

Journal

April 1, 1927.

Miss Alma Luise Olson,
140 East 46th Street,
New York City.

My dear Miss Olson:

I have been away for some little time so that your letter of March 12th has been necessarily neglected. I understand from Mrs. Comstock, the Chairman of the Writer's Section of the Pen and Brush, that she has been in communication with you and that she hopes that the conference of which she talked, can be arranged for some day in May. I hope Mrs. Howes can conduct the conference as you suggest. If I am in town you can count on my being there.

As I understand it, what you want me to answer on the questionnaire sent is the last question in #5 and this I have done. You are at liberty to use what I have written if you think it would be of any use to you.

Yours sincerely,

INT BWA.

If a College girl came to you and told you she wanted to write, or take up editorial work, or become a free-lance, what suggestions would you offer?

Answer:

College Girls frequently come to me asking the question you have underscored. The advice given must be shaded, of course, by the girl's particular bent for what she thinks is her bent by her previous experience; her income; her obligations. Generally speaking, if it is free lance work, looking to a career as a professional writer that she has in mind, my advice is to take the bull by the horns and write, and to keep it up until she has proven that, after all, she was wrong in thinking that she could write or that she finds that the struggle is going to be too severe for her health or her courage. There is a great demand for articles and fiction but in both the articles and fiction require knowledge of the subject and the theme and those are not won by sitting at a desk. There must be study of sources of information and study of human beings. There must be a continual struggle for knowledge; continual struggle of human beings and the writer's art. Unless a girl can put real patient effort, real study into her work, she is not going very far, however clever she may be with her pen. We are supposing that she must support herself, at least, partly, by this free lance work. She must, if she is to sell what she produces, study the market know what the various newspapers and magazines want; If she is aiming at books, study the publisher's to find out what their interests are. Much work is wasted because the writer does not understand the need of knowing the market. *at the*

The girl should always, when she goes to an editor, have something to show, an article written and with it subjects to suggest. Not only must he see what she can do, but know what she has in mind with which to follow it up. The girl should be prepared for a long struggle, as in any other profession. She must not expect a comfortable salary and acceptance of herself and her product at the start. The willingness to make this struggle; to live on a narrower budget than she has been accustomed to; to sacrifice ease and comfort, prevent many girls from reaching a good position in the profession which is possible for them. Primarily the whole matter is up to the girl. There is no profession in which outside influences count less in the long run than the writers. It depends upon what you personally can produce.