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## MRS. ANNIE LYDIA SMITH WRITING NOVEL AT THE AGE OF 72 YEARS.

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Annie Lydia Smith, the novelist of Worcester, and author of "Lords of the soil." "there is plenty of room for another novel. There is a field that no one has touched yet, and which is waiting for someone to jump in and write the real novel."

"What is it?" asked the interviewer.

"Ah," said she, "that would be telling. I have the skeleton of just such a novel in my mind—have written five or six pages of it—and know what I am going to call it?"

"Title please?"

"Oh, no, that would be just the same, as telling you what the novel is and then you might go and write one."

The novelist was 72 years old yesterday. She was at her home, 28 Belmont street. She was not working last night. She said that the hot weather jangled thought. She is now writing four or five stories, and has just finished the serial, "Secrets of the ruined mill," which ran in a Chicago paper for some time. "The price of a coronet," and "In the days of Nathan Hale," are the titles of some of her more recent productions.

Mrs. Smith says that there are a lot of nonsensical novels in the market at present, and that the public is being surfeited with them. However, there are also some good ones in the market. She does not know who is the most popular and foremost of the novelists of America, but her favorite has been Mary Jane Holmes for many years. Mary Jane Holmes created "Lena Rivers," and "Lena Rivers" still lives.

"What do I think of Ella Wheeler Wilcox? Well, that's a poser for me to answer. I like her fairly well as a poet, but as an author I think that she is not so good. Her 'Sweet stranger' I should not call the greatest book of the age. My poet is Longfellow.

"We'll go back to Mrs. Holmes. There's nothing sensational about her writings. She is a most beautiful delineator of character and speech.

"I like Mrs. Augusta Frances Evans Wilson's works, particularly, 'One, I think of right now, is 'St. Elmo.'"

Mrs. Wilson, who is also the author of "Vashti," is about the age of Mrs. Smith, and lives in Mobile.

er." "Men and maid in the time of Nathan Hale," and "Knighthood in the Black Hills."

Mrs. Smith says she prefers the novel that smacks of history rather than the one that does not. The historical novel is good for people, she says, because one can learn something about the country from it. More people, she finds, prefer a genuine love story, no matter whether it is founded on history or not. All that the bulk of the world wants in its literature is love and war, war and love, and love and war.

Mrs. Smith, at the age of 72, is surprised that she is able to write with such easy facility. Her pen, she thinks, will never be stilled. She began with a pen, but it has been displaced by the typewriter, and this helps her to keep up with her train of thought. She believes that she writes better now than she did before. Her powers of description she believes are greater. When she began writing fiction, she could not write a chapter as quickly as now. It is an easy matter for her to sit down to a typewriter and chink off three or four chapters in the time that she was wont to devote to building one.

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"Do I ever have any trouble in having my manuscripts accepted? Why I can't say that I do. Oh, of course once in a while I get one back, but that is because I do not understand the nature of the publication that I send the story to. In a sense it is all my fault. Before one sends a story out he or she should know the style of the magazine or newspaper to which it is offered. What might do for the Red Book would not do for Harper's Bazar.

"I like to write, and always have. When I was 3 years old, I could say my A B Cs, and I remembers that when I was 6 or 7 the teacher gave me a number of words such as merit, visit, hunt and so on, and then asked me to form them into a story. I did so and that was really my first story, although I did not get any money for it.

"It's hard to tell anyone how to write. I don't think it can be done. The knack of writing just comes like everything else. It is God-given. There may be an ideal novel, but I don't know what it is nor could I suggest upon what lines the ideal novel could be written."

Mrs. Smith said that she was feeling very well on the anniversary of her birth. "I am not very sweet," she added.

Mrs. Smith was born in Vernon, Ct., and the major portion of her girlhood was passed in Tolland. She is the daughter of Essek Jocelyn. He was a millwright. Her maiden name was Lydia Anne Jocelyn. She was married to Henry Weston Smith, a Methodist minister of Palmer.

Mrs. Smith's husband was a missionary. Out in the Black Hills, where he was murdered by hostile Indians Aug. 29, 1876, there is a monument to his memory. It is at Deadwood, S. D. Mrs. Smith and her daughter moved to Worcester Feb. 5, 1885. A daughter, Mrs. Edna I. Tyler, and her mother opened a public stenographers' office in the Walker building.

The lawyers, whose need for stenography is always necessary nowadays, were opposed to the perpetuation of testimony in courts by shorthand methods then; and Mrs. Smith and her daughter had a rather difficult time in making them understand that it was really a great business facilitator.

Mrs. Smith's literary ability, while inherent, came slowly but surely, and when she felt that she would be able to transmit interesting situations that were conjured up in her brain in English that would chain the attention of the public, she became very industrious, and produced story after story.

Mrs. Smith's productions were demanded so steadily by publishers that she was able to abandon other work with which she hoped to make her living, and devote herself exclusively to fiction.

She had two pen names, Julia Edwards and Ella Jeanette Fleiding, which she used when she wrote for the New York Weekly and other publications which catered to the lovely, romantic and picturesque. Her first story was an Indian tale dealing with the Custer massacre. A Louisville newspaper accepted this story. This was during the days when newspapers, particularly those of good financial standing, circulation and importance, bought the stories that they desired to use.

Mrs. Smith's story that appeared in the Louisville newspaper was "Two Face's defeat."

Among her later stories were: "Judge Rosemore's will," "Cast up by the sea," "The Woodleigh millions," "Duchess of the loom," "Cuba's dark secret," "Under China's black flag," "The mystery of Ferndell," "A shadowed love," "Little Erlamonde's fortune," "A Mormon boy."

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