

Richard Watson Gilder:
A Study of a Notable American Editor

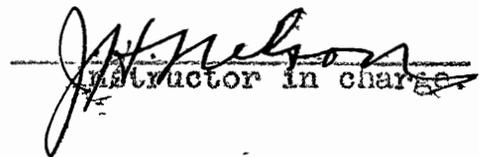
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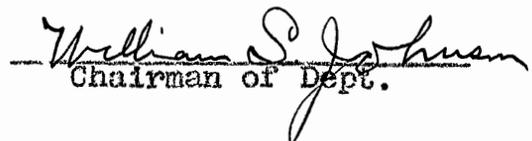
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PREFACE

Since the work of Richard Watson Gilder was finished nearly twenty years ago and no complete study of it has been made, it has seemed worth while to give attention to his contribution to American life and literature. With that end in view the following paper has been prepared.

The biography of this notable American editor is based on brief accounts of Gilder's life as found in various magazine articles, in Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography, and Gilder's journal, an informal sketch of his early life written for his children. His journal was begun April 7, 1909, and added to from time to time. It was found among his papers and was published in 1916 as the first chapter of the book, Letters of Richard Watson Gilder, which was edited by his daughter, Rosamond Gilder.

Gilder's informal letters and his daughter's comments found in this book throw into clear perspective Gilder's life, his work, and his personality. The book, Remembered Yesterdays, written by Robert Underwood Johnson, who for thirty-six years was associated with Gilder in his editorial and public work, gives many interesting facts about Gilder as an editor and a public benefactor. Besides reading these books I have surveyed fifty-eight volumes of the Century Magazine, from its beginning in 1881 to 1910.

The volumes one to fifty-seven cover the period of Gilder's editorship, and volumes fifty-seven and fifty-eight give, at his death, an account of his life and works. From these volumes I have read all the articles and editorials that deal with subjects in which his letters showed him to have a special interest. Although Gilder did not write all the editorials appearing in the magazine they have been considered as expressing his sentiments on the various subjects presented.

Reading to gather the material for this thesis has broadened my knowledge of authors, literature, art, and the world. The knowledge I have gained has also given me a greater sympathy for mankind as it has helped me to realize more clearly "how the other half of the world lives."

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. J. H. Nelson for his advice and guidance in the selection of my subject and in my study, and for the helpful criticism and encouragement given in the writing of the thesis.

F. A.

Lawrence, Kansas.

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THE MAN - RICHARD WATSON GILDER

The characteristics of Richard Watson Gilder that helped to make his life an outstanding success cannot be traced to any famous ancestors, since he, like Shakespeare, Lincoln, and many other great men, was a product of the common people. The Gilders were English people, who had settled in America in the colonial days. An uncle of Mr. Gilder's grandfather fought in the Revolutionary War. His grandfather, John Gilder, was a Philadelphia carpenter who became an alderman and was said by a friend to be one of the most useful citizens Philadelphia ever had. His grandmother was "a fine looking woman of refined countenance and a face that suggested strength of character. She was a Leonard, and of Huguenot blood."¹ Of his mother's father, Major Thomas Nutt, one learns that he was the son on a prosperous Burlington County farmer, and that he fought in the war of 1812. His parents were the Reverend William Henry Gilder, a Methodist minister, and Jane Nutt Gilder.

Richard Watson Gilder was born at Belle Vue, Bordentown, New Jersey, on February 8, 1844, in the house which had been given to his grandmother Nutt in 1806, and had probably been built in 1788. Gilder was one of a family of seven children. His letters mention four sisters: Maria, who died in childhood, Martina, Almira, Jeannette; and two brothers, William and Joseph. When Richard was two

¹Letters of Richard Watson Gilder, p. 9.

or three years old his father, a school teacher, gave up his school in Bordentown and bought the Reverend Dr. Hawk's Flushing Female College. In this school, under the instruction of his father, Richard received his education.

If childhood interests may be considered an indication of future vocations, one may say that the literary critic and editor began to develop early in the young Richard. A letter to some former playmates, written when he was ten years old, mentions his enjoyment of Gulliver's Travels, and his being president of a literary association, in his father's school. At their meetings the members read and learned poetry, and wrote compositions. His first editorial experience was in writing, editing, and printing a paper which he called the St Thomas Register. This venture, in which the youthful publisher did the work of typesetting and printing, was carried out in the office of the Long Island Times in 1856-'57, when Richard was twelve or thirteen years old. He speaks of his venture thus:

My father wrote some of the editorials and was greatly interested in the undertaking. The paper was dedicated to no less a purpose than "the Promotion of Literature, Morality, Religion, and Science." The publisher promised "on all occasions to observe a proper degree of dignified decorum, but he would not allow himself to be governed either by fear or favor." ²

²Letters of Richard Watson Gilder, p. 18.

Between his twelfth and fourteenth year he took an active interest in religion and considered religion a "delightful thing." During this time he also became interested in the writing of poetry. He speaks of the "yards and yards of extremely juvenile verse in- or rather at- the style of the Lady of the Lake." His twelfth year was also a time in which his sympathies for the poor of the tenement districts, which was to bear such abundant fruit in his later life, was aroused. He accompanied his father and a missionary to the mission and through the neighborhood of Five Points in New York. The horrible impressions left on his mind by the sights he witnessed are recorded in his journal.

Richard was encouraged by his father to write for publication. When he was sixteen one of his poems appeared in the Long Island Times, and a serial novel from his pen was published in the Bordentown Register. In later life Mr. Gilder referred to these early attempts as being "perfectly worthless."

The Flushing Female College, on account of its owner's generosity with poor pupils, proved a financial failure. The Reverend Mr. Gilder then moved his family to Redding, Connecticut, where he had charge of a Methodist Episcopal church for a year. The following year he was located at Fair Haven, Connecticut. The next venture was a Day school at Yonker, New York, in which Richard was his

assistant. When the war began, the Reverend Mr. Gilder enlisted as a chaplain, and his son Will entered the army as a soldier. The family then returned to their earlier home, Belle Vue, Bordentown. While visiting his father for a few months, in camp outside of Alexandria, Richard wrote letters that were published in the Long Island Times. Thus at an early age he became an unofficial war correspondent. Later he entered a law office as a clerk at three dollars a week. Here he began to study law. But the call to arms presently stirred his heart. Although he was far from rugged physically, and only nineteen years old, he succeeded in convincing his mother that it was his duty to become a soldier. She then consented to his enlistment in the First Philadelphia artillery, June 24, 1863. He saw active service in the Gettysburg Campaign.

In 1864 Chaplain Gilder died of smallpox contracted while he was visiting some sick soldiers. The loss of the father threw much of the responsibility of supporting his mother's family on Richard. When he returned to private life it was necessary for him to earn more than three dollars a week, which had been his previous salary. He secured a position with the Camden and Amboy Railroad as a clerk in the paymaster's office. Here he had the responsibility of handling large sums of money in paying the employees.

While working in the paymaster's office he began

his editorial work by preparing for the press Mrs. Howarth's poems, which were published 1867-'68. Soon after this Mr. Gilder became a local and legislative reporter on the Newark Daily Advertiser. While working as legislative reporter he began his work as a humanitarian, by frustrating, through his writings, the plans of a lobbyist- a portrait painter, who was trying to secure a contract for paintings of the whole historic list of the New Jersey governors. He also assisted in the securing of a charter for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and started a state society of which he became secretary; and assisted in modifying the law regarding capital punishment.

In partnership with Newton Crane, Mr. Gilder established the Newark Morning Register. As this business venture was not financially successful its editor took upon himself, while still managing the daily, the additional task of writing editorial paragraphs for a Scribner publication, Hours at Home. He was also editor of this magazine from November 1869 till October 1870, when it was merged with Scribner's Monthly, of which Gilder became managing editor, under Dr. J. G. Holland. This position he held for eleven years, gradually taking more and more of the responsibility from the shoulders of the aged editor. In 1881 he became editor-in-chief of the Century Magazine, which was the new name given to the Scribner's Monthly. Gilder was a very small stockholder in a new company formed to publish the

Century. He left all the money matters to other members of the company, however, as he had little confidence in himself in the management of business affairs, and found his greatest enjoyment in the editorial work. This position he held for twenty-eight years, till the time of his death in 1909.

As it was necessary for Gilder to help support his mother's family, his early education was somewhat limited. Although he had had no chance to secure a college education, he did not remain ignorant of the things that contribute to culture, and fitted him to be a better editor of a literary magazine. These statements from his journal show that he continued his literary education:

All along I felt the need of more thorough education. After my work on Scribner's began, and before I was married, I took up the study of Latin again, - but I did not get very far. After my marriage I took some Italian lessons, and I have always had some system in my reading - following the classics in English translations, and taking up one after the other, the English poets.⁵

The winter of 1871-'72 was a milestone in Gilder's life. One day in the company of Helen Hunt, Miss Helen De Kay visited the editorial rooms of Scribner's Monthly and met the young assistant editor. Thus began the friendship between Gilder and the woman who was to be his inspiration and helpmate for the rest of his life. Miss De Kay was at that

⁵Letters of Richard Watson Gilder, p. 47.

time studying painting at the Cooper Union in New York.

Miss Rosamond Gilder comments on their companionship thus:

There was a peculiar fitness in this friendship; the poet and the artist had much in common and much, also, that each could give the other. With her familiarity with European literature, her knowledge and appreciation both of art and music, she opened new fields of interests and enjoyment to her eager "comrade." Together they went to concerts and art exhibits, they listened to lectures, read poetry, and studied Dante, with an ever increasing pleasure and intimacy.⁴

The poet in Mr. Gilder was inspired by the happiness and love brought to him by this companionship, and during the two years before their marriage, the love sonnets, later published under the title A New Day, were written. The poet and the artist were married June 3, 1874, and began a busy life that was to be filled with the happiest companionship and confidence, in spite of comparative poverty, sickness, and sorrow. It was necessary for them to live on the simplest possible scale, for part of Mr. Gilder's salary was sent to his mother each month. For the first fifteen years of their married life their home was in the central part of New York in an old barn that had been converted into a house, which they dignified by naming "The Studio on Fifteenth Street." Their letters show that the purchase of a piece of furniture, even though it was second-hand, was an event in their lives.

⁴Letters of Richard Watson Gilder, p. 56.

What the Gilder home lacked in splendor was made up for in hospitality, as their home became the rendezvous for all their friends. Of their early home Miss Rosamond Gilder writes:

The Studio on Fifteenth Street very quickly became the gathering-place for a group of young artists and authors, many of whom subsequently won an honorable rank in their profession. Here, in the simplest setting, but in the atmosphere of warmest hospitality and appreciation, people of all sorts and conditions found a congenial meeting-ground. It was not alone the circumstance of my father and mother being themselves artists that brought them so many and such varied friendships, but because they possessed to an unusual degree a power of sympathetic understanding which drew every type of person to them. "You must never forget this of the Gilders," Walt Whitman told his biographer, "that at a time when most everybody else in their set threw me down, they were nobly and unhesitatingly hospitable. The Gilders were without pride, and without shame they just asked me along, in the most natural way."⁵

Mr. Gilder had other interests besides his work and his friends. Although his physique was frail, his martial spirit, that had caused him to take arms against the injustice of slavery, when he was nineteen, caused him in later life to be ready to help fight the battles of every cause that was for the spiritual, moral, mental, or physical development of mankind. He joined many organizations and filled offices that demanded a great deal of his time. So much of his time was given to public activities that often most of his routine editorial work was done at hours that should have been spent in rest. To this personal interest

⁵ Letters of Richard Watson Gilder, p. 65-66.

was added the influence of his pen, and it is to his influence that may be accredited the success of many of the organizations in which he took such an active part. He became the first secretary of the Society of American Artists, organized at the Gilder home in 1877. The Authors' Club, which worked so consistently for international copyrights, came into existence in 1882 in the Gilder Studio. When a group of journalists organized a Fellowcraft Club, Gilder became its first president. In 1890 he joined the Peoples' Municipal League in order that he would be able, as both a citizen and editor, to fight against the city's rings. He was a member, and often an office holder of the City Club of New York, and worked in a campaign to save the City Hall from destruction, and to have the Metropolitan Museum open on Sunday. On the campaign committee of the Good Government Club, he was listed as a member; he was also a trustee of the New York Kindergarten Association, and President of the New York Association for the Blind, and a member of the American Institute of Social Service. Likewise he was a member of the Civil Service Reform Association and served on its executive committee. He also carried on a campaign of public information by both his written and spoken word. His most important service, however, was the organization of the Anti-Spoils League, a society, started at his own suggestion, for the nationalization of the anti-spoils crusade. As a member

of the Committee of Investigation on the New York Tenement House Commission, he began in 1894 a campaign for better tenements in New York, which has brought about better tenement houses, better schools, as well as school playgrounds and public parks for the benefit of the poor.

Mr. Gilder was extremely modest and unassuming, never thrusting himself before the public as an individual. In his editorials he never gave himself the credit for any of the things he had accomplished, but modestly gave the honor to the organization with which he was affiliated. He did not consider himself a public speaker, but was often asked to give public addresses, in which his favorite subject was literature or poetry. But occasionally, at times of city campaigns, he used his voice as well as his pen, to influence the voters to vote for men outside the corrupt political ring. Such a worker for the good of mankind did not pass unnoticed, and many honors were heaped upon him. He received honorary degrees from the following universities: Harvard, A.M., 1890; Dickinson, LL.D., 1883; Princeton L.H.D., 1896; Yale, Litt.D., 1901; Wesleyan, L.L.D., 1903. He was also made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor of France.

The life of this patriotic citizen had its shadows as well as its joys. He was a man who enjoyed home life, and the companionship of his wife and five children, Rodman,

Dorthea, Francesca, George, and Rosamond, who are mentioned in his letters. Two other children, their first born, Marion, and Richard, who died in early childhood, are also mentioned with great sadness. Mr. Gilder's many public activities took much of the time he would have enjoyed spending in his home, but his letters to the various members of the family show that a sympathetic understanding and love existed in this family circle. Mr. Gilder had more mental energy than he had strength and often drove his frail body beyond its endurance, and was then compelled to take a complete rest from both his public and editorial work. He, accompanied by his family, lived abroad from March, 1879, till May, 1880. On this first enforced vacation, he visited England, France, and Italy. In May, 1894, another physical breakdown caused him to give up his office work for a period of a year and a half. With his family, he again crossed the Atlantic and visited England, a number of countries in Europe, and the Holy Land. But all the time Mr. Gilder kept in touch with the Century office and served as a "scouting agent" for new features for the magazine. Later Mr. and Mrs. Gilder spent from February till July, 1900, abroad. His letters give glimpses of other vacations that were taken to secure much needed rest. One of these vacations lasted from September, 1903, till September, 1904, during which he spent part of his time resting at home, from February till May in Florida,

and the rest of the summer at Brook Farm, his country home in New England. Many of his interesting letters to friends were written during these periods of sickness. They show him to be optimistic. As he was not permitted to do routine editorial work, he read much good literature and often wrote poetry for diversion.

Poetry was Mr. Gilder's chief avocation, and to be a success as a poet meant more to him than success in his editorial or public work, if one may judge from his own words:

I dare say that I am various other things that I cannot remember, but if you can state on positive evidence that I am a poet I would rather be that than all the rest put together.⁶ . . .

But I had to be considerably over fifty before "the General" were willing to take me as a poet more than in any other way. It seems now to have leaked out that that is what I really care most for.⁷

Although he loved poetry and found great enjoyment in writing, he did not consider himself a genius, for he says:

I wish my voice had had more power, but nothing that I could have done would have changed that. We have the genius with which we are born; the Lord of Life will not blame us for having less than our lofty neighbors are endowed with.⁸

His appreciation of Mrs. Gilder as a critic is shown in these lines:

H. made me a poet (if I am one truly), and her appreciation and criticism are the most important things in the world to me. . . . She is not only an appreciator and a constant stimulus, but a standard—a standard that means the very highest in art. She is anxious, ever doubtful, as I am doubtful.

⁶Letters of Richard Watson Gilder, p. 368.

⁷Ibid, p. 471.

⁸Ibid, p. 437.

I cannot tell you all she is to my art.⁹

His daughter speaks of her father and his poetry thus:

In his poems he has written his life history, in them he is himself and writes from his own soul. About every five years he published one of these little volumes, "milestones" he called them, along his path. They are the expression of that inner flame which unifies his life, which was on the surface so varied, so full of divergent and arduous labor. That life of editor, philanthropist, civic worker, writer, was essentially the life of a poet.¹⁰

Mr. Gilder might be called an "occasional poet" or an "unofficial poet laureate" as he often wrote poems for various public occasions. Shortly after Mr. Gilder's death another editorial writer commented thus on his writings:

The inspiration of these poems, lyrical and epigrammatic, for which as a writer he will chiefly be remembered, came largely from his public service. Through all the exacting cares of so full a life he ever heard comforting melodies and wedded his activities to rhyme. If he never reached the poetic heights, he had the rare faculty of expressing popular emotion in graceful form. At dedications and other large public ceremonies his charm and tact rarely, if ever failed him.¹¹

Mr. Pattee in writing of Mr. Gilder's volume of collected poetry, which was published in 1908 gives the following opinion of the man and his works:

It is depressing to think that this most virile of men, who was the tireless leader of his generation in so many beneficent fields of activities, must be judged in the coming period solely by this

⁹Letters of Richards Watson Gilder, p. 452, 453.

¹⁰ibid., p. 50.

¹¹ibid., p. 505.

volume of poems. For classical poetry was not his life work, not his enthusiasm, not himself - it was a rarely furnished room in the heart of his home, rather, where at times he might retire from the tumult and enjoy the beauty he had gathered in the realms of gold. He was not a poet, singing inevitable lines, spontaneously and inspired. His poems lacked lyric distinction, that compelling quality that sinks a poem into the reader's soul, and, lacking it, they have little hope for permanence. They are finished always and coldly, beautiful, but finish and beauty are not enough.¹²

Mr. Gilder's works and the dates of publication are as follows:

The New Day, 1875; The Celestial Passion, 1878; Lyrics, 1878; The Poet and His Master, and Other Poems, 1878; Lyrics and Other Poems, 1885; Poems, 1887; Two Worlds, and Other Poems, 1891; Great Remembrance, and Other Poems, 1893; Five Books of Song, 1894; For the Country, 1897; In Palestine and Other Poems, 1898; Poems and Inscriptions, 1901; A Christmas Wreath, 1903; In the Heights, 1905; Book of Music, 1906; Fire Divine, 1907; Poems, Household Edition, 1908; Lincoln the Leader, 1909; Grover Cleveland, 1910.¹³

In his prose writing Gilder is strictly a journalist in his style. His sentences are never involved or complicated. He makes one see his point without over elaboration or fine writing, for to him the thought seems much more important than the form. He gives the ideas to the readers in such a way that one gives no thought to his style. For instance in his sketch of Grover Cleveland's life he puts him-

¹²Pattee, History of American Literature Since 1870, p.343.

¹³ibid. pp. 353-54.

self into it in such a way that one feels the personal touch without once feeling that Gilder is egotistical, or self-centered when he often uses "I". To make his sketch appear more interesting he divides it into sections with a sub-head for each. He also often uses personal letters as another means of telling his story. He is always fair minded in his estimation of people, and he does not try to force his conclusions upon his readers, but gives evidence and lets the readers come to their own conclusion.

One cannot read Mr. Gilder's journal, or letters without discovering that the writer had a keen sense of whimsical humor which often appears as flashes that both surprise and entertain. His predominating optimism often is displayed by clever ideas that are extremely original. R. U. Johnson, a fellow worker, praised his chief by saying:

Mr. Gilder's enthusiasm, his enjoyment of his work, and his bubbling and whimsical gaiety made an atmosphere of happiness and inspiration for everybody about him. There was never a moment of the day when he could not relish a jest. Humor preceded serious matters as a sort of grace before meat. At his hands the most unexpected kindnesses seemed natural and easy to accept. Every one of his business and editorial associates and assistants feels himself or herself¹⁴ his debtor for considerate and helpful friendship.

This more personal comment was made by his daughter:

Instinctively peace-loving, naturally of an optimistic and kindly disposition, any form of controversy was intensely repugnant to him. Yet he had so strong a sense of justice and such a

¹⁴"His Editorial Relations", Century, LVII (Feb., 1910), p.631.

fund of indignation against "prospered wrongs", that again and again during his life he became involved in public discussions, often of the most violent and bitter character. Moral indignation was in him a compelling emotion, but it was an emotion controlled and guided in its expression. He never let himself be carried away by his feelings without a careful examination of the facts involved, and a minute study of every side of a question. Like Jefferson in his acting, he had a cool head and a warm heart. It was his strength that he knew a subject thoroughly, and expressed his opinion calmly; but that he had behind this control an emotional intensity that gave his words vitality and effect.¹⁵

At Mr. Gilder's death November 18, 1909, which occurred two weeks after a severe attack of angina pectoris, a member of the staff of The Outlook wrote: "A life of beautiful sincerity and service has gone out in the brightness of a stainless reputation, in the glow of a friendship as wide as the continent."¹⁶ Henry Van Dyke wrote this poetic tribute to him.

Richard Watson Gilder

Heart of a hero in a poet's frame,
 Soul of a soldier in a body frail, -
 Thine was the courage clear that did not quail
 Before the great champions of shame
 Who wrought dishonor to the city's name, -
 And thine the vision of the Holy Grail
 Of Love revealed through music's lucid veil,
 Filled thy life with song and heavy flame.

¹⁵Letters of Richard Watson Gilder, p. 107.

¹⁶The Outlook, XCIII (Nov. 21, 1909) p. 648.

Pure was the light that lit thy glowing eye;
 Strong was the faith that held thy simple creed;
 Ah, poet, patriot, friend, to serve our need
 Thou leavest two great gifts that will not die, -
 Amid the city's noise, thy lyric cry!
 Amid the city's strife, thy noble deed! ¹⁷

Gilder was notable as an editor because he put the good of humanity first in considering what his magazine should contain. No number ever went to press without something in it distinctively spiritual, if it be only four lines of poetry. He excluded the vulgar and cynical from his magazine, but was never priggish or prudish. He looked evil squarely in the face and felt the responsibility an editor owes to the public. He believed America to be the most decent nation on the face of the globe and tried to advance good movements by praising, exalting, and supporting good men and women who worked for the betterment of their fellow citizens.

¹⁷The Outlook, XCIII (Nov. 27, 1909), p. 652.

Gilder as an Editor

When Richard Watson Gilder became editor-in-chief of the new Century Magazine he had the responsibility of carrying out the ideas of the former editor, Dr. Holland, who had had high ideals of what the new magazine should do for the American people. Dr. Holland had been an outstanding leader as an editor, as is shown by this statement, published by the New York Evening Post at his death:

No literary man in America was so accurately fitted for the precise work of developing a great popular magazine. He had the immense advantage of keeping on a plane of thought just above that of a vast multitude of readers, each one of whom he could touch with his hand and raise a little upward. "No other man in this country," said Robert Collier, "could have built up Scribner's as he did, making it fill a place uniquely adapted to the great mass of the American people." This was his ideal -- to speak to the heart and mind of the average man. His proudest title was, "The Great Apostle to the Multitude of Intellectual Americans Who Have Missed a College Education." To them he preached constantly, and in the most neighborly of fashions. One of his great texts was temperance. Not only did he criticize severely the political and social abuses of his time - still a preposterous rashness for a popular magazine.¹

In writing of Dr. Holland's death Gilder says, "We believe that the best memorial we can build for our beloved chief and our friend is the honorable future of this

¹ Tassin, The Magazine in America, p. 287.

magazine - an enterprise which owes, and always will owe so much to his far-sighted courageous and large hearted management."²

To Gilder, who was a much younger and more progressive man, fell the task of developing all the good of Dr. Holland's doctrines and adapting of his editorial policy to a progressive world so that the magazine would continue to have an uplifting influence. In speaking of the influence of the Century Robert Underwood Johnson says:

It must be kept in mind that what gave the magazine its novel character was that it was not merely a miscellany, but was founded in convictions, open mindedness, ambition for leadership, and a determination to be of public service. The main idea of the editors was to discover what was best and then to exploit it. ... The Century was a strong influence upon the taste of the time.³

A great factor in the success of any enterprise is the cooperation of all those engaged in an undertaking. That Mr. Gilder was an executive who could inspire the good will of his fellow workers is shown by this statement of Mr. Johnson's:

Gilder's humor and good will were pervasive and his generosity of mind was salient. These qualities created in the Century editorial rooms an atmosphere of happiness and comradeship. It

²The Century, I (Dec. 1881), p. 143.

³R. U. Johnson, Remembered Yesterdays, p. 87. Mr. Johnson was assistant editor of the Century for thirty-six years.

was like a united and helpful family in which every member is the ally of every other. This feeling extended to the art and business departments as well, and was reenforced by the character and disposition of others. Such a group it was that went to the making of the magazine, supplementing one another and learning from one another, all happy in the personal successes of each and proud of the reputation and influence of the two magazines, so full of life and beauty.⁴

The Century followed a number of definite policies which made for success. It did not, as did many of the magazines of the day, carry advertisements disguised as stories. The editors were very scrupulous about being exact in every thing published, and required every contributor to be vouched for by some one known to the Century before his contribution would be published. The editorial staff made it a rule to take the most scrupulous precaution against errors of fact. Proofs of articles were often sent to experts for corrections, and no trouble was too great in the editorial room in the work of clarification, as the editor's idea of a model magazine article was one that would interest alike the person who knew all about the subject, and the one who knew nothing about it.

The editors of the Century tried to make each issue of the magazine have a wide appeal. In order to carry

⁴ Johnson, Remembered Yesterdays, p. 89.

out such a plan consistently they applied the following test to the make up of each issue.

Tests

1. Illustrations
 - a. Variety in subject.
 - b. Variety in matter.
 - c. Variety in artist.
 - d. General force.
 - e. Are pictures interesting?
 - f. To whom?
 - g. Oddity.
 - h. Compare with last month.
 - i. Artistic Quality.
 - j. Copyrights.
2. Literary quality.
3. Personal interest.
4. Appeal to women.
5. Breadth of appeal.
6. Variety.
7. A touch of travel.
8. Unusual, special feature , and oddity.
9. Appeal to American audience.
10. Appeal to English audience.
11. Humor and brightness.
12. Articles of importance.

13. Timeliness and seasonableness.
14. Religious or spiritual appeal.
15. Scientific aspect.
16. Practical articles.
17. Sports and adventure.
18. Can schedule be maintained?
19. Possible substitutes.
20. Expensiveness of the whole number.
21. Are we working off material likely to be stale?
22. Have we vouchers for every writer?
23. Is it advertisable?
24. Is expert supervision of any article necessary?
25. (and by no means least important) Beware of libels!⁵

Not every number completely carried out the plan suggested by the list, but the use of the plan shows the watchfulness exercised to make the magazine contain such a wide variety of material that it would appeal to people with many different interests.

In the twenty-ninth anniversary of the establishing of the Century, Johnson comments thus on the efforts the staff had always made to make the magazine an important influence for good.

⁵ Johnson, Remembered Yesterdays, p. 140.

The Century has in the main avoided the hectic aspect of life, and has gathered from normal existence such salutary and hopeful lessons as may strengthen rather than discourage for the conflict. ... It is the aim of the Century first of all, to be of use to its readers, to minister to their enjoyment by fiction, poetry, art, and miscellany, that shall take them out of their cares through wholesome humor or absorbing pictures of the imagination, and through the rarest of qualities - that of charm. The reader little knows the endeavor, the industry, and the expense that go to the production of a single number of this magazine. The Century is regarded as a trust which we have undertaken for our readers. A large part of this sense of responsibility is concentrated upon maintaining the tone which in our judgment should permeate a magazine for the family and the people. Along with a reflection of the beauty of life, he who stands at the receipt of manuscripts must note "the rush for the precipices" - the vicious influence set to words, the vulgarities, and the insidious lowering of the standards of conduct. In this phase of labor an editor need not give himself airs of a censor of morals; he is simply taking, in the line of the day's work, one of the ordinary responsibilities of life.⁶

Editorials on what children should read often appeared in the Century. These editorials pointed out that to acquire a love of good literature one should learn to read good books in one's childhood. They also showed that it is the parents' duty to direct the child's reading, not only by providing good material but by excluding from their homes the comic supplement and the yellow journals that feature crime and sensational material. The editorials also criticized teachers for trying to teach a love of literature

⁶"The Century to Its Readers" Century, LVIII (Oct., 1910), p.955.

from histories of authors. The following is the concluding paragraph of one of the editorials in the Century on early education in literature:

In this home development of the youthful mind, this early sowing of the seed of a love of learning, the children's magazines of the present day with their high standards of writing and illustration, are forces of incalculable power for good. They have in countless cases done the work which the parent has for one reason or another failed to do. They have by creating a solid love for the best made it forever impossible for the worst to gain a foothold in thousands of households. No more valuable educational work than this could be performed. Montaigne says that he read books that he "might learn to live and die well." The youth who comes to manhood with the love of learning firmly planted in his heart has in him the highest equipment for a useful citizen, for he will constantly read more books, will year by year shape his course more in accordance with the garnered experience⁷ of all the ages, and will thus live and die well.

The Century contained material that made appeal to all types of people. It published a number of things of special interest to even young children. Humorous illustrations and stories appeared in the "Lighter Vein" column and in later issues there was a special children's page on which appeared a series of humorous animal pictures. The early numbers had a department called "Home and Society". Although this name was later dropped the same general subjects were treated in their "Open Letter" department. This department contained a wide variety of subjects and gave the readers an

⁷ "Early Education in Literature", Century, XIX (Feb. 1891) p. 630.

opportunity to express their ideas on current topics.

Those who were interested in sports and athletics found entertainment in Walter Camp's article on American Sports. The citizens interested in public affairs found the questions of the day treated seriously and earnestly, without political bias in the pages of the Century Magazine.

Articles of interest to farmers were also published, such as: reports on the experiments carried on by the Department of Agriculture on soil inoculation; articles telling of the United States Weather Bureau; the fighting of infectious diseases among herds of the country; and the selection of the best breeds of horses, cattle, sheep, goats, and poultry. These articles were profusely illustrated and were not too scientific to be instructive and entertaining reading.

Articles on travel, home making, and all types of popular fads appeared, as well as more literary material. A number of poems both serious and humorous were printed in every number. Usually two or more serial novels were published in each issue, as well as a number of short stories. In addition practically every issue contained a biography or critical study of some prominent author or some other well known person. The novels, short stories, articles, and critical studies were written by some of the best known writers of the day. In addition the Century made a wide appeal as a "picture book" as it was the second illustrated magazine to

appear in America. Its pictures after November, 1898, were often printed in colors, and after December, 1902, full page art pictures appeared in colors. In quality of printing and type of subject they were of much higher grade than the pictures appearing in any other magazine of its day.

The Century Magazine was devoted to the developing of all American interests. One of the things which tended to give it "a distinctive character of its own was its discarding of English serial and its cordial encouragement of every sign of originality and force in the younger writers".⁸ That the editors considered the Century a national magazine is shown by this quotation from an editorial:

The Century is a national magazine - not an international, not a sectional magazine. As between East and West it knows no difference; as between North and South it knows no difference. And yet, it being national assumes on the one hand that America has a great deal to do with Abroad, and on the other that America is a nation.⁹

One of the first steps to develop a national spirit was the arousing of interest in the South by publishing the works of Southern writers. The war series, written in a broad minded unprejudiced way did much to help the wounds of the war to heal. According to Tassin, "The war articles were not only superb journalism but splendid patriotism also.
...

⁸Tassin, The Magazine in America, p. 950.

⁹"The Century a National Magazine", Century, XX (Oct., 1891), P. 950

... It was not until Southern men began to write for Northern magazines that the South became a factor in the literary life of the country."¹⁰ The first Northern magazine open to Southern writers was the *Century*, which accepted stories that represented their life, and articles that stated their point of view.

In 1885 Gilder, accompanied by Frank Scott, secretary of the *Century* Company, made a trip to the South to solicit personally, contributions from authors of that section of the country. This encouragement of Southern writers brought to the pages of the *Century* the works of such authors as Thomas Nelson Page, with his Negro dialect story, "Mars Chan," and Francis Hopkinson Smith in his "Colonel Carter of Carterville," which was written at Mr. Gilder's suggestion after Mr. Smith had told the story at a club dinner. Assistant editor Johnson speaks thus of the Southern writers whose works appeared in the *Century*:

Another discovery of a Southern writer of rare quality and value was that of George W. Cable, whose stories, "Old Creole Days," first appeared in the *Century*. ... We believed in him from the start and were not surprised when he took his place among the foremost American romancers of permanent worth. ... The South was in the literary saddle in those days. Among her new authors were Mrs. Burnett, then Fannie Hodson, with her dramatic cross section of life; James Lane Allen, with his charming romance of Kentucky; Colonel Richard Malcom Johnson with the quiet homely humor of the po'white and the adventures of "Romulus and Remulus"; Irwin Russell, wittiest of writers in negro-dialect verse; and Joel Chandler Harris, with his inimitable fables of

¹⁰ Tassin, The Magazine in America, pp. 29-95.

the modern AEsop, "Uncle Remus", probably the most enduring contribution to Afro-American folklore that has been made. Then came Grace King with her "Balcony Stories," and Ruth McEnery Stuart, and Mary Murfree, who as "Charles Egbert Craddock" long concealed her sex; and John Fox, Jr., with his picture of Kentucky mountaineers, and Alice Hegan with her wholesome and homely humor, and many others who with those already in the field made it a golden epoch of Southern fiction, with the diverting traits of the negro holding the center of the stage.¹¹

The West was also a field of which the Easterner knew very little. The Century editor in his attempt to make the magazine represent the entire nation published a number of articles and stories of the country and people west of the Mississippi River. One series of illustrated articles dealt with the early history of California. Other articles were on the Yosemite valley, the Grand Canon, and Alaska by John Muir, and also an article on Yellowstone Park by Ray Stannard Baker. The Century also published Western poetry written by Joaquin Miller, Bret Harte, and Edwin Markham; and Western stories by Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stevenson, Hamlin Garland, Bret Harte, and E. W. Howe. Through its literature the Century helped the East to discover the West.

But the Century did not neglect either the Eastern or foreign interests while it was broadening the American

¹¹ Johnson, Remembered Yesterdays, p. 122.

horizon of its readers. It contained entertaining sketches of interesting, little known, out-of-the-way places in the East and stories of foreign travel. As for prominent writers, they at all times were well represented in the Century. In its columns appeared poems by such prominent poets as Lowell, Whitman, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Sidney Lanier, Helen Hunt, Emma Lazarus, Celia Thaxter, John Hay, Kipling, Emerson, George Meredith, and other poets who have won recognition in America. As Gilder was a poet, he was continually alert to secure for the Century the best of modern poetry. Among the prominent authors who wrote either fiction or articles for the Century there appear the following names: W. D. Howells, Brander Matthews, Rudyard Kipling, Henry Van Dyke, Winston Churchill, Feir Mitchell, Irving Bachelor, John Burroughs, Jacob A. Riis, Helen Keller, Jack London, Booker T. Washington, Margaret Deland, Theodore Roosevelt, and Woodrow Wilson. Some of the early works of Edith Wharton, Elsie Singmaster, Willa Sibert Cather, and Anne Douglas Sedgwick, popular writers of the present day, first appeared in the Century.

Such a group of prominent authors and outstanding works did not merely drift to the columns of the Century. The editors were always eager to secure new features that would add to the interest of the magazine. "If we heard of any very desirable feature," writes Mr. Johnson, "we

usually did not wait to meet the person concerned or depend upon the chances of correspondence, but within the next ten minutes we would take a cab, or would use the telephone, or if necessary, the telegraph or the cable. In this way we obtained much significant material that I am sure would otherwise have been lost."¹²

Mr. Gilder's personality was a vital factor in his success as an editor. His daughter gives the following word picture of her father at his work:

He had an extraordinary capacity for work, a power of getting through an apparently overwhelming amount of manuscripts and correspondence in the shortest possible time. He had an infinite capacity for taking pains, which he carried into every field of his activity. All the demands made upon him, and they were many and of the most divergent kind, received a prompt and effective response, whether it was to help a friend in need, organize a dinner to some foreigner of note, advise a stranger as to his future career in art or literature, or merely to pass judgment on the poetic ability of some aspiring high school graduate. With all this intensity of life, there was in him nothing breathless or hasty. He seemed neither restless nor ceaselessly agitated. He had a fund of whimsical humor, a genial and understanding quality that made his presence a delight.¹³

Mr. Johnson tells of Mr. Gilder's never keeping anyone waiting to see him and of other editorial policies:

¹² Johnson, Remembered Yesterdays, p. 147.

¹³ Letters of Richard Watson Gilder, p. 114.

Every one who left the office was made to feel that even if he had not obtained what he wished, he at least had the good will and as far as possible the aid of the editor and their assistants. It used to be said of Gilder that he could decline a manuscript so gently as to make the author think it almost an acceptance. ...

I doubt if in any office in the world the hunt for talent was conducted with more assiduity. After the first sifting the promising manuscripts were read by two or even three of the staff. The problem was how to save what was worth saving out of a manuscript otherwise unavailable, and how to help an author to concentrate on whatever talent he had. ...

Both Gilder and I in those early days received many letters from authors of note in appreciation of helpful suggestions we had given. ...

I could cite a dozen instances of persons who enjoy a large reputation for fiction in which the sympathetic criticism was gratefully received and followed. There were times when the Century seemed like a department of a great university with special chairs of fiction and poetry. And how delightful it was, this prospect for golden talent. ... After responsibility, the quality Gilder had most conspicuously was taste; the next, sensibility; and the next sympathy, and these all showed in the editing of the magazine. His handling of fiction was one of his strong points. He had an almost unerring instinct for perceiving the logic of a piece of fiction and, without contributing a line himself, he made suggestions which would enable the writer to lop off superfluous or ineffective passages and reshape his work to a successful issue.¹⁴

A number of Century editorials discuss the editor's attitude toward the author. They tell of the editor's

¹⁴ Johnson, Remembered Yesterdays, pp. 112-14.

conscientiously wading, for hopeless hours, through manuscripts in search of some spark of genius that might be encouraged, and of his suffering pangs of regrets because he must return many worthy manuscripts, because space for their publication was not available, as he expressed it, "A quart measure will not hold a barrel of apples." He pointed out that many must be disappointed because of the eight thousand five hundred to nine thousand manuscripts submitted during two years only four hundred or less could be used. He advised young writers not to be in great haste to bring their work to a publisher, but to regard each poem and each story as a definite step in their literary career, and not to let any work leave their hands till it was a work of art if it was possible for the writer to make it so. To refute the idea that no unknown author had a chance to have manuscripts accepted by the Century the editorial continued thus:

The unknown writer is the apple of the editor's eye. He spends many weary days and sleepless nights in search of the hidden jewel; and there is no prouder moment of his life than when the great discovery is made, and the shining splendor is forever set in the editorial crown of rejoicing.¹⁵

He also intimates that as every author must have been at

¹⁵"The Rights of the Unknown Author," Century, XXV (Feb., 1894), p. 629.

the beginning unknown, in sad obscurity he probably would have remained had it not been for editorial patience, insight, and prescience.

In an attempt to discover new writers and to develop literary talent among college graduates the Century conducted contests for four years from 1897 to 1900. Each year three prizes of \$250 each were given to college graduates of the previous year who submitted the best poem, essay, or short story to the Century.

To Mr. Gilder the manuscripts he read were much more than prospective fillers for the columns of his magazine. Back of each manuscript he saw the individual author with his ambitions for a successful literary career and was always ready to offer a helping hand in the way of good advice, and often financial aid to a worthy but poor contributor. In all the stress of work he kept his optimism and sane sense of humor. In speaking of Gilder's friendliness Bill Nye said that "he could return manuscripts in such a gentle and caressing way that the disappointed scribblers came from hundreds of miles away to thank him for his kindness and stay to dinner with him."¹⁶ After Gilder's death Mr. James Thierry of Cleveland, Ohio, mailed to the Century office the following unique rejection slip that Mr. Gilder had sent to him August 27, 1909, when

¹⁶ Letters of Richard Watson Gilder, p. 387.

Gilder was returning a poem that Mr. Thierry had sent to the Century.

The trouble is that in this land sublime
 Too many citizens know how to rhyme;
 In fact, some ten or twenty thousand can
 Write verses that correctly mate and scan,
 And several hundred sometimes even reach
 To no small aptitude of measured speech.
 So many scores woo well the fickle muse
 That editors dare not their songs refuse:
 Thus are our safes so full of pretty verses
 We can no more -- so, prithee spare your curses.

The Editor.¹⁷

R. U. Johnson concludes his chapter entitled "Forty Years of Editing" thus:

As I look back over the art and writing in the Century of my day I am astonished at its interest and wholesomeness - and I think it is not mere complacency that makes me characterize it, first and last, serious or humorous, fiction or drawing, by one word - genuine. Here was no straining after effect, no simulated robustness, no cocksureness, no "push" and "pep", no revolutionary madness. In keeping with our traditions; it had grace and serenity, and honest sentiment and natural gaiety.¹⁸

A chapter on Gilder as an editor would not be complete unless it gave an account of his interest in the International Copyright Law, and the work he did for this cause. A summary of the copyright movement during Mr. Gilder's day, as recorded by his daughter, is as follows:

¹⁷ Century, LVIII (Sept. 1910), p. 479.

¹⁸ Johnson, Remembered Yesterdays, p. 147.

The first bill mentioned, the Dorsheimer, is dated 1884. On this no action was taken by Congress. In 1886 the Chace Bill was strongly favored by the International Copyright Association, and recommended by authors, but again no action was taken. Two years later the same bill, somewhat modified, passed the Senate, but was blocked in the House, and no action taken upon it. The following year another unsuccessful attempt was made. Finally in March, 1891, after an all-night session, the Chace-Breckinridge International Copyright Bill was voted on favorably by the House, and on March 4, at 2:30 A. M., it passed the Senate.¹⁹

But such an account does not tell the story of the struggle that finally culminated in victory. The plan for international copyright was nothing new. It had been discussed in 1837, fifty-two years before it was finally passed in 1889. In spite of the fact that this bill, so important to American authors, had failed to pass so many times, Gilder never stopped hoping for its success. He in his optimism, believed that Congress would pass the bill when the public opinion was in favor of it being passed. Therefore, he logically set about educating the public. By means of editorials he began his campaign by explaining the need of such a law and showing the advantage of such a law to both the author and the publisher. His editorials set the facts before his readers in a clear, forceful way, pointing out to them the justice of such a law. He, much against his usual custom, at times became sarcastic when

¹⁹Letters of Richard Watson Gilder, p. 192-93.

he compared the people who opposed international copyrights, because it would do away with cheap books, to people who would favor the stealing of clothing and food from another nation in order that these commodities might be purchased at a lower price. In 1882, Gilder, Dr. Eggleston, and Mr. Lathrop organized the American Copyright League. The purpose of the league is set forth thus in Mr. Gilder's words:

The copyright league is intended to include all the writers of the country with a view to pressing a law giving equal rights to foreign authors, this without any reference to a treaty, and trusting wholly to the expectation that foreign authors will reciprocate by extending to our own authors the same courtesy. This latest movement is independent of the publishers. Our idea is to try to bring the matter before the public especially in its moral aspect and to try to educate public opinion in the direction of honest and fair dealings.²⁰

This league grew to the number of nearly seven hundred men and women and included authors, editors, college presidents and professors, clergymen, lawyers, and journalists. Among these were nearly all the most distinguished authors of the country. These members raised funds to carry on their campaign by a series of programs at which the authors gave readings from their works.

Gilder carried on his part of the campaign in various ways. First of all he shouldered much of R. U. Johnson's editorial work in order that Johnson might give at least

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Letters of Richard Watson Gilder, p. 117.

half of his time to the league in the capacity of its secretary. He wrote many letters, and by personal interviews converted many people to the cause. But his greatest work for the cause was in the writing of editorials for the columns of the Century. He adopted many different devices in these editorials. At one time he published forty-four letters from prominent people, who gave their opinion on International Copyrights. His arguments were often written much like a debate. He would set forth points and give arguments to prove his points. He would also state an argument against the question and then refute it. He appealed to the readers' ideas of justice and fair play, and made an appeal to them to help the bill to pass by using their influence with their congressmen. Each time a new session of congress was to be held a new series of editorials on the subject appeared. Gilder was especially skillful in telling some new points of interest each time. The editorials did not sound like reprints of the original article but always reported some progress if nothing more than a change of public opinion and an optimistic hope for the future. Gilder's optimism, in face of many defeats, is shown in his providing President Cleveland with a quill pen, made from an eagle's feather, which was to be used in the signing of the bill. Although Cleveland did not have the pleasure of signing the bill, this pen was used for that purpose by

President Harrison in 1889.

Gilder as well as many others of the league did some lobbying for the copyright bill. That lobbying was very distasteful to Mr. Gilder is shown by these statements:

I think Congress should be informed on the subject by those who have studied the matter, but as a rule I would rather print my views where they can be seen than attempt to run around and button-hole lawmakers.²¹

It is absolutely disgraceful that congress should have to be hunted and chased around to get them to do their public duties. I believe I have no personal interest in the copyright matter, and I certainly would not devote so much time to anything personal. There are some things that make me, at times, ashamed of being an American, and the absence of copyrights is one.²²

The Century was so outstanding in this important work of seeing justice done to authors that Stedman referred to the magazine as "the very life-raft of our authors."²³ When Gilder was asked by Cleveland why he took so much interest in international copyrights he answered that he regarded it as a moral question and that the attitude of America in permitting the piracy of the work of foreign authors was a national disgrace.²⁴

²¹ Letters of Richard Watson Gilder, p. 198.

²² Ibid., p. 202.

²³ Johnson, Remembered Yesterdays, p. 349.

²⁴ "Grover Cleveland a Record of Friendship," Century, LVI (Aug., 1909), p. 486.

The benefits, as Gilder saw them, of overcoming this "national disgrace" are pointed out in this excerpt from an editorial published in the Century after the International Copyright Bill became a law.

The accomplishment of the reform draws the nation into the atmosphere of honor in literary affairs. It arrests a widespread moral deterioration in the direction of a dishonest communism which has begun to affect many well meaning people. It stimulates American patriotism by removing a just grievance which American authors have always felt against their country, and makes it unnecessary longer to apologize for our exceptional position as a nation.²⁵

In these words Mr. Gilder sang his song of thanksgiving for the victory in the eight year's battle, fought by him and his associates of the Copyright League, against the injustice that all wielders of the pen had suffered.

Gilder, as an editor, raised the standards of the American magazine. He saw the need of presenting to his readers a variety of material in order that his magazine would appeal to people with many types of interests. He made an appeal through the illustrations that were published. These illustrations were both instructive and entertaining, and added much to the popularity of the Century. He secured the work of the best American writers for the magazine, and through the stories and articles about various

²⁵ "International Copyright Accomplished," Century, XX (May, 1891), p. 148.

parts of the country helped the people to understand and appreciate their fellow-countrymen. This understanding helped to wipe out sectional feeling and develop a national conscience. But probably the greatest work ever accomplished by an editor was the educating of the public to demand the passing of the International Copyright Law. Thus Gilder won justice for American authors, and made it possible for them to win a hearing from the American people. In addition he taught the people of the United States to prefer the works of American writers to the works of English authors. Gilder's name should be recorded among the greatest of American editors, for he gave a life of unselfish service to the developing of a magazine that was influential in establishing higher standards of both literature and citizenship.

GILDER AS A TEACHER OF THE COMMON PEOPLE

Through his editorial work on the Century Magazine, Gilder became a teacher of the common people. Like many of the readers of the magazine Gilder had not been able to go to college. However, he had ambition enough to gain an education. His knowledge of literature was secured through a systematic course of reading after his day's work was finished. His appreciation of art was gained through his interest in the work of Mrs. Gilder and her friends. He studied history as a means of gaining knowledge to enable him to nationalize his magazine, and his knowledge of the world was gained through travel as well as through his reading. Gilder always tried to direct public opinion by his editorials rather than merely to record the trend of affairs. To do this it was necessary for him to mingle with people that he might understand the existing social and industrial conditions. Thus, by studying public situations he became a well informed writer on many public questions. But all this knowledge came through a lifetime of conscientious effort to improve his mind. Therefore, it was only natural that Gilder should attempt to publish articles in his magazine that would open the eyes of his readers to the vast field of cultural knowledge that could be gained by reading.

As a person's attention must first be gained before he can be taught, the Century, from the first issue, devoted much space to its illustrations. As the magazines of today sometimes devote half their space to pictures, the present generation can scarcely realize the influence that illustrations exerted at a time when only one other illustrated magazine was being published. But the pictures in the Century did much more than catch the attention of the reader. Many of the pictures were real works of art that gave the subscribers a well organized course in the study of the great paintings of the world. Alexander Drake, the art editor of the Century, was mainly responsible for the success of these pictures. He introduced a new form of reproduction, that of preparing the surface of the wood block like a photographic negative, and by the use of the camera reproduced upon it the original drawings, or paintings, which could then be engraved with the guidance of the original. He extended this process to include not only pencil drawings, but etchings, crayon work, and paintings in water colors and oils. Thus a great variety was given the illustrations in the magazine.

The most outstanding art work that appeared in the Century was the work of Timothy Cole, perhaps the foremost

wood engraver in the world. He was first sent abroad to engrave a dozen or two of the masterpieces in the Italian galleries. But his work was so well received by the readers of the Century that he remained abroad for twenty-eight years. He included in his work not only the masters of Italy, but also those of Holland, England, Belgium, France, and Spain. The reproductions of Cole's full page wood engravings were accompanied by an account of the artist and his works. Cole's literary collaborator on the "Old Italian Masters" was W. J. Stillman; John C. Van Dyke wrote the accounts of the old English masters. Illustrated articles on the works of early sculpture in Greece, Rome, Persia, France, and England also appeared in the Century. Other features that found a place in the columns of the magazine were pictures and articles on Flemish, Spanish and Japanese painters, and also articles on the modern American and English artists and discussions of the new movements in art. From such a collection of material a reader would be able to receive a broad knowledge of the famous artists and sculptors of both the past and the present and could, through the illustrations, learn to recognize the world's great works of art. Even though the pictures were in the main printed in black and white they were so faithfully reproduced that one could learn from them really to appreciate art. After December, 1902, there

appeared in each number from two to four full page pictures in artistic colors. Some of these colored pictures were reproductions of paintings of heroines of fiction, such as Lorna Doone, Becky Sharp, and of Maude Adams as Peter Pan. Often the illustrations to the stories and articles were interesting as works of art. By following the half-tone pictures illustrating the travel sketches of both America and Europe one could almost feel that he himself had taken the journey. The effective illustrations added much to the interest of articles on the most commonplace subjects.

Gilder worked for art in other ways than through the columns of the Century. "He was one of the founders of the Society of Americans Artists, became president of the National Art League out of which has grown the Federation of Art Societies. He was also one of the founders of the National Arts Club, and in the long battle for free art Mr. Gilder placed the Century aggressively in the front of the struggle." The Century contained both articles and editorials that discussed the establishment of museums and art galleries, and other that discussed beautiful architecture as a means of developing one's appreciation of the beautiful. Gilder considered the art and architecture appearing at the public expositions at New Orleans, Chicago, and

¹Beaux, Cecelia, "His Relation to the Arts," Century, LVII (Feb. 1910), p. 630.

Buffalo a means of developing a broader appreciation of art. Many editorials pointing out the mistake of placing a tariff on art appeared in the Century. They stressed the fact that imported pictures would not interfere with the sale of American productions, but that they would increase the demand for pictures by developing an appreciation for good paintings. The following quotation gives some of Gilder's forceful arguments in favor of free art:

Our legislation is a cruelty to the ambitious and artistic of our own country-men. . . . Art is an education. It refines, elevates, civilizes. It develops and perfects the tastes of a people. It is at once the evidence and the cause of culture. Every work of art which America receives adds to its store of educational equipment and increases the possibilities of artistic growth. It does not come as other articles, to disappear in the wants of daily consumption, but to delight and improve the public taste for generations.²

Gilder showed his readers the need of free art. He thus helped to establish a public opinion favoring the removal of the tariff on all works of art. The Congress of 1890 responded to the demands of this public opinion by passing the McKinley Bill which put art on the free list, but unfortunately the Dingley Bill of 1897 placed a tax on works of art imported. However, Gilder did not give up the struggle, and to the day of his death worked for the

²"Art and Congress," Century, VI (Sept. 1884), p. 786.

advancement of art in America, because he believed it to be both a cultural and educational influence.

The Century also did much to broaden its readers' appreciation of literature. Every copy contained one or more articles discussing the works of some prominent writer. Sometimes the article dealt with an ancient writer as Homer or Dante; at other times it discussed some of the English authors of the earlier period as Milton, Shakespere, and Addison. But the most prominence was given to writers of the nineteenth century, including both the English and American authors. The articles were not formal biographies, but informal sketches of the author's life, his personality, and his works. Most of them were written by well known literary critics who had the skill to make their writing entertaining. These instructive articles aroused the reader's interest in the classics and serve as a guide for further reading. Many of them were written to arouse interest in the authors whose works were then being published in the Century. The publishers of the Century had the means to pay well for the contributions they accepted and were thus able to secure for their readers what they considered the best in modern literature. In this way the readers of the Century were taught to appreciate good modern fiction, and also instructive articles on various subjects.

The magazine gave its readers a knowledge of great rulers, statesmen, musicians, composers, actors, scientists and inventors. The articles were usually illustrated with pictures of the person discussed and such other illustrations as would make the story more interesting and comprehensible. Each magazine contained from five to ten instructive articles on a wide variety of subjects. These gave the reader a broad knowledge of what was going on in the world. In subject matter these articles ranged from new and novel industries to discussions on astronomy. Through the pages of the Century the public was kept well informed on what was new in drama and music. Various religious movements both past and present were reviewed for the benefit of the readers of the Century. But the articles on religion were never written from a partisan point of view, however, they were not offensive to readers of any religious denomination.

Much history was taught through the columns of the Century. Ancient periods were reviewed through articles on Zoroasterism, the Vedas, the finding of the tomb of Aristotle, the story of conquests of Alexander the Great, recent discoveries concerning Buddha, and an account of Hammurabi. Foreign history was represented by accounts of the Spanish Armada, the French Revolution, Life of Napoleon,

and Nelson in the Battle of the Nile. The history of the American colonial days was represented by stories of the Indian wars and of the Revolution. Pictures of the early days of the nation appeared in such articles as the "Inaugural of Washington," "Home and Haunts of Washington," and "Thomas Jefferson's Home." Later history was represented by the story of the writing of the "Star Spangled Banner," Mexican War campaigns, early California history, and Custer's last battle. But the most outstanding historical project was the Civil War series.

This series of articles ran from November 1864 to November 1867. After their appearance in the Century these articles were published in four volumes, entitled "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War." Through this publication an authentic history of the war was made available to later generations. The million dollars profit made on the articles enabled the Century Company to finance the publication of its dictionary. In this way the articles contributed a double benefit to the cause of education.

These articles on the war, were first planned to be an account of the campaign or battle from the commander on each side. These stories were then supplemented by articles giving life and color to each particular event. The writers were asked to make their articles interesting, to

go behind the official returns and give inside history and the human side of the affairs. All of the technical statements were carefully checked with the official records of the war to assure their accuracy. Care was also observed in the selection of the pictures used for illustrations. A search was made among collectors and photographers all over the country to secure suitable pictures. "The art editor of the Century made trips to Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and elsewhere collecting views of the battlefield of Fort Donelson, Shiloh, Corinth, Chattanooga, Stone River, Murfreesboro and other places. The pictures of the naval engagements were made largely under the supervision of officers who participated. The greatest care was taken that these views should be accurate as well as picturesque."³ The accounts dealt with the events of these conflicts in an unsectional way barring all political questions. The editors hoped that such a series would "soften controversy" between the warring parties through the contemplation of sacrifices, resourcefulness, and bravery in foes, and thus become an element of intersectional reconciliation. The articles helped to show the people of the North that the citizens north of the Mason and Dixon line had a few faults, and

³ Johnson, Remembered Yesterdays, p. 192.

that the slave holders were not all villains. In a letter to a prospective contributor to the series Gilder writes, "Please don't say "no" to our war request! This is the time for the 'unveiling of our hearts.' If the North can see the hearts of the South, and the South the North's, they will love each other as never before! This is truth and not sentimentality."⁴

These articles especially appealed to those who had had some part in the war, and immediately many unsolicited contributions began to appear in the Open Letter Column. These were written by soldiers who had different views of various situations from those presented in the main article. Such letters added many valuable bits of interesting historical facts to the series. The following excerpt from an editorial gives the editor's idea of the value of the series:

We are aware that the present series is not all history, but even in its errors, its bias, its temper, and its personality, it is the material of history. . . . It is not too much to claim that when completed it will probably constitute a more authoritative and final statement of the events of the war, as seen through the eyes of commanders and participants, than has before been made on a single plan. Collected, it will be an intimate and authentic record such as has never before been made of the war

⁴ Letters of Richard Watson Gilder, p. 130-31.

for the Union, or indeed of any military conflict.⁵

The war series were followed by the "Memoirs" of U. S. Grant, and a history of the life of Abraham Lincoln by J. Nicolay and John Hay, Lincoln's private secretaries. "The 'Life of Lincoln' was not only what you might call the secret history of the secession conspiracy, and the inside history of the war, but it also contains a complete, authentic and logical account of the great political struggle in connection with the subject of slavery. But what gives it greater value, at least in this country, is that it is the only authorized life of the greatest man this country has ever produced."⁶ An editorial in the Century makes the following statement about the educational value of this great historical work:

It is one's patriotic duty to read the "Life of Lincoln." This is the book that Lincoln himself helped to make and would wish to be judged by. It contains clear and authentic statements, from the national point of view, of the political origin of the military struggle of 1861-'65. The American who neglects the present opportunity to make himself acquainted with this vital epoch in the history of his country will be less intelligent in his patriotism than the faithful reader of the authoritative Life of the greatest President.⁷

⁵"The Century War Series," Century, VII (Mar., 1885), p.788.

⁶Letters of Richard Watson Gilder, p. 175.

⁷"To our Readers in Confidence," Century, XI (Dec., 1886), p.318.

The Spanish American War offered another opportunity for the Century to become an informal history teacher. The following quotation from an editorial outlines the plan of the new war articles and suggests their interest and value:

The series on the Spanish war will resemble the earlier work in aiming to present the chief events of the war as they appeared to the commanding officers and their lieutenants. Coming after considerable conflict of detail, and revealing much that is unknown or but vaguely guessed, the authoritative-ness of these papers will be beyond question. And as the Civil War series revealed to the public the courage of the contestants on both sides, the new series cannot fail to show the gallantry of our late enemy, as well as to portray in permanent colors the deeds of the American navy and army, of which men of all opinions are proud.

Following close upon Captain Sigbee's narrative of the Maine will come Lieutenant Hobson's story of the Merrimac adventure. The symposium on the Santiago naval action is likely to be singularly complete. Every vessel on the American side will be represented in the accounts, including the papers promised by Admiral Sampson and Schley, and supplementary articles of novel interest. A detailed map has already been made, on which the movements of each of these vessels have been placed by its officers, - usually the commanding officer, - and a large number of unprinted photographs taken during the action have been secured. The land operations will be treated with similar thoroughness.

It is a subject for mutual congratulation between the Century and its readers that so many of the chief participants in these stirring events have consented to cooperate in the making of this unique series while the facts are fresh in their minds.⁸

⁸ "The Century's War Series," Century, XXXV (Nov. 1889), p.153.

All of these authentic war articles gave the reader his lessons in history in a somewhat "sugar coated" state. They were well illustrated and dealt out in small enough portions that even the indifferent student would be willing to study that short a history lesson at one time. When a person began to read he became so fascinated by the interesting informal style used, and the human touches found in the incidents, that he would peruse the entire article as it was continued from number to number. Through such series one gained much general knowledge of great events of the past.

Gilder realized that travel was a means of gaining experience and broadening one's education. He had made three trips to Europe and had seen much of the eastern part of the United States. He had also been south to Florida, as far west as Minneapolis, Minnesota, and north into Canada. In these travels he saw many interesting things which gave him a broader vision of life as well as much pleasure. Therefore, he attempted to broaden his readers' vision of the world by vicarious journeys. These accounts of travel were not tiresome descriptions of things seen, but personal accounts of the experiences of the travelers, their contact with the people of the various countries, and descriptions of the home life and work of the people visited. Through such personal touches, and aided by the well chosen illustrations, an imaginative reader could gain much pleasure as

well as knowledge from the accounts read.

In the Western Hemisphere stories of travel ranged from an account of an expedition to reach the South Pole, to one describing an expedition to the North Pole. There were also articles describing the Klondike gold rush and Alaskan scenery. The exciting accounts of journeys to California in forty-nine and the Pony Express were followed by other accounts of California in its later fruitfulness. The mountainous regions of North America was a field well explored, and one was enabled through the pages of the Century to visit Canada, the Grand Canon, Yellowstone National Park, and the other mountainous regions that are now included in Glacial National Park. Nor was the East neglected, for a number of accounts of interesting out-of-the-way places appeared. Washington and other large cities were described.

A series of articles on famous places in England and in Germany appeared, as well as articles that told of visits to Russia, Norway, Poland, and to the Alps of Switzerland. The titles of the various articles did much to attract the readers' attention. Few could resist reading articles with such attractive titles as "Parisian Pastimes," "On the Track of Ulysses," "Sailing Alone Around the World," "Italian Merrymaking," "To Gypsyland," or "The Spell of Egypt." One might enumerate many pages of titles or countries

that were described in travel sketches, for practically every country of the world, many prominent cities, and a number of islands were visited by travelers who sent accounts of their journeys to the Century for publication. Through the reading of this magazine, those who were not able to travel could gain, at secondhand, much of the pleasure, knowledge, and culture that travel gives.

Probably the most effective accounts of foreign travels printed in the Century were George Kennan's articles on "Siberia and the Exile System."

In 1885 Gilder arranged with Kennan to go to Siberia ... to study not only the Siberian prison system but the philosophy and activities of the revolutionists there in exile. At that time Kennan, though he had lived two years and a half in Siberia and subsequently had made an overland journey of five thousand miles through the country in the interest of the Russian-American Telegraph Company, believed, not only that the severities of the exile system had been grossly misrepresented, but that the political prisoners were largely anarchists without reason for their violent opposition to the established order. ... His experience, however, converted a candid humane observer into an ardent advocate and friend of the revolutionist cause. ... His unvarnished and moderate accounts aroused American and British public opinion, and widely and secretly circulated translations among the people of Russia, particularly the soldiers, contributed largely toward a moral pressure which ultimately became one of the great forces in the political revolution of Russia.⁹

⁹ Johnson, Remembered Yesterdays, p. 224-25.

These articles, which had so great an influence in arousing public sentiment against the monarchical government, are considered the "Uncle Tom's Cabin" of the Siberian exile, and Kennan was called the "chief American protagonist" of Free Russia.

Kennan is recognized in Russia and England as being a great force of civilization and humanity. What began as a magazine enterprise soon became, despite the author's personal hardships and the continual peril to his health and safety, a labor of love, a propaganda of freedom. The Century staff, editors and publishers, felt in this the pride which they so often had the right to feel in that magazine's moral leadership of great movements. ...

His first chapter appeared in the Century for May, 1888. In the preface of that article, after recounting the preparation and circumstances of his journey, he says: "For Russia and the Russian people I have the warmest affection and sympathy; and if by a temperate and well-considered statement of the result of my Siberian investigation, I can make the country and the nation better known to the world and ameliorate even a little the lot of the unfortunates to whom "God is high above and the Tsar is far away" I shall be more than repaid for the hardest journey and the most trying experience of my life."¹⁰

But it was not only abroad that the Century found conditions that needed correcting. The career of the Louisiana Lottery was ended largely because of the opposi-

¹⁰ Johnson, Remembered Yesterdays, p. 225.

tion aroused by the Century. Gilder believed that all permanent reforms and progressive movements should be fostered by public sentiment. Therefore, he devoted many pages of the Century to discussions of existing social and industrial conditions. The discussion of such subjects as women's clubs, women's work, women's colleges, marriage and divorce, union of churches, Jewish problems, control of disease, various types of recreation, the stage, protection of natural resources, and control of disease gave to the readers of the Century a broader view of the social problems that faced American citizens.

As the world progressed industrially, the Century informed its readers of various important questions that arose. Important inventions of labor saving machinery, that influenced the industrial world, were discussed. Other articles showed the influence of the great industries on humanity. There appeared in the magazine unprejudiced articles explaining the cause and the effect of, and the relations between: strikes and lockouts, labor unions and wages, tariff and manufacturies, trusts and the independent producer, and railroad rates and farming. Such articles instructed those who read them, because each was written by a man who had made a careful study of the situation and gave the facts uncolored by political bias.

In public affairs the Century was also an educational factor. In its editorials, as well as in its special articles, it discussed all important questions that were before the American public. These articles did not give opinions formed by some political party but sought to give enlightening facts that would help its readers to draw their own conclusions. Nor did they deal in vague generalities, but in definite specific points and ideas that were comprehensible to those who were not well informed on such questions as: gold standard, free silver, the United State's land policy, good roads, election of President by popular vote, Philippines, the negro question, cost of government, imigration, and national defense. Gilder was not proselyting for any political party when he edited these articles on public affairs for the columns of the Century. Therefore, he insisted that they be instructive enough to be of real educational value rather than that they should contain the type of emotional appeal that would cause one to change his beliefs because only one side of the question was presented.

The common people of America who read the Century Magazine during Gilder's editorship should not be considered uneducated. Gilder saw his chance to do the work of a teacher and he carried out a well organized plan to give his

readers the best in literature and art. He also gave the reader pleasure, and broadened his outlook on life through the publication of instructive stories from history and through vicarious travel. In addition he kept the readers well informed on all questions dealing with social and industrial affairs, and made them better citizens by giving them a real understanding of public questions.

GILDER, THE PATRIOT AND HUMANITARIAN

Gilder as a patriot and humanitarian gave his best to his country and its citizens. In his youth his patriotism made him a soldier. In later life he continued as a soldier, fighting battles to establish truth and justice for American citizens. He cherished a lofty scorn for all that was mean and ignoble, and hypocrisy roused him to indignation. He gloried in the struggle for right and was never dismayed though victory seemed to be long postponed. His interest in reform was practical and unselfish, for he believed that the evils of a democracy could only be cured by an alert, intelligent, and constant patriotism. He believed that such a patriotism could be developed in a democracy through the education of its citizens.

Gilder did his part toward developing patriotism through education by working with organizations that were conducive to better citizenship, by keeping the public well informed on public questions through the columns of his magazine, and by giving moral support to all educational movements. The teachers of the public schools had a staunch supporter in Gilder. His magazine often printed articles and editorials that would open the eyes of an indifferent public to the value of the work done by these public servants.

Such articles were appreciative, encouraging, and helpful in tone. They gave the teachers credit for doing much good, even though handicapped by lack of equipment, that a careless public and been too indiffrent to supply. He believed that morals and ethics should be taught in schools as a means of developing better citizens, for he saw a close relation between education and social progress. In order that schools might fit people for life as well as citizenship he advocated the giving of industrial training through the establishing of trade schools, and the teaching of manual training in the public schools. He also believed that schools for nurses, should be established. The benefits of a college education for both men and women was a topic to which Gilder gave much attention.

Gilder considered the theater an educational force for either good or evil, depending on the type of play produced. He appealed to parents to bring about a theatrical reform by not permitting their daughters to attend plays that had demoralizing influence. The public expositions held in New Orleans, Chicago, and Saint Louis received much space in the pages of the Century because Gilder believed them to have an educational and cultural value. Likewise was much attention given to the free library movement.

Members of the present generation, who accept the free lending library as a matter of course, probably do not realize its advantages to the greatest extent. Gilder often discussed the libraries of New York which were available only to students, who were required to read in the building. He makes the following statements:

The old reproach, that we teach our children how to read in free schools but do not teach them the love of reading, will be in fair way for removal whenever literature shall be as free to the poor in New York as it is in Boston. But why should the movement for free libraries be confined to great cities? A library is of more use in an educational way than a high-school. The taste for good reading is the true door to culture, and if the taste for good reading be once established in a young person, there is an absolute certainty of attainment of a degree of culture which persevering years in school cannot give.¹

Of all the movements for public education Gilder looked to the public schools to accomplish the most for the citizens of America. The following was his idea of what the teacher should do for the pupils:

The thing to be first sought, and the thing most neglected in our public teaching, is the development of a sound character in the pupils. The State cannot teach religion, but it can require its teachers to enforce the virtues of industry, self reliance, truthfulness, purity, honesty, justice, kindness, and courtesy; it can make the inculcation of these virtues a chief part of the teacher's work. The education that neglects or undervalues morality is

¹"The Free Library Movement," Century, XII, (May, 1882), p.30.

worse than worthless; it "fits" the pupil to be a malefactor.

The next thing to be sought is to awaken the minds of the pupils, to stimulate their thirst for knowledge, to train them in habits of inquiry. The successful teacher is the one who makes his pupils think patiently and independently, who stirs them up to original investigation. Any pupil who has had this done for him has been "fitted" so far as his mind is concerned for success in any calling.²

Gilder recognized the press as an important educational factor. He also realized that sensational newspapers gave the public a type of education that was not an aid in developing good citizenship. As an aid in improving the type of news published he says:

Every man can be his own censor, and see to it that his support is not given to these newspapers which are curses to the community. The cure must come by discrimination, by reform brought about by the readers; by such free and fearless criticism as will lead to suppression. It is with the curse of yellow journalism as with the curse of yellow politics, the decent individual has got to perform an active part in creating a public opinion in which "pandering to the vulgarest tastes for sensationalism" will prove unprofitable as it is disreputable.³

But Gilder was optimistic enough to see improvement in the yellow journals, as he thus points out:

The sensational newspaper's editorial page already often shows gravity and pith of style

²Practical Education in the Common Schools," Century, II (June, 1882), p. 298.

³"Pandering to the Vulgarest Tastes," Century, LVI (May, 1909), p. 154.

evidencing ability and conscience. There is a growing tendency toward the fearless, generous, and public-spirited discussions of living questions. Let us hope that these signs indicate a reaction against a state of things that is depreciated by the best men engaged in the profession of daily journalism.

With all its faults the newspaper of to-day is a tremendous power for good; for the perpetuation of freedom; for the criticism and reform of government; for the betterment of social conditions. The daily press has reformed many things, and ought to be, and is, fully able to reform itself.⁴

Some of the principles that Gilder believed should be followed if one wished to be a good citizen were: to hold high ideals for your own life and for your country, to find enjoyment in hard work, to help in the advancement of public affairs, to be interested in humanity, to show sympathy for the weak and oppressed, and to do your duty to your employer and to mankind. Gilder showed his duty to mankind by taking interest in political reforms. He joined the Citizens' Union in 1897, and was made Chairman of the Committee on Press and Literature. This committee distributed over two thousand documents in the course of the campaign. These pamphlets, circulars, and cards, dealt with projects that Gilder later helped the city to realize,

⁴"The Newspaper Side of Literature," Century, XLV (May, 1890), p. 150.

such as: small parks, clean streets, public economy, the merit system, and civil service. Gilder was well fitted to carry on this campaign of public information. He shows in this statement that he believed this public work was a duty, and that he did not neglect his vocation to carry it out: "My rule is to do nothing that is not a clear call of duty, and to do nothing that interferes with my magazine work, which after all is, I hope, my principal usefulness. It is only one's pleasures that one has a right to interfere with, not one's regular work."⁵

Like all good citizens, Gilder was a strict believer in law enforcement. He deplored the fact that there seemed to be a trend toward mob law in the country and saw the development of the proper public opinion as the only solution of the problem. He pointed out that it was every citizen's duty to contribute to his own community on honest and wholesome sentiment toward law enforcement by conventional methods, if violence was to cease in the country. He criticized cities for opening their liquor shops and places of amusements on Sunday, because he believed that aside from the Biblical command, man needed

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Letters of Richard Gilder, p. 320.

for his physical well being a day of quiet rest, instead of a day of carousing. He seemed to feel that pandoring to party power was largely responsible for the laws not being enforced. Special movements toward the correction of evils he looked upon as a sign that the better element of people were determined to see that the laws were enforced.

The anti-gambling and anti-drinking waves which are spreading over the country give evidence that a good many people are determined that the world shall be better, and that soon, in these respects. Movements of this kind are subject to reaction; but the net results, in the present instances, are likely to be an appreciable improvement in both sentiment and practice.⁶

Gilder held corruption in politics as being largely responsible for the lack of laws enforcement. He took an active part in public affairs of New York, but not as a "party" man. He believed in voting for principles instead of a party. But he felt that neither party possessed any high principles because they were so largely influenced by "bosses" who exercised power through the spoils system. As a member of the Good Government Club he describes the fight for better city government thus:

The campaign in the city of New York is not only

⁶"Improvements In Standards," Century, LIII (Mar ., 1908) p. 799.

against Tammany hall, it is in favor of permanent reform in the separation of national from city politics. The banner of the Good Government Clubs have inscribed upon them the true motto of the campaign: "For the City." It is a fight for a clean, intelligent, progressive government, not for the benefit of any machine, but for the benefit of the whole people.

As a means of doing away with political bosses, and securing better public officers a Civil Service Reform Association was formed. This association worked for the passing of a Civil Service Reform law. Gilder as a member of the executive committee carried on a campaign of public information by his written and spoken word. His most important service, however, was the organization of the Anti-Spoils League. At Gilder's suggestion the work of the league was popularized by attempting to enroll all citizens who were opposed to the spoils system. Gilder drew up the constitution of this league and wrote the circulars and cards which were used. The league grew rapidly; in four months after it was founded it had ten thousand members from all parts of the union. Gilder took a firm stand against the spoils system in the columns of the Century and missed no opportunity to give public addresses in its favor, though as a rule he objected to making speeches. In his

⁷ "Good Government in New York," Century, XXVII (Nov., 1894), p. 150.

editorials he pictured the scramble for office as it existed under the spoils system, and showed the harm done to the country by the giving of offices as pay for faithful service to a political party. He pictured the better situation that would exist if office holders were chosen by competitive examinations. Through all the discouragements that came in teaching the public to see the harm done to the country by the spoils system, Gilder optimistically looked ahead and saw a vision of the successful culmination of his labor. Such lines as these show this unfailing optimism:

This spoils system has lived through two generations, but before a third passes away the last traces of it will be eliminated from our national politics. Public sentiment will compel this reform in spite of the opposition of the professional politicians and spoilsmen.⁸

As has been previously shown, Gilder had a passion for improving his nation politically. With the same ardor he attacked corruption in political affairs of New York. His work became an example for citizens of other cities to follow in improving their cities. The Century was the first magazine to advocate "home beautiful" campaigns. That Gilder was especially interested in encouraging citizens to beautify their surroundings is shown by

⁸ "Origin and Growth of the Spoils System," Century, XXIV (July, 1893), p. 473.

this statement made in a letter to Vachel Lindsay, who at that time was teaching the gospel of beauty in commonplace things: "You must know that I shall always be interested in the helpful life you are leading." Mr. Gilder's daughter says this of some of his civic work:

My father's interest in the City Club of New York might be considered part of this lifelong work for the attainment of a high standard of civic life. He was a member of the board of managers of the Club, and was for years chairman of the library committee. He was later vice-president, and for a while acting president of the club -- and was always an energetic and enthusiastic member. As chairman of its special committee on the preservation of the City Hall, in 1894, he did his share in arousing a strong opposition to the destruction of one of the few handsome, historical buildings in the city. He urged other clubs to pass resolutions and make petitions to the mayor; he published in the Century a descriptive article about the building, which was later reprinted in pamphlet form and used as a "campaign document." By dint of heroic effort the vandalism was prevented and the City Hall was saved.⁹

In 1908 by means of a satirical poem Gilder succeeded in influencing the Trinity Church Corporation to permit St. John's Chapel to stand. Thus he saved from the hands of the wreckers one of the very few fine examples of colonial architecture in New York. Not only was Gilder interested in saving artistic pieces of architecture for

⁹ Letters of Richard Watson Gilder, p. 223.

future generations, but he was also interested in adding other works of art. After the Washington Centennial -- for which Gilder had served on several sub-committees -- he became the secretary of the permanent Washington Arch committee. This committee had as its object the building of a marble arch to replace the temporary wooden structure which stood at the foot of Fifth Avenue during the Centennial celebration. It took eight years to raise the money which came mainly through public subscriptions, in order that the people of the city could feel that they had helped to build this monument to the first president. Other good deeds which Gilder did for his city will be discussed under his work as a humanitarian.

In 1889 the Century took up the cause of forest preservation. This campaign, according to Gilder's policy, was at first one of public education. He showed the benefits of preserving the forests in the mountains in order that the water supply might be conserved. He also pointed out that America would soon be facing a lumber famine, if the forests were ruthlessly wasted. In addition he showed that it was a foolish policy to place a tariff on lumber imported from Canada, as the tariff made a needed commodity so much more expensive to the purchaser, and gave protection to a lumber industry that was far too active for the good

of the timber supply of the United States. But Gilder did more than educate the public. In November, 1907, through the columns of the Century, he suggested that the President should call a conference of the governors of all states in which there were forests. This conference was to recommend legislation for the protection of the American forests. An advance copy of this editorial was sent to the President, and a copy, with a letter asking for comments, was sent to each governor concerned. Many governors replied. Their published letters gave the public a broader knowledge of the situation. George E. Chamberlain, Governor of Oregon, concluded his letter thus: "I hope the Century will persist in its good work, for without a more general understanding of the part played in our civilization by the forests on the upper stretches and mountain ranges, they are doomed to destruction, to gratify the commercial spirit of an extremely commercial age."¹⁰ At the time Gilder began to call the attention of the public to the need of a systematic policy for the preservation of the national forests, there was no tree-land reserved excepting the Yellowstone National Park and the small Yosemite Canon. These had been set apart to safeguard notable scenery rather than for the

¹⁰ "New Hope for the Forests," Century, LIII (Feb., 1908), p. 634.

purpose of protecting forests. In the twenty years of his active interest in this movement Gilder saw his work bring good results in the setting aside of great tracts for national forests.

Gilder considered the kindergarten movement a means of making better citizens. He was one of six signers of the call to organize the New York Kindergarten Association, which was formed in the editorial rooms of the Century, in May, 1889, and he served as president of the Association from 1891 to 1894. In March, 1890, the Association opened its first kindergarten, and by January, 1894, the Association had established fourteen kindergartens, "which were supported by various associations and private individuals and by general funds of the society, obtained by annual dues, life membership, special donations, and the proceeds of entertainments."¹¹ Much of the work connected with the entertainments to raise funds for the cause was done by Mr. Gilder, and many of his friends volunteered their service. "His interest in the kindergartens was more than an educational interest. He saw in it a means of developing a better civic life, a higher standard of living and acting among the people of the tenements."¹² Such articles as the

¹¹Letters of Richard Watson Gilder, p. 208.

¹²Ibid., p. 205.

following in the pages of the Century probably did much to arouse interest in the kindergarten movement.

Through the kindergarten the children learn cleanliness, selfrespect, mutual kindness, observation, an interest in nature and in handiwork, a sense of law and order, the possibility of wholesome and unscolded childish happiness. The parents learn something of sanitation and hygiene, a better way of training their children, and many other things taught by contact with teachers who do not offend by airs of patronage. ...

There are so many evil object-lessons and influences in America just now, there is such a frightening increase of the lynching mania and of civil corruption, there is such violence in connection with labor troubles, that an institution like the kindergarten which takes the child at the earliest possible age and trains him in the virtues which are inimical to these unsocial forces and influences, commands, and is certainly receiving, the deepest attention of our educational authorities, whether these authorities belong to our government or voluntary system of education.¹³

The kindergartens established by this and other benevolent organizations serves as guides for the Board of Education of the city schools of New York. The public was educated to see the benefit derived in the tenement district, and demanded similar benefits for the children of other parts of the city. The kindergarten system has had a rapid growth. The first kindergarten in New York was established in 1890, and by 1916 kindergartens had increased to more

¹³ "The Kindergarten Idea," Century, XLIV (Sept., 1903), p. 797.

than nine hundred. The system has also spread to nearly all parts of the United States. Gilder as a pioneer deserves much credit for the success of this movement, which aids in developing better early education and in the later life of the individual a more worthy citizenship.

All educational movements were supported by the Century. At a time when trade schools were new in the country the magazine published illustrated articles telling of their value. Thus it helped to dispel the popular idea that a general education was the only type that should be given at the expense of the public. He was also interested in the blind citizens of America. The Century printed a number of articles dealing with the causes and prevention of blindness in infancy, and others that told of the education of the blind. "He worked for improvements in education of the blind so that their heaviest burden, enforced idleness, might be removed. He contributed to the fund for educating the blind, and at the time of his death was president of the association that 'helps the blind to help themselves.'"¹⁴

The Century Magazine and its editors had a great influence in the improving of living conditions of the poor

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Riis, Jacob A., "His Philanthropic Works," Century, LVII (Feb., 1910), p. 628.

in New York. It also gave publicity to the type of care given to the sick, insane, and to the prisoners of the charitable and penal institutions of both the city and the state of New York. This publicity showed the need of training schools to train nurses and helped to eradicate the unsanitary conditions of the buildings and the cruel treatment of inmates that had existed. But the greatest humanitarian work accomplished by Gilder was that done as chairman of the New York Tenement House Commission, which was organized in May, 1894, in Gilder's office. On this committee he was closely associated with Jacob A. Riis, whose articles in the Century on various phases of New York life show him to be well informed on social conditions. These two men, assisted by other workers, devoted much of their time to the commission, and accomplished much within a year. They began by studying the whole tenement question of New York and compared its problems with similar ones in other cities, and then drafted reforms which they submitted to the New York legislature. Their investigation included such aspects as, both old and new tenement houses, the race, nationality and income of the people in them, parks and playgrounds, lavatories, public baths, health regulations, water supply, and fire prevention.

One phase of the work to which Gilder gave his

particular attention was how to avert fires in the tenement house district. At that time "the tenement houses in New York numbered thirty-one per cent. of all the buildings in the city, while the tenement house fires numbered about fifty-three per cent."¹⁵ "In order to better study the subject, Gilder obtained a shield from the Department entitling him to pass the fire line at any time. This he wore continually under his coat and the clang of the fire engine in the street at any hour of the day or night was a signal for him to follow them. He would accompany the chief of the department in investigation of the cause and conditions of tenement house fires, and the legislation that resulted from the knowledge he thus acquired might well have excited for him the gratitude of the poor of New York for whom he did much in other ways."¹⁶

Through the publicity given to existing conditions, the public conscience was aroused. The conditions of tenements owned by the Trinity Church Corporation was brought to the attention of the public through a series of public hearings in which experts gave reports. These hearings aroused the attention of the editors of the newspapers, who then also took up the fight for better living

¹⁵ Letters of Richard Watson Gilder, p. 263.

¹⁶ Johnson, Remembered Yesterdays, p. 117.

conditions. After the conditions were thoroughly understood, the next step was to ask the legislature to pass laws that would correct such evils.

The recommendations of the tenement house committee may be said to consist of two parts; those which have been presented to the Legislature in the form of bills, and those which consisted of general recommendations which may be carried out by the city government with or without additional legislation.

One of the enactments presented to the Legislature looks to the destruction of unsanitary buildings with a provision for reasonable compensation to the owner.

Another important recommendation is as to the construction of tenement houses hereafter to be built, requiring more light and air for their inhabitants and greater safety from fire. Precautions are also suggested for the prevention of fire in tenements now existing. The Committee paid great attention to this question. . . . The bill included, furthermore, an increase in the height of basement ceilings; suggested the restriction as to the use of wall paper in tenements; required the better lighting of halls; and offered further precautions against the overcrowding which increases the danger to the city of infectious diseases. Also additional sanitary inspectors and policemen are provided for. . . .

Separate laws are also submitted, breaking the deadlock as to Mulberry Bend and two other small parks acquired under the Small Park Act; also requiring some small parks, partly to be used as playgrounds, in the crowded lower east side of the city; and required that no school shall be constructed hereafter unprovided with a playground. The recommendation without laws attached, refer to rapid transit, municipal bathing establishments, drinking fountains, lavatories, electric lights, extension of smooth pavements, sufficient school

accommodations in general, and especially additional kindergartens.¹⁷

Gilder worked whole heartedly for the passing of these measures. Whenever one of the bills was to have a hearing he journeyed to Albany and used his personal influence to win a successful vote. An editorial in the Tribune for May 11, 1908, gives this picture of Gilder working for the passing of the tenement house bills:

To Mr. Gilder, the chairman of the commission, the credit for this result is chiefly due. Mr. Gilder had little experience in the field of legislation, but an intimate acquaintance with "practical politics" could not have served this community one half so well as it has been served by his perfect rectitude, his unselfish zeal, his tact and his urbanity. Mr. Gilder is a reformer, but he is also a gentleman. He did not appear at public hearings on his bills with a chip on his shoulder. There was no exasperating assumption of superiority on his part. Wherever tenement house reform needed a champion he was sure to be present, but there was no rancor or stubbornness in his contention. He made frank acknowledgment of his opponents' courtesy, and of the instruction which he had derived from their arguments. He was always ready to concede a point which did not sacrifice a principle. He commended not only himself but his cause to those with whom the controversy brought him into contact, and he finally won against obstacles which at the outset seemed insuperable.¹⁸

The result of the legislation for which Gilder had worked so faithfully was direct and immediate. "Before July,

¹⁷ Letters of Richard Watson Gilder, p. 262-64. (Summarized from Leslie's Weekly for March 28, 1895.)

¹⁸ Letters of Richard Watson Gilder, pp. 272-73. (Quoted from an editorial in the Tribune for May 11, 1898.)

1896, the Board of Health under the new statute, had condemned two hundred tenements as 'unfit for human habitation,' and the buildings, mostly rear tenements, has been razed. Mulberry Bend Park was completed and turned over to the public, and two new parks were made."¹⁹ It was suggested that one of these parks should be given Gilder's name, but he objected to the plan. In addition an open air playground had been established in connection with every school. And as a result of the publicity given the subject, more model tenements were built, and in other cities in the United States an effort was being made to improve the condition of the tenements. The building of modern school buildings was another outcome of this general investigation. Other outcomes were the forming of the City and Surban Home Company in 1895, and the Improved Housing Council in 1896. Gilder was a member of the former organization, and chairman of the latter. The object of the City and Surban Home Company was to prove that decent tenement houses could be built and maintained with a reasonable return upon money invested.

Gilder was also interested in the social life of the people of the tenement district. He was one of the founders of the Peoples' Institute, whose influence has

¹⁹ Letters of Richard Watson Gilder, p. 273.

also been extended to many other cities. The Institute began in 1897 by giving a series of interesting lectures presenting a study of democracy. It developed into an evening school in social science, a peoples' forum, a church, and various club organizations. It furnished both amusement and education to the poor of New York. Some of the work done was to develop an appreciation of drama through the securing of reduced prices on theater tickets; it established the first censor board for moving pictures; and cooperated with the Woman's Municipal League and the College Settlement to secure the enactment of laws regulating places of amusements, and of the laws favored by the Child Labor Commission, and by the Tenement House Commission. In this work for the good of the public Gilder "worked with zeal and determination of a crusader and his hand was held back from no good course."²⁰ Mr. Johnson concluded his chapter on Gilder with these tributes of appreciation:

After Gilder's death among the multitude of tributes to him that came to us were these: "He was the most Christ-like man I have ever known," and "He was a gentleman unafraid." He was indeed greatly beloved. That was said of him then is true to-day; "There is not a dweller in New York's tenement houses but owes in part to Dr. Gilder the air he breathes, his

²⁰

Quoted from a tribute by Nicholas Murray Butler, Century, LVII (Feb., 1910), p. 634.

quota of sun and sky, his protection from fire,
his children's playgrounds and his babies'
lives."²¹

Though Gilder's work as a poet and editor ceased in 1909, his great work as a patriot and humanitarian lives on in the improvements he helped to bring about by his untiring efforts to develop better cities and citizenship.

²¹ Johnson, Remembered Yesterdays, p. 96.

CONCLUSION

"Richard Watson Gilder's life work was" says Mr. Winship, "the making of the world's greatest literary and artistic magazine. For almost forty years he was managing editor or editor-in-chief of Scribner's and of the Century, the successor to the original Scribner's. With a free hand he made a magazine after his own heart. From the age of twenty-six, until his death at sixty-five he lived the joyful life materializing his literary highway vision. But Mr. Gilder was always something more than an editor, more than a literary man."¹

Gilder was a friend of mankind in whom he had great faith. His friends were not limited to those in whom he came in contact, but extended to those who read his magazine and to those who were benefited by his public work.

The following statements made by authors who were Gilder's friends show his influence upon his associates. George L. Cable writes:

Through his whole career he was one of the finest uplifting powers in the literary world. To me he was a shaping, guiding influence, noble, invaluable, and endearing. He must

¹Winship, A. E. "A Bunch of Incidents," Journal of Education, LXXVIII, No. 22 (Dec. 11, 1913), p. 593.

have been so to a multitude of others.²

Of his influence as an editor Brander Matthews makes this comment:

His editorial standards were high, but so was his belief in his countrymen. He acted on the assurance that what was truly good was certain to be popular. This is why it seems to me difficult to overestimate his influence upon the development of the American magazine. He proved all things, and held fast to that which is good. And the man himself was finer than the editor, the poet, or the citizen.³

As a writer Gilder has left little by which he will be remembered, for practically all of his prose writings appeared as unsigned editorials and were of temporary interest. A man who was so busy helping others to develop their literary talents had little time to develop his own, but was satisfied in sharing the reflected honor of the magazine to which he gave thirty-nine years of his life. He was proud of what he had accomplished as an editor and a public benefactor but was always modest and retiring. He learned to use the editorial "we" early in life and practiced its use forever after. He was always ready to let others take the credit for accomplishments, for which he was mainly responsible. He seemed to feel

² Quoted from tribute to Gilder, by George W. Cable in the Century, LVII (Mar., 1910), p. 634.

³ Quoted from tribute to Gilder by Brander Matthews, Century, LVII (Mar., 1910), p. 636.

that the good accomplished should attract the attention rather than the worker who had brought it about.

Other chapters have pointed out outstanding reforms that the Century and its editor accomplished, but Mr. Cable, in writing a sketch of Rosewell Smith, publisher of the Century, sees a more subtle reform in the public attitude of mind for which he gives the Century credit:

When they began their work there was in our country a distance, an estrangement, between culture and religion, between author and preacher, artist and common people, scientist and Bible student, that is now not easily realized. To remove that gulf to draw these elements, by a kind and faithful energy, nearer to one another, was recognized as one large article of the magazine's great commission. That their efforts were not unsuccessful was proved by the rapidly growing popularity of the magazine, as well as by its development and improvement.⁴

Gilder had no patience with those who were always bringing forward evidence to prove that the world was getting worse. He believed the yellow journals were responsible for people holding this belief, for such journals did immense harm by exploiting the extravagances and vices of the few. But he was firm in his belief that the plain people of America go onward and upward, living honest lives.

⁴ Letters of Richard Watson Gilder, p. 55.

He did his part throughout his life to make the world better whenever such an opportunity presented itself. Gilder evidently was a firm believer in the old proverb, "It is better to wear out than rust out," as he often overtaxed his strength in his zealous efforts in some good cause. He was never one to sit idly by waiting for someone else to accomplish a reform but seemed to believe that the surest way of having something done was to do it yourself.

All commenters on Gilder's life speak of the personal responsibility which he always felt. He shouldered as his personal duty the work of making the world better and asked all citizens to help him. "He felt that institutions were in the last analysis merely men, and that ours could be preserved only by the virtue and altruism of the individual citizen. The scorn he felt for those who were wilfully recreant to their political duties was like that of a soldier for a deserter."⁵ He did much through the columns of the Century to persuade citizens to see, and shoulder their share of the responsibility in making the world better.

Gilder was a man of letters, a philanthropist,

⁵Richard Watson Gilder, " Century (Jan., 1910), p. 472.

and a worker for better ideals in civic life, -- the last was the first to be honored and perpetuated by a memorial. Shortly after his death a number of Gilder's friends, including Governor Charles Hughes, Hamilton W. Mabie, Jacob A. Riis, and Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University, met and planned to raise a fund of one hundred thousand dollars to be known as "The Richard Watson Gilder Fund for the Promotion of Good Citizenship." The fund was to be intrusted to Columbia University for the support of several fellowships for the pursuit of the political and social sciences and for practical civic work. The first Gilder fellowship was granted in 1911. Since that time forty-two young men have profited by this memorial by receiving fellowships which enabled them to do graduate work in the department of political economy. In addition the expense of publishing the results of investigations made by the fellows is paid from the interest from this fund.

There are, however, other memorials to Gilder that show that he was notable as an editor as well as a patriot, philanthropist, and humanitarian. Through the high standard Gilder set for the literature and art in his magazine he developed in its readers an appreciation for the best of these two sources of culture. He helped many American authors to win public recognition, and set American

literature on a plane above English literature for the American reader, and was very influential in the abolishing of literary piracy. In addition he made himself and the Century an influence for good by helping reform politics through working for civil service reform. He also did much to help banish the spoils system, and he preached the doctrine of party reform. He placed interest in humanity above moneyed interest in bringing about political and social reforms in New York. He also taught the public to look upon the tenement dwellers as humanity worthy of decent living conditions and protection. All these benefits were brought about by the influence of a man who "was an extraordinary combination of gentleness and strength -- the gentleness of righteousness, the strength of the unselfish patriot."⁷

The tribute to Gilder, written by William M. Sloan, is a fitting conclusion to this story of the life and works of a notable American editor:

To most of us he seems to have died too young, yet he lived beyond the average of life. He had felt the crown of victory on his brow, and he left an enduring monument. This magazine testifies to his successes; the authors, old and young, whose efforts he appreciated and whose lives he sweetened bear the same witness. The solid reforms wrought in city and nation are the fruit,

⁷"Richard Watson Gilder," *The Nation*, LXXXIX (Nov. 25, 1909), p. 505.

increased a hundredfold, which sprang from the good seed he cast on fertile, well tilled soil. My appreciation of him, my tribute to him, are the meed due to a man who must be ranked among the conquerors. His weapons were those of the newer, better world - faith, hope, and love.⁸

⁸ Tribute to Gilder paid by William M. Sloane, Century, LVII (Feb., 1910), p. 657.

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