July 18, 1924

Mrs. Anna Coder Colburn,
414 South Fifteenth St.,
Lincoln, Nebr.

My dear Mrs. Colburn:

To my great regret I have just discovered that there has lain on my desk in an out of the way place for many weeks now a letter of yours in which you ask my advice about your daughter Dorothy, and what, in my opinion, would be the next best move for her to make in carrying out her ambition to become a journalist in the international field.

She seems to me to have had a first rate preliminary experience, and I quite sympathize with her desire for a change of field. I wish I could be of definite help to her in her desire to join the staff of a magazine, but I fear I cannot. There seems to be no way but for the new comer to submit her wares - knock and knock again at the doors of the publishing houses. I think she is wise in not wanting to come to New York until she has tried out a few addresses.

If I were in herplace I would write directly to certain publishing houses, say Harper & Brothers, 147 East 33 St.; McMillans, 64 Fifth Avenue; D Appleton & Co., 35 West 32 St. - in fact all of the leading houses, giving my experience, saying that I was prepared to do secretarial or any other work.

If she gets any kind of a hopeful nibble - and she must not be discouraged if she doesn't - then she would do well to follow it up.

Probably the most useful experience for her, though it would be the most difficult, and unless she has financial backing too uncertain, for me at least, to be willing to advise, would be to try for a position as a reporter and officehelper on one of our great newspapers, particularly the New York Times or the New York Evening Post. There she would have a much better chance than she would have on the staff of a magazine to write and possibly ultimately to write along her chosen line. On the magazines and in the publishing houses there is very little chance for actual literary work other than editing, and it takes considerable time for a new comer to make her way into the editorial ranks of a house.

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One who wants to do journalism should do journalism, and the daily paper is their best hope. From that, if they prove successful in gathering material, in correct, clear, attractive presentation and in soundness of ideas and judgment, they may very well hope to gradually work their way into the magazines by submitting articles and finally perhaps be able to devote the bulk of their time to magazine and book work. My own judgment is that one who wants to write should write, that positions on magazines and in publishing houses necessarily lead to other work than that of writing on a chosen line.

If Dorothy decides to come to New York, or if she is already here which I think possible from your letter, I will be glad to do everything that I can to help her. After talking with her I could very well introduce her to a few newspaper editors who might give her a chance at space work. She might have exceptional fortune and get on easily from the start, but the chances are, so far as my experience and observation go, that she would have many months of hard sledding. However, that is nothing but what everybody that enters a profession of any kind - medicine, law, teaching, or what not, must pass through. Journalism is no exception. The reason that we have not more first class women journalists is that so many young women are not willing to serve the long preliminary apprenticeship. I should say that your daughter's experience has very well equipped her to make a venture her; and, as I said before, if she decides to take the plunge, or has already taken it, she can count on me to help her in any way I can.

Regretting exceedingly that I have let your letter lie so long, believe me, my dear Mrs. Colburn,

Sincerely yours,

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