College, Buena Vista College, Carleton College, Colby College, College of Emporia, Columbia University, De Pauw University, Emmanuel Missionary College, Goucher College, Howard College, Kansas City Polytechnic Institute, Knox College, Lawrence College, Lehigh University, Leland Stanford Junior University, Marietta College, Marquette University, McKendree College, Miami University, Morningside College, Mount Union College, Municipal University of Akron, New York University, Pomona College, Ripon College, St. Xavier College, Toledo University, Trinity College, Tulane University, University of Chicago, University of Denver, University of Notre Dame, University of Pittsburgh, University of Southern California, Vassar College, Western Reserve University.