

barely touched, and led the way into the dining-room, pausing at the door with studied politeness to allow her to pass in first.

"Will you not be seated?" he said.

"No, thank you, I will stand. I shall not detain you. Captain and Mrs. Percy have brought Emily's little girl from Africa; they are in the drawing-room."

A slight elevation of the high, white forehead, and a strange twitching of the firm mouth and thin nostril, were the only symptoms of surprise evinced by Mr. Le Roy at this intelligence.

"You must see them; I cannot," he said.

"They have written and telegraphed, and believe themselves expected," she rejoined.

"They are waiting for you. They were Emily's friends."

Her voice quivered slightly.

"Friends!" he repeated, with another elevation of the brow. "They cannot expect to see me at such a time. The house is at their service. Send up luncheon; anything you like."

"And the child?" suggested Miss Heath.

"You know I hate children," he replied.

There was a quick, firm step in the hall, followed by an opened door. In another moment a footman came in, and said that Captain Percy wished to see Mr. Le Roy at once, as he had an engagement elsewhere in half-an-hour.

"Say I will come immediately," returned Mr. Le Roy, while Miss Heath escaped to her room.

He went to the drawing-room and apologised to Captain Percy for keeping him waiting.

"I am grieved to intrude at such a moment, and sympathise heartily with you," said Captain Percy. "We only arrived last evening and slept at the hotel. We leave town immediately. I telegraphed at once."

"I never read telegrams or post-cards, but my man does, and I wonder he did not tell me," said Mr. Le Roy.

"This is your niece," put in Mrs. Percy. "I fear you did not expect her so soon."

"Scarcely. How do you do? Hem! I forget her name."

"Mimica," said a low, soft voice, as Mrs. Percy impelled the child towards him.

Their gloved hands touched, and she retreated to Mrs. Percy's side.

"Take me back to the Cape. My uncle does not want me," she whispered.

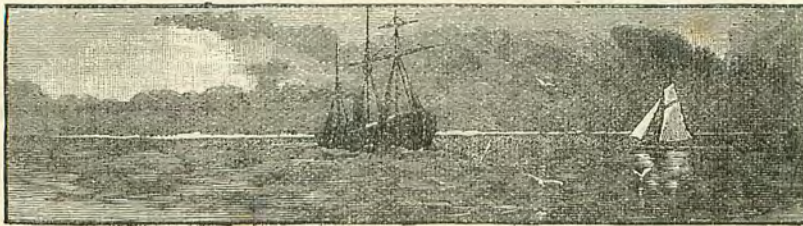
"He is sad; he has just lost his mother," said Mrs. Percy.

"Like me," returned Mimica, glancing at her uncle, who was hearing from Captain Percy the account of his only sister's dying request.

This had been that Mimica should be taken to her mother, Mrs. Le Roy. The letter announcing that Captain and Mrs. Percy would bring her immediately had not been opened, for it had reached London the day of Mrs. Le Roy's death, and had been given, with other papers, to her son, who had set it aside, and either ignored or forgotten it.

There was no time for further conversation—only for a hasty farewell to Mimica—and Captain and Mrs. Percy left the house.

(To be continued.)



WOMEN AS REPORTERS.

By AN AMERICAN NEWSPAPER REPORTER.



SHORTHAND is far less used by American newspaper reporters than it is used by newspaper reporters in England; but the arts of shorthand writing and type-writing combined

are used to a considerably greater extent in the commercial world in the United States than they are in the commercial world in England. Of every ten letters received by a New York or Chicago business firm, it is quite within the mark to say that seven of them are typewritten. As one walks through the corridors of the office buildings in any large American city, the constant click of the typewriting machine is ever falling on the ear. If business should take one inside the offices, he discovers that in quite nine cases out of ten the typewriting machines are manipulated by ladies who write their letters from shorthand notes. Women are admittedly specially and peculiarly adapted to the work, and if there is any one department of work in which more than in any other American women are energetically and successfully competing with men, it is that of shorthand writing and typewriting. And every year the competition between men and women for this class of work is becoming

keener. Already a number of the State Legislatures have passed acts under the provisions of which a certain proportion of the clerkships at the State Capitols are thrown open to women, and American girls are educating themselves for the new sphere of usefulness which is thus being year after year opened out to them. American girls whose parents are of the higher artisan and trading class remain at school a year or two longer than do English girls whose parents belong to the artisan and trading class. From school a large proportion of the girls go to the shorthand, typewriting, and telegraph colleges, of which there are several in every metropolitan city. The students at these colleges attend there four or five hours each day, for three or four months, taking a course of lessons in shorthand, typewriting, and telegraphy; and at the expiration of the college course take engagements in the business houses and the law offices. To an intelligent girl the work of a business man's secretary, or corresponding clerk, is congenial, and far less trying and fatiguing than either the work of a shop assistant or that of a dressmaker or milliner.

The pay, too, is generally better than that received by ordinary shop assistants and dressmakers and milliners, the salaries of lady stenographers and typewriters ranging from £1 12s. to £3 per week.

Nor are lady shorthand writers in America inclined to confine themselves to office shorthand work. They are now invading the province of the reporter and the law shorthand writer. A short time ago, when a popular revivalist preacher was delivering a long series

of addresses in St. Louis, Mrs. Udell, who is as well known in the West as a successful shorthand writer as Mr. T. A. Reed is known in the same capacity in London, undertook to furnish one of the morning papers with a verbatim report of each address. With the help of one assistant, and with the use of a typewriting machine, Mrs. Udell successfully performed her task, and night after night, for six weeks running, handed into the newspaper office a report varying in length from three to four Times size columns. If Mr. Gladstone or Lord Salisbury was announced to deliver a four-column speech at a meeting in London, each of the morning papers would tell off five or six reporters for the work of reporting the speech.

Twice the writer has met lady shorthand writers at national conferences, taking full notes for official publication; and has on several occasions seen lady reporters at work in the law courts. Court reporting, however, is a class of work ill-suited to ladies, and for numerous reasons which readily suggest themselves to the reader. The attendance of lady stenographers in the American courts is as yet only of infrequent occurrence; and while the competition between men and women in the corresponding clerk and private secretary departments of shorthand work will continue to become keener as long as a large proportion of American girls look to that class of work for a practical solution of the problem "What am I to do?" law reporters have not much to fear from the occasional presence of a venturesome lady stenographer in their midst in the Civil Courts.