

NINETEENTH-CENTURY GENDER STUDIES

ISSUE 10.2 (SUMMER 2014)

Special Issue:

Gender and Journalism: Women and/in the News in the Nineteenth Century

Guest Edited by F. Elizabeth Gray and Nikki Hessel

Blowing the Cover:

News of Emily Crawford's Foreign Correspondence in the 1890s Periodical Press

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<1> The nineteenth-century reporter Emily Crawford had a formidable journalistic reputation. One profile, which labelled her as a "Queen Among Journalists," suggested that

Mrs Crawford knows not how to spell the word fear . . . when Paris was in the hands of the infuriated Communists she made her way at nightfall through the barricaded city on March 23, 1871, and interviewed the Communist leaders as they sat in council. Many a time when shots were falling around she set forth on some journalistic enterprise, carrying no arms, her ready wit and quick perception proving her surest weapons of defence [sic.]("A 'Queen Among Journalists,'" *The Mercury*, 28 August 1890)

Unlike most mid-century women journalists who wrote from home and on women's issues, Emily Crawford, Paris correspondent for London's *Daily News* and other newspapers, covered important political events like the Franco-Prussian War and the Treaty of Versailles.⁽¹⁾ While other women such as Harriet Martineau and Frances Power Cobbe had reported on political events from abroad for the *Daily News*, their fame did not rest, like Crawford's, on having been female foreign correspondents.⁽²⁾ The above note is composed of sections drawn from a longer article on Crawford published in London's *Echo* newspaper and shows that Crawford's remarkable story travelled across the seas, all the way to Australia.⁽³⁾ Crawford's exceptionality made her a prize news-story in the rapidly expanding "celebrity print media" of the 1890s (Easley 137).

<2> Mark Hampton and F. Elizabeth Gray have demonstrated that the very definition and status of journalism as a profession were topics of fervent debate rather than firmly established categories in late-Victorian England. These discussions overlapped with debates about whether women, particularly single middle-class women hoping to earn their own livelihood, could and should work as regular

journalists in offices filled with men and write on public, political events, or whether they had best stay at home and produce fiction or prose on “feminine” issues like fashion and gossip. This topicality of women’s journalism bolstered Emily Crawford’s newsworthiness. In having successfully written on politics and in a style indistinguishable from the *Daily News*’s male correspondents, Emily Crawford was living proof against the theory, widely prevalent in the 1890s, that if assigned political reportage, women would lower its standards and undersell male journalists. As one of the few women to be elected to the Institute of Journalists in 1890, Emily Crawford’s professional credibility exceeded that of most women reporters of her time. Journals like the *Women’s Penny Paper*, which promoted women’s entry into middle-class professions, found a useful icon in Crawford. By drawing attention to Crawford’s success as a wife and mother, such journals showed that women could successfully balance domestic duties with professional work.

<3> Despite claiming to tell the same story, approbatory narratives of Crawford in the 1890s press differ over critical details such as whether or not she accomplished certain famous scoops, what her work conditions were, whether she even wrote the *Daily News* articles herself or merely assisted her husband. These differences matter because they construct radically different images of Emily Crawford as a female foreign correspondent, and demonstrate important variations in late-Victorian advocacy of presswork for women. By examining interviews of Emily Crawford in the *Women’s Penny Paper* and the *Young Woman*, and her signed prescriptive article on women’s journalism in the *Contemporary Review*, this study demonstrates that Crawford participated in tweaking details about her work to make women’s political journalism seem acceptable to the various target audiences of these journals. Marysa Demoor has argued that the self-images of late-Victorian women writers attained a stifling stability, making it “all but impossible” for a woman writer “to change or replace” her persona once she created it (15). I qualify this view by showing that women like Emily Crawford were able, because of the anonymity of their work and much of it being done abroad, to fashion to their own advantage, disparate narratives of their professional lives. By drawing attention to the relatively unremarked career of Emily Crawford, this article contributes to existing scholarship on women’s professional journalism in the 1890s.(4)

<4> On 1 March 1890, the *Women’s Penny Paper*’s regular front-page interview of famous women featured Emily Crawford. Founded in 1888 by the prominent women’s rights advocate Henrietta Müller who edited it under the pseudonym Helena B. Temple, this one-penny feminist weekly “aspired to a broad readership” consisting of working women, educated ladies and male supporters of the women’s movement (“Women’s Penny Paper”).(5) It deployed many of the techniques of so-called “New Journalism,” such as low pricing, aggressive advertising, a personalized approach towards readers, and a self-conscious opposition to the intellectual and political establishment, which for the *Women’s Penny Paper* was represented by those who opposed women’s participation in public life. The format of the interview, as noted by Gowan Dawson, was “one of the most distinctive of the new journalism’s borrowings from North America,” and it “created a sense of intimacy” between the audience of the journal and the celebrity subject of the interview (190). For Müller, the familiarity bred by the interview performed two critical functions. Firstly, it had the “useful effect” of making the interviewees “braver and honester [sic.] in stating their views and in sticking to them” (“Our Interviews” 102). Thus, far from wanting to simply lionize successful women, Müller saw the interview as an opportunity to make famous

women declare their political views in print and act accordingly by drawing public attention to them. Secondly, Müller felt that “interviews of women of note” were “one of the strongest weapons” of the “women’s party” since “every account published of a woman who has talent, or pluck, or industry” gave “the lie in the most effectual way to those who deny her [woman’s] powers only because they fear them” (102).

<5> What “powers” of Emily Crawford does her interview bring to light? There is precious little in it about her foreign correspondence. Crawford tells her interviewer that she had “been busy” with her pen since the age of nineteen, when, shortly after arriving in Paris, “the garbled accounts of all that rottenness which appeared in the English papers” made her “long to describe things as they were” (Interview 217). About her work for the *Daily News*, we hear nothing but that she helped her husband in his work for the paper, and that she inherited his post on his death, “for the sake of the children” (217). Harriette Emily Colenso and Madame Isabella Bogelot, the two women who immediately preceded Emily Crawford as the *Women’s Penny Paper’s* interviewees, were introduced with brief descriptions of their credentials and past work for the rights of Zulu chiefs in South Africa and the welfare of released female French prisoners respectively. By contrast, Emily Crawford’s official position as *Daily News’s* Paris correspondent is never mentioned, as though the readers of the *Women’s Penny Paper* were expected to know it. This seems to be a reasonable assumption for the editors to make, given that Mrs. Emily Crawford had made news in the journal just two weeks prior to the interview as “the Paris Correspondent of the *Daily News*,” who had “consented to act as English corresponding member for the International Bureau of women” (“M.P.’s and Women’s Suffrage” 194). Moreover, as per the journal’s regular practice, the previous issue had announced that that the forthcoming interviewee was Mrs Crawford “of the ‘*Daily News*’” (Colenso 206).

<6> By limiting its coverage of Crawford’s foreign correspondence to a few lines, the interview focuses on fleshing out Crawford’s relation to the women’s movement. Answering in the affirmative when asked whether she had ever had “strong views about woman’s position in Great Britain,” Crawford adds, “the question [of the condition of women] first occurred to me from what happened at home” (217). Strikingly anticipating twentieth-century feminism’s stress on the personal being the political, she recounts her childhood indignation at her mother’s legal inability to own property or protect her family from the financial hardship brought on by her profligate father and her own dismay at her young brothers’ socially-acquired contempt for women. As a resident of France, Crawford may not have been personally affected by the 1870 and 1882 Married Women’s Property Acts which granted married women the right to hold property and to own their professional income but she indicates her approval of these legal reforms by showing her own marriage to journalist George Crawford to have been happily free of the disputes caused in her parents’ marriage because of her mother’s inability to be financially independent of her father.

<7> As Michelle Tusan has demonstrated, periodicals which showed women’s public and political activity as respectable found it useful to emphasise that such work was only an extension and not a denial or transgression of women’s traditional roles as guardians of middle-class values. This partly explains why the *Women’s Penny Paper* preferred to project Crawford in the relatively conservative role of a devoted working wife, rather than as an aggressive professional competitor to her

husband. Crawford notes, for example, that being a journalist herself, she could help her husband with his *Daily News* work. However, this reading does not account for the noticeable shifts in the *Women's Penny Paper's* presentation of Crawford's professional life within a few weeks' time. In addition to showing the changing terms on which the journal advocated the admission of women into political journalism, these shifts demonstrate the inherent tension in the journal's attempt to present women journalists as non-competitive while foregrounding their fitness to enter a fiercely competitive profession like journalism.

<8> At around the same time as publishing Crawford's interview, the editor of the *Women's Penny Paper*, Henrietta Müller, applied for "accommodation in the press gallery of the House of Commons" ("Women in the Press Gallery" 258). Though the application was almost instantly rejected, the episode "sparked a heated debate regarding the fitness of women as news journalists" (Tusan 118).⁽⁶⁾ Opponents argued that the press gallery had too few seats to accommodate women, and that if admitted, women would not only distract the men in parliament but also ruin the working environment of the press gallery by asking for preferential treatment. Some predicted that women would undersell their reports, and consequently lower the wages of male journalists. Parliamentary debates were also said to be too serious and political, too "unfeminine" a subject for women to report on.

<9> Müller countered these arguments by noting that regular newspapers like the *Times* carried "bald and uninformative" reports on Parliamentary discussions on women's issues, and at times "absolutely and entirely" suppressed critical speeches made in favour of women ("Women in the Press Gallery" 258). She argued that the only way to counter the "bitter costs" of such selective reportage to women was by allowing women to have their own representatives in the press gallery. Thus, the *Women's Penny Paper* raised concern not only about women's place within professional journalism but also about the implications of gendered parliamentary reportage for the women's movement. By representing the *Women's Penny Paper* as a non-commercial, special interest feminist journal, Müller downplayed the potential competition that female reporters and women's magazines could pose to mainstream publications if admitted to the press gallery. Even while claiming their fair share of official press space, the journal was careful to appear as though it was merely asking for a niche. In this context, it is understandable that the *Women's Penny Paper's* interview with Crawford does not mention her coverage of the Versailles conference for a mainstream press like the *Daily News*. It was more useful to present her as a non-competitive female journalist, a precedent to the female reporters it attempted to place in Parliament.

<10> However, as one of the few English presswomen who had experience in Parliamentary reportage, Crawford seems to have felt compelled to draw attention to the issue which Müller sidestepped in her editorial note: women's ability to compete with men as professional equals. Having professed "strong views about woman's position in Great Britain" in her interview, Crawford now sent in a public statement on the debate (Interview 217). Unlike Müller, who argued that female journalists would attend more diligently to women-related discussions in Parliament than men, Crawford asserted that women journalists wrote no differently from their male counterparts. She pointed out that the schedule of news-making in a daily paper was so tight that "editors in their hurry are not disposed to lose time by

haggling about wages,” or to risk sloppy reportage by hiring an inefficient reporter “for the sake of mean savings” (“To the Editor” 282). There was no need for pressmen to fear that “feminine competition will lower wages” since only those women who could meet the high standards of professional reportage, and consequently command the same pay-scales as men, would find employment in a newspaper office (“To the Editor” 282).

<11> Underlining the unfairness of excluding meritorious women from the gallery, Crawford noted that “the best reporter at the Versailles Assembly” was one Madame Rouvier, foreign correspondent for a Brussels newspaper called *L’Indépendance Belge* (“To the Editor” 282).

Crawford reproduces a familiar 1880s definition of journalism as an “open” meritocratic field into which all may enter, “the fittest would survive” and “the most talented would naturally rise to the top,” to argue against the reservation of the press gallery for men (Hampton 142). The reference to Madame Rouvier suggests that women could be the “fittest” of journalists, and that allowing them to compete on equal terms with men would only raise the standards of journalism. Anticipating that her proposed model of the female journalist could be attacked as an unfeminine Amazonian rival to men, Crawford shifted abruptly from speaking of journalists as competitors to speaking of them as members of a large, harmonious family:

I never have allowed and never can allow that women and men have conflicting interests. Mothers and aunts have sons and nephews, and love them just as dearly as they do their daughters and nieces. Fathers and uncles stand in relative positions to girls. . . . Women have an interest in the true prosperity of men, and *vice versa*. . . . Perhaps it might be well to construct another reporters galley, in which a preference would be given to *bôna-fide* lady reporters. (“To the Editor” 282)

Underlining that professional women were also wives, mothers and aunts helps Crawford to claim cultural sanction for them. Once the professional field was cast as a vast, connected family, the very possibility of a conflict of interest did not arise. Importantly, the family that Crawford outlined was not the conventional Victorian middle-class unit that was organised around a gendered division of labour. It was an expansive network in which both men and women took on domestic and public roles: if aunts and mothers loved and nurtured a future generation of men, uncles and fathers stood in “relative positions to girls”. In fact, Crawford noted that it was men who suffered in domesticating women, “tragical[lly]” aging before their time “through the deep business anxieties involved in keeping up a number of womenkind in, for them [the men], irksome indolence” (“To the Editor” 282). Crawford envisions a prosperous family as one in which men and women are both domestic as well as professional collaborators. The image of the press-as-family recalls the *Women’s Penny Paper’s* interview’s presentation of Crawford’s own marriage as a journalistic collaboration. However, in this letter, Crawford suggests that it was not as a helpful aide to her working husband, but as a full-fledged professional in her own right that a woman could best serve her own family, the press, and the larger social body.

<12> In July 1890, a fresh debate about women’s access to official press galleries broke out in the pages of the *Women’s Penny Paper*, this time occasioned by the denial of press seats to female reporters at

the Agricultural Hall during the annual military tournament.⁽⁷⁾ Incidentally, London's *Echo* newspaper had recently published an explosive account of Crawford's career, seemingly based on an interview with her, and showing Crawford to have outstripped her male colleagues on many occasions, including the reportage of the 1871 Treaty of Versailles.⁽⁸⁾ By excerpting this account of Crawford onto the same page that carried the debate about the exclusion of female reporters from press seats, the *Women's Penny Paper* underlined women's ability to cover important political events and the injustice of treating women journalists as less deserving of professional privileges than male journalists. Though the *Women's Penny Paper* left out the *Echo's* specific reference to Crawford outperforming her husband by succeeding, unlike him, to secure a seat in the press gallery, it did point out that Crawford had beaten all correspondents, male and female, in the race to break news of the Versailles conference to English readers: "Unable to move or take a single note she carried away the leading points in her memory, returned to Paris, sat up all night writing, and caught the early mail, by which means hers was the first full account of the debate and defeat of the French Government which reached the English Press" ("A Queen Among Journalists" 451). Here, unlike its interview with Crawford, the *Women's Penny Paper* proudly presents her prowess in the aggressively competitive work of scooping her professional rivals. Thus, even when Crawford herself did not write for the *Women's Penny Paper*, myths about her mid-century career that circulated in general newspapers like the *Echo* were used by the magazine for particular campaigns in favour of women's professional journalism.

<13> The fact that Emily Crawford was invited to Dr. Henry Lunn's interfaith conference at Lucerne in August 1893 to speak on the topic of journalism as a profession for women shows that she had succeeded in presenting herself as an exceptional, yet respectable middle-class professional woman.⁽⁹⁾ Convened by the religious reformer Dr. Lunn and sponsored by the *Young Man* journal, which espoused Christian values, the conference supported the discussion of various social issues alongside theological matters. Though Emily could not attend the conference due to the ongoing elections in France, her son G.E. Crawford, also a journalist, read Emily's paper on her behalf.⁽¹⁰⁾ Never one to miss a chance to publish, Crawford reworked her paper into a signed article for the high-brow, theologically-inclined monthly, the *Contemporary Review*.⁽¹¹⁾ As noted by Deirdre Raftery, the *Contemporary Review*, started in 1866, was next only to the *Englishwoman's Journal* in the space it gave "to the writing of the mid-Victorian feminists, and to the theme of women's education generally" (157). It was thus a particularly suitable avenue for Crawford to speak of journalism as a middle-class profession for women.

<14> Like other late-Victorian writers, Emily Crawford stressed the occupational rigor of professional reportage such as long working hours and strict deadlines to point out that "journalism was not a profession for the faint-hearted" (Hampton 145). She pointed out that if women were to make room for themselves in the daily press, characterized by "the eager competition between pressmen and presswomen, the more eager competition among newspapers, and the yet greater competition for space among the telegrams pouring in from all parts of the globe," they would have to make themselves physically and mentally tough ("Journalism as a Profession for Women" 367). As against her earlier assertion that men and women wrote no differently, she now insisted that women's reports were more vivacious than men's. Thus, while she applauds the famous male foreign correspondent Augustus Sala's

“masterpiece” on the Royal wedding of the Prince of Wales, she still wishes that some editor would have thought of commissioning a sketch from “the vivid rattling pen of Miss Braddon” (“Journalism as a Profession” 363). This implies that female journalists’ distinct style of writing made them irreplaceable by even the best of male reporters. Crawford wrote to encourage the middle-class female readers of the *Contemporary Review* not simply to eke out a living, but to be thorough professionals, to aspire to the very pinnacle of journalistic fame and fortune from which she claimed to speak.

<15> It was precisely because war correspondence departed so strikingly from the home-based writing deemed suitable for women that it was strategically useful for Crawford to discuss her reportage of the 1870 Franco-Prussian war in this article. If women’s war reportage could be shown in a respectable light, their adoption of less militaristic and male-dominated presswork would hardly appear objectionable. Recalling her experiences in a war-torn Paris, she noted:

The woman who writes this paper had to serve her apprenticeship in one of the most furious war storms of modern times. Battles, barricades, bombardments were so familiar as to cease to frighten. The noise of cannonading lulled to sleep at night, and the cessation of it kept awake. . . . These dangers and hardships were the best possible training for subsequent duties. *One was deconventionalised and thrown back on first principles.* Having gone through such a school, she had no difficulty in taking her life in her hand and walking alone from one end of Paris to the other during the throes of the Commune, to meet her husband coming from Versailles, and be with him should he be arrested as a spy. (369, emphasis added)

It is remarkable that despite speaking of the Franco-Prussian war as a journalistic “apprenticeship,” Crawford said nothing about the actual work of reporting itself. Instead of describing what it was like to write and post her letters to London even as the bullets fell thick all around her, we get a tale of how turbulent times toughened her to rush out into the streets to seek her husband, in anticipation of him needing her wifely assistance. Evidently, Crawford felt it necessary to show that women could enter the war-zone without losing their ability to be devoted wives.

<16> This partly explains Crawford’s striking description of war as all-pervasive. Cannon sounds eerily replace lullabies as people become habituated to the utter disruption of everyday life by war. Crawford makes a case for the suitability of women to report on political conflict by showing that women are not, even in the confines of their homes, immune to its effects. Conflict is, in this sense, as much a woman’s story to tell as a man’s. In Crawford’s account it is not journalism but war that “deconventionalise[s]” her. Her passage through fire may have turned her into a journalist, but she could not have avoided the war even if she were to have never picked up her pen.

<17> Speaking of war as an “apprenticeship” also bolsters the chief argument of the essay, that “the great school for the journalist, man or woman, is life, and the great secret of success pegging away” (369). The idea that journalism could not be taught in schools was held by a number of late-Victorian commentators and it reinforced the view of journalism as “an ‘open’ profession, with no artificial barriers to entry” (Hampton 139). Crawford had foregrounded journalism’s formal openness to argue against barring women from the Parliamentary press gallery in the *Women’s Penny Paper*. She uses it in

her *Contemporary Review* article to demand that women be considered on equal grounds with men for all kinds of journalistic assignments. Presenting women's journalism as an extension of the Christian principle of the dignity of all labour, she states:

Nothing that it concerns the world to know of should be rejected as common or unclean. The philosophy of what that voice said in the vision of Simon Peter has been overlooked. . . . There should be nothing common nor unclean for the journalist. The woman journalist should not seek, any more than the man, to be on the crests of high waves but to be ready for them, and, when caught up on them, to trust to their landing her on high ground. (369)

The biblical story of Simon Peter, who disobeys a voice from heaven that tells him to eat animals considered unclean, taught that man must not be fastidious about things that God himself has cleansed. Crawford uses it here to argue that all life, being god-given, was fit to be written about by both men and women. The biblical reference, evidently chosen to appeal to the readership of the *Broach-Church Contemporary Review*, helps Crawford to present women's adoption of unconventional journalistic roles as a sign of their religious uprightness. Though Crawford seems to preach primarily to female readers in telling them that *they* must not refuse whatever assignments are given to them, she obliquely challenges male readers' reservations about female reporters by showing such discomfort to be incompatible with Christian doctrine. Later in the article, she reinforces the idea that the exclusion of women from political journalism was caused by social conventions that had no ethical validity. Speaking highly of female French journalists who managed to break through the professional obstructions raised against them by "the pest of gallantry" and "bourgeois conventionalities and a low standard of social ethics in regard to women," she applauds them for making it to "the top of the journalistic profession" ("Journalism as a Profession" 364).

<18> It is particularly interesting to note that despite presenting herself as a devoted wife, Crawford speaks well of a colleague named Séverine, who had not only divorced her first husband, but had lived with another man. Recounting the French Séverine's "bohemian" life helps Crawford to foreground, by contrast, her own adherence to the English code of monogamous marriage and thus align herself with her English readers ("Journalism as a Profession" 365). However, these scandalous details about Séverine seem out of place in an article written to justify women's journalism to her English readers. Moreover, having disclosed such details about Séverine, why does Crawford cite her as the best example of "the suitability of press work to women" (366)? By appreciating Séverine's professional achievements despite her unconventional personal life, Crawford demands that women journalists be judged for their professional work strictly on the basis of their writing. Therefore, though Séverine's life entailed a transgression of the English cultural norm of wifehood, Crawford appreciates the fact that she was "a finished craftswoman" whose work was "always 'on the nail'" (366). Crawford firmly defends her female colleague Séverine against "brethren of the pen" who, being "frantically jealous of her success," collectively attempt to discredit her writing as being too offensive (366). Crawford hails Severine's resilience in continuing her work despite being constantly "afflicted by the spite of her masculine rivals" (366).

<19> In 1894, the *Young Woman* ran an interview of Emily Crawford that described her working life in great detail. Started in 1892 as a companion to the moralistic *Young Man* and edited by Frederick A. Atkins, this three-penny monthly magazine was aimed, unlike the high-brow *Contemporary Review*, at “young women working mainly in the clerical and generally lower-status professions” (*Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism* 697). Though the journal “did not identify itself as a feminist magazine *per se*, the *Young Woman* attempted to educate its readers about how to better their own and other women’s lives monetarily, socially, and politically” (*Dictionary* 697). Prior to the interview, Crawford had contributed to this “broadly progressive though not explicitly feminist” journal by writing an article entitled “The Women of France” that praised the French marital system for encouraging women to be the professional allies of their husbands (*Dictionary* 697). By pointing out that the “husband-and-wife partnerships” in business and trade, “so frequent in France, are delightful for those in them, and a cause of wealth and weal to the nation,” she suggested that England would do well to modify its own model of matrimony to make it more supportive of women’s professional lives (“The Women of France” 7). The *Young Woman’s* interview of Emily Crawford depicted her marriage to George Crawford in this light. Emily Crawford’s father, whom Emily had criticised in her interview with the emphatically feminist *Women’s Penny Paper* for dissolving the family property, is presented here as a responsible country gentleman who had suffered “terrible reverses of fortune” (“A Famous Lady Journalist” 183). The *Young Woman* seems to have preferred to present Crawford as an obedient and loving daughter, not wishing to encourage its female readers to be critical of parental authority even though it advocated greater familial support for women’s professions.

<20> *The Young Woman* had already carried articles promoting women’s journalism. W.T. Stead, editor of the *Review of Reviews*, a journal that was “particularly distinctive” for employing a large proportion of women journalists “at rates of pay equal to their male colleagues,” had written an article in its inaugural issue advocating journalism as a profession for young women (Dawson 175). In the article, entitled “Young Woman and Journalism,” Stead presented an editor’s perspective on women’s employability within journalism and he underlined that women journalists must not seek preferential treatment on the basis of their sex. Stead attacks as false and limited the notion that regular presswork would make women unladylike. This was evidently meant to convince the lower-middle-class female readers of the *Young Woman* that they could pursue journalism without losing their respectability.

<21> In keeping with Richard Salmon’s description of the late-Victorian celebrity interview, the *Young Woman’s* interview with Crawford presents her as a grand “spectacle upon which it is deemed to be a privilege for the reader to gaze” (162). But given that the *Young Woman* printed prescriptive articles on professional journalism for its middle-class female readers, its interview features Crawford not simply as a spectacle to gaze on, but an admirable model to follow. By presenting Crawford as “a lady journalist” who was born into the landed gentry, the *Young Woman* emphasised that there was nothing ungentle about women working in the male-dominated line of newspaper reportage.

<22> However, the interview made no bones about how difficult it would be to replicate Crawford’s success. In fact, it ends with Crawford warning young women against rushing into journalism unless they had “dauntless courage, exceptional health and powers of physical endurance, and a considerable amount of reserve force” (“A Famous Lady Journalist” 185). Thus, the interview shows Crawford as both

inimitable and inspiring. Its minute details about Crawford's rigorous schedule foreground her exceptionalism even as they provide professional guidelines for aspiring female journalists. The entire interview is peppered with tips to young aspiring journalists, such as the benefits of type, of preparing oneself not only for the rigorous schedule of newspaper work but also staying ever ready to adapt to the unpredictable conditions of news-reportage. In fact, this interview offers a remarkably literal prescription for becoming a woman journalist. The reader is told what Crawford ate for lunch while working, what model of pen-nibs she used, and what exercise she took, to become such a "famous lady journalist."

<23> As was usual practice in the 1890s press, both the *Young Woman* and the *Women's Penny Paper* interviewed Crawford at home. However, though these interviews describe Crawford's Paris flat in some detail and though the *Young Woman's* interview does draw attention to some of Crawford's prized possessions like the "museum of souvenirs and mementoes given . . . by one or other of her numberless friends and colleagues," they do not show the marked fascination with the celebrity subject's material property that Richard Salmon has described as an important aspect of "at home" interviews in the late-Victorian press ("A Famous Lady Journalist" 184). The *Women's Penny Paper's* and the *Young Woman's* interviews focus on Crawford's life and the *Young Woman*, as noted above, presents a strikingly detailed account of Crawford's work-schedule. Why did the *Young Woman* differ from journals the *Women's Penny Paper* in choosing to carry mundane details about her? What other debates had emerged since Crawford's earlier interview that required women like her to be projected in such abundant detail?

<24> For one, the New Woman had appeared in the pages of the periodical press. As noted by Michelle Tusan, she was first named in 1893 in the *Woman's Herald*, the feminist newspaper into which the *Women's Penny Paper* had transformed in 1892.⁽¹²⁾ By tracing the first use of the label "New Woman" to the *Woman's Herald's* article published in August 1893 entitled, "Social Standing of the New Woman," Tusan points out an important alternative to the New Woman depicted in novels and mainstream periodicals as a "mannish and overly sexualized New Woman" (131). In sharp contrast to such negative descriptions, Tusan argues, the feminist journals represented the New Woman as "a symbol of a new female political identity," a woman whose interest in public politics was not opposed to, but an extension of her domestic duties (131). "It was here, in the pages of turn-of-the-century women's press," Tusan claims, "that she was first invented as a fictional icon to represent the political woman of the coming century" (131).

<25> However, Tusan's reading does not account for a significant detail in the notice that christened the New Woman. The "Social Standing of the 'New Woman'" is, in fact, part of a report about a Congress of Women held in 1893. This particular section on the New Woman quotes a speech on "Woman" that is said to have been delivered by one Mr. Ham. The "new woman" that Mr. Ham outlines is not a fictional vision of the future. She is a representative of the real feminists of the 1890s. As Mr. Ham says:

The woman's movement of this age is the most momentous event that has ever disturbed the sleep of the conservative. Without warning woman suddenly appears on the scene of man's activities, as a sort of new creation, and demands a share in the struggles, the responsibilities,

and the honours of the world, in which, until now, she has been a cipher. *And the main proof of her worthiness of her right to equal freedom with man is found in the obstacles she has already overcome.* ("Social Standing of the 'New Woman'" 410, emphasis added)

It is precisely because the feminist new woman refers to the real historical women who participated in the women's movement that Mr. Ham announces her arrival with such certainty. This new woman may have been a "cipher" *until* then, but she was indeed in the very audience that Mr. Ham was addressing. As he notes, this "new woman" had proved her right to be treated as man's equal in having "already overcome" the obstacles placed in her way. Though Mr. Ham does state that he cannot speculate on how successful these feminist new women would be in the future, he shows no sign of doubting their contemporary existence.

<26> This detail is critical because it offers us a new way of understanding the alternative discourse of the feminist New Woman that Tusan describes. Indeed, one of the key defences marshalled by the feminists against the caricatures in the press was that *theirs* was a real woman. As shown convincingly by Talia Schaffer, women like Sarah Grand, who were advocating greater freedom and political agency for women, found it particularly useful to argue that the "grotesque buffoon . . . bicycling in bloomers, ogling men, or thrusting her fist in the assembled faces of Parliament" was purely fictional (39). The *Woman's Herald's* representation of the "new woman" as a real feminist suggests that promoting real women who had played a prominent role in public and political life without compromising their domestic duties helped to combat the mainstream press's prejudiced caricatures of non-confirming women.

<27> The interview of a famous lady journalist like Crawford powerfully counters the alleged monstrosity of the New Woman. Indeed, as a woman who had taken her share "in the struggles, the responsibilities, and the honours of the world" with her male professional peers way back in the 1870s, Crawford showed that the professional woman was not a newfangled phenomenon of the 1890s ("Social Standing of the 'New Woman'" 410). Thus, the more detail the *Young Woman* offered about Crawford, the more solid its own model of respectable yet professional womanhood becomes. The interview underlined how pleasant Crawford *looked*, and in keeping with its regular practice, carried the interviewee's photograph on its main cover, as if to prove that professional women were nothing like the hideous figures that appeared in the pages of *Punch*.

<28> The interviewer notes that Emily had managed, unlike her husband, to gain admittance to the press gallery at Versailles. But she points out that Emily had dictated the speeches to her husband, so he could write up his reports. Given that by this time, reports of how Emily had not only rivalled but beaten her journalist husband had already circulated in the press, it is interesting that this strikingly contradictory story about her Versailles reportage is offered to foreground the professional woman's devotion to her husband. But the very fact that Crawford's story had circulated in so many different forms made it possible to produce yet another version of it. It is precisely because there is no one authoritative version of Crawford's story that her "real life" can become material for constant myth-making.

<29> Apart from its remarkably detailed view of Crawford, this interview differs in another critical way from the *Woman's Penny Paper's* brief interview with Crawford in 1892. Though the possibility of Crawford having rivalled her husband is not admitted to, some of her remarkable journalistic feats are mentioned. The interviewer notes that she “believe[d]” she was “right in stating” that Crawford had been in Paris during the Commune and “that it was then that she made the acquaintance of Mr. Labouchere, who, much impressed with her extraordinary descriptive powers and accuracy, asked her later on to become the regular Paris correspondent of his new venture, *Truth*” (“A Famous Lady Journalist” 184). In a similarly convoluted reference to another highpoint in Crawford’s life, the interviewer notes, “the correspondent of the *Daily News* is, I believe, the only lady foreigner to whom was ever offered the *legion d'honneur*. But greatly to her friends’ disappointment, she refused to accept the distinction, begging that it might be given to her son” (185). But why would an interviewer, supposedly having interviewed Crawford personally, “believe” that she was right in noting such details? Didn’t Crawford herself state these to the interviewer?

<30> Indeed, the interviewer seems particularly interested in suggesting that she had heard the above stories from other sources. Putting these stories of Crawford’s career outside quotation marks and implying that Crawford had not herself spoken of them helps the *Young Woman* to project the professional woman as being appropriately modest, even while consenting to being celebrated. For all its detail about Crawford’s career, the interview underlines that “unlike some women who write, Mrs. Crawford rarely if ever alludes to her work” (184). The interviewer points out that Crawford would have remained “unknown save as the wife of a distinguished man of letters” had circumstances not “forced her to take a prominent part” in the press (185). Thus, the interview presents Crawford’s journalistic anonymity, a standard practice within newspaper reportage that must have enabled Crawford to pursue her remarkable career in the first place, as though it was the personal choice of an admirably modest woman. In this way, the interview spares Crawford the need to blow her own trumpet by blowing it for her. It also provides a public record of those details about Crawford that would have otherwise been lost to the world. The readers of the *Young Woman* interview knew, for example, that it was Crawford, and not her son, whose professional work the French government had initially wanted to honour with the prestigious *legion d'honneur*. They also knew that Crawford, for all her professional merit, was an unexceptionable mother who placed her son before herself.

<31> The above-described accounts of Emily Crawford reveal a less-remarked aspect of the “cult of literary celebrity” studied by Alexis Easley (196). In making celebrities out of authors, the 1890s press seems to have inflated authorial personalities to the extent that the very professional lives on which their fame was based could be presented in varied and occasionally contradictory ways. The ephemeral quality of the periodical press, the fact that it did not require the reader to remember accounts published earlier, supported this kind of celebrity myth-making. Easley has demonstrated that featuring in interviews and profiles “increasingly associated” women writers “with the ephemerality of the popular press” and resulted in their exclusion from “emerging narratives of British literary history, which defined great literature as having timeless appeal” (12). However, for women like Crawford who worked primarily as journalists, becoming the subjects of celebrity interviews enabled them to write themselves into contemporary press history. For example, on her death, several newspapers paid

tribute to her journalistic skills by drawing on the above accounts of her career, and the *Times* newspaper noted that “her name, indeed, is to be coupled with that of a Blowitz [its own famous Paris correspondent] in any effort to determine the origin of the methods of contemporary journalism” (“Mrs Emily Crawford” 8). Thus, the celebrity cult of late-Victorian England helped Emily Crawford to lift the cover from her anonymous journalistic career and claim her fair share of fame.

Endnotes

(1)The *Daily News* was launched in 1846 under the editorship of Charles Dickens as an organ of liberal reform (“Daily News”).^(^)

(2)Harriet Martineau covered post-famine Ireland in 1852 and Frances Power Cobbe reported on 1861-62 Italy.^(^)

(3)The article on Crawford was published in the *Echo* probably in July 1890. While the *Echo* article seems to have been highly approbatory about Crawford’s reportage, I have not discussed it due to difficulty in accessing it, and because my paper does not attempt to provide a comprehensive account of all narratives about Crawford in the late-Victorian press.^(^)

(4)Discussions of Crawford’s participation in fin-de-siècle debates about women’s journalism, as in the volume edited by F. Elizabeth Gray, are generally limited to her article, “Journalism as a Profession for Women.” Fred Hunter and Anne Sebba have described Crawford’s career by drawing on various nineteenth-century biographical notices about Crawford but have not examined the constructed nature of these sources. This article differs from the above by demonstrating that Crawford’s differing self-presentations are an important aspect of her journalistic career.^(^)

(5)I recognise that the term “feminist” is anachronistic when applied to late-Victorian periodicals, since they predated the emergence of the term, and because these journals themselves did not use this term. However, I believe that this term usefully indicates the commitment of these journals to the improvement of women’s social, political and cultural status. Scholars like Susan Hamilton, Michelle Tusan and others have used the term to refer to the *Women’s Penny Paper*.^(^)

(6)My outline of this debate is derived from Tusan’s work.^(^)

(7)“Women Reporters Again,” *Women’s Penny Paper*, 28 June 1890.^(^)

(8)The *Women’s Penny Paper* excerpted from the same article on Crawford published in the *Echo* that I noted earlier with reference to the *Mercury* newspaper.^(^)

(9)For a brief description of this conference see Andrew Lycett 201-202.^(^)

(10)For a report of Emily Crawford’s speech as delivered by G.E. Crawford, see “Journalism as a Profession for Women. By Mrs. Emily Crawford,” *Woman’s Herald* (24 August 1893): 423.^(^)

(11)The speech, as reported in the *Woman’s Herald* article, uses the same ideas and phrases as Crawford’s *Contemporary Review* article.^(^)

(12)As noted by Tusan, though bearing a new name to emphasise its objective of heralding a new model of womanhood, the *Woman's Herald* did not change the main agenda of the *Women's Penny Paper*. It maintained the *Women's Penny Paper's* "strong advocacy character" (121). Though all references to Tusan's work in this paper are from her book, *Women Making News*, a detailed discussion of the New Woman in the feminist press may also be found in her essay "Inventing the New Woman: Print Culture and Identity Politics During the Fin-de-Siecle [sic]".(△)

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