The American Newspaper

James Edward Rogers

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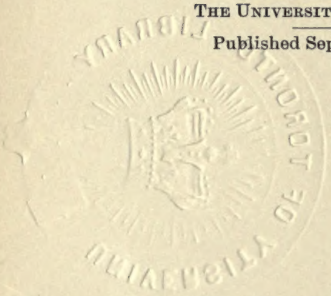
BY

JAMES EDWARD ROGERS

CHICAGO
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
LONDON
T. FISHER UNWIN, 1 ADELPHI TERRACE
1909

Published September 1909



Composed and Printed By
The University of Chicago Press
Chicago, Illinois, U. S. A.

TO

J. B. P.

PREFACE

Professor S. N. Patten in his latest book, the *New Basis of Civilization*, opens his first chapter with the following suggestive words:

> One summer day I took my notebook to a wooded hillside whence I could overlook a rich and beautiful valley. The well-tended farms, the strong stone houses, the busy men and animals moving peacefully over the roads and fields, would inspire me, I was sure, with the opening theme of this book. As I seated myself under a chestnut tree a fellow-guest at the hotel came by, and glancing at my memoranda asked if I, like himself, was writing a lecture. He too had come to the woods, he said, to meditate and to be inspired by nature. But his thesis, enthusiastically unfolded, was the opposite of mine. It was part of his faith as a Second-Day Adventist that the world is now becoming more unhappy and more wicked; and it is now so evil that the end of it rapidly approaches.

Professor Patten then proceeds to tell how they saw different meanings in the same things, how they came to opposite

conclusions, and how one pair of eyes is always apt to see but one side of life.

In this study, however, I have tried, as far as possible to see both sides of the question. My aim has been to avoid the pitfalls of hasty or set notions. The subject for discussion seemed to me to be one of concrete fact and not one of personal philosophy, and therefore I have examined some fifteen thousand newspapers from all sections of the country as a first means of getting some acquaintance with the necessary facts before forming any decided judgments. Essays like those by F. Wilcox in the *American Academy of Political Science*, July, 1900, and E. L. Shuman, *Practical Journalism*, have also proved particularly valuable and the essay of Professor W. I. Thomas in the *American Magazine* for March, 1908, has aided much in formulating my point of view on the psychological aspects of the subject.

President Roosevelt's recent onslaught on newspapers that "habitually and con-

tinually and as a matter of business practice every form of mendacity known to man, from the suppression of the truth and the suggestion of the false to the lie direct," seems to have given expression to a critical attitude toward American newspapers which has long been growing. Lord Northcliffe, the premier of English journalism, is reputed to have told a *New York Times* reporter recently that in certain important respects "American newspapers are getting worse and worse every year—most of them," and it is not long ago that Mr. Charles Whibley, an English writer of distinction, stated in *Blackwood's* his sincere conviction that "no civilized country in the world has been content with newspapers so grossly contemptible as those which are read from New York to the Pacific Coast." Such criticism does not come entirely from foreign visitors. Several of our own foremost thinkers and writers have been severe in their indictments of the American press. John A. Sleicher, editor

of *Leslie's Weekly*, believes that the newspapers of this country are "not as accurate as they were fifty years ago." Mr. Frank Munsey, with special reference to the Sunday papers, observes that "nothing new has been discovered for fifteen years. Since that time we have had only copies of copies. All you can say is that some of them are worse than others." Only the other day no less than three of the foremost American publicists—one of them President Hadley, of Yale—took occasion to criticize American journalism and to question its honesty. The substantial truth of these charges cannot reasonably be doubted. The conclusion to which my own study of the subject has led me is that the nature of the American press is essentially sensational and commercial with only a secondary place given to the cultural aspects of human thought, and that as a result its influence on the morals of the community tends in the direction of stimulating love of sensation and interest in purely material things. At

the same time I believe that the sources of these qualities of the press and of this influence lie largely in certain special traits of the American people; for, as I shall endeavor to show, the press represents the nation. In other words, my investigations have convinced me that if the American press is to be judged harshly, and if it has failed to attain its highest possibilities as an educative force in the community, this is due to the fact that it is a reflex of the nation rather than a leader of it.

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CHAPTER I

THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE MODERN NEWSPAPER

Before discussing the American press of the day, with its freedom that tends to license, a brief historical review of the development of journalism in its several functions seems in place.

The first attempts in the field of journalism were made before the Christian era in China, where the art of printing was then known. We have little information today concerning those early specimens of the printed sheet. The first real newspaper, in the modern sense of the term, was the *Pekin Gazette*, which is still published and which is the official organ of the Chinese government. It is the oldest daily in the world, having been first issued about 1340 A.D. It prints the edicts of the government, the appointment of officials, and other government news.

The newspaper of the western world was born in ancient Rome, where in the *Acta Diurna* we have a remote ancestor of our newspapers. This *Acta Diurna* was a small daily bulletin which aimed to give to the citizens of the Roman capital the news of the empire, especially the happenings at Rome. It recorded the acts and speeches of prominent Romans; it gave accounts of the progress of the imperial arms; it told of trials, judgments of the courts, and acts of the Senate. If the modern newspaper reader could see a copy of this curious old *Acta Diurna*, he would probably reject with scorn the notion of a resemblance between this succinct bulletin and the breezy, profuse modern newspaper; yet here is the newspaper of today in embryo. Comparison shows that form and purpose have changed, but that there is really slight difference as regards content, for both are about wars, armies, deaths and births, the deliberations of government, and the acts of prominent persons. In

Rome and throughout the Middle Ages the papers that told the news were posted in some public place, a market or square, so that the people might read them. This is done in China today; and he who in China-town in San Francisco chances to see at a crowded street corner a group of Chinamen reading the official news printed in black letters on red paper and pasted on the side of a building, can readily picture the Romans gathered in the same way to read the *Acta Diurna*.

In modern Europe newspapers appeared first in Italy and Germany. Italy, so long the center of art and learning, naturally led. At Venice in 1566 there appeared a small sheet, the *Notizie Scritte*, the first Italian newspaper. It was sold on the streets, and those who pressed it upon the passer-by demanded for it a small coin called the "gazzetta." Herein lies the origin of the name "gazette," now so popular a name for newspapers the world over.

In Germany as early as the middle of

the fifteenth century, shortly after the invention of printing, small sheets in epistolary form began to appear at Augsburg and Nüremburg; there were similar publications at Vienna. All these sheets, called variously *Relationen* or *Neue Zeitungen*, gave accounts of discoveries, travels, and similar important events. They were issued irregularly and seem to have had a precarious existence. It was not until 1615, one hundred and sixty-three years after the invention of printing by means of metal type, that regular collection and publication of news began. In that year, a German, E. Emmel, published at Frankfort the well-known journal, *Das Frankfurter Journal*. This sheet is still in existence and is considered the oldest European weekly.[1] Along with Butter, De Foe, and

[1] A chronological list of the early newspapers of Europe still in existence is as follows: *Frankfurter Gazette* (1615); *Gazette de France* (1631); *Leipzig Gazette* (1660); *London Gazette* (1665); *Stanford Mercury* (1695); *Edinburgh Courant* (1705); *Rostock Gazette* (1710); *Leeds Mercury* (1718); *Berlin Gazette* (1722); *Berlingske Fedende* (1749).

Renaudot, Emmel has been called the father of journalism, but it is difficult to say to which of them that honor belongs.

In France, the *Gazette de France* was the first real newspaper. Publications of the newspaper class began there in 1605 with the *Mercurie françois*, a would-be historical compilation appearing from time to time. From the beginning, the French were influenced by the Italians and in 1631 a French *Gazette* was published, at first a poetical newspaper devoted to gossip that often bordered on scandal. The publisher was Doctor Théophraste Renaudot, and when presently he issued it under the direct patronage of Richelieu, it became as the *Gazette de France* a potent weapon for furthering the purposes of the great cardinal. A number of small sheets intended to influence public opinion appeared at the same time and this kind of journalism finally culminated in the printing of the *Mazarine*, a paper which, as its name implies, was issued in the time of Cardinal

Mazarin. The *Paris Mercury* published a little later, represents a new type of journal, giving neither news nor politics, but containing matter of historical or technical interest. The French newspaper in its modern form really begins with the Revolution. During that stirring era, the streets were crowded with vendors of papers advocating every shade of political opinion. This mass of hysterical political sheets disappeared under Napoleon's strict censorship. *Le Moniteur Universelle*, the official organ of the government (1789), discussed only moral and political questions, and among the scandals published in the *Nouvelles à la Main* there was no reference to Napoleon and his court. It is only since the Third Republic that daily newspapers have again increased rapidly in France. As in England and America, freedom of the press and a steady fall in the cost of publication have made the people of the French republic inveterate newspaper readers. In 1903 there were one thousand,

four hundred newspapers printed in Paris alone. There are some like *Le Temps*, *Le Figaro*, *Le Siècle*, and *La Justice*, which are conservative and of good moral influence. There are others which, like *Le Petit Journal* and *Le Matin*, seek a wide circulation and get it by means of all the arts of modern sensationalism.

Of the origin of the newspaper in England, Alexander Andrews writes, "First we have the written news letter furnished to the wealthy aristocracy; then, as the craving for information spreads, the ballad of news sung or recited; then the news pamphlet, more prosaically arranged; then the periodical sheet of news, and lastly the newspaper." The first English newspaper is believed to have been the *Weekly News*, issued in London about 1622, the so-called *English Mercurie* being regarded by most scholars as a forgery. On December 31, 1660, in Edinburgh the first number of the Scottish *Mercuris Caledonis* appeared. The first newspaper printed in Ireland was the

Dublin News Letter, published in 1685, followed by the *Dublin Intelligencer* in 1690. As in other parts of Europe, the earliest newspapers of England were weeklies. It was not until the eighteenth century that dailies made their appearance. England gave the modern world its first daily, the *Courant* (1709). This paper consisted of one page of two columns, five paragraphs of which were translated from foreign journals and contained for the most part foreign news, and descriptions of travel and of court and military life. England furnished also the first penny paper, *The Orange Post* (1730). In 1776 appeared the first number of *The Craftsman*. With this newspaper began the idea that besides news, newspapers should contain criticism of men and affairs. *The Craftsman* was printed in opposition to the government and freely criticized its opponents. The *North Briton*, edited by Wilkes, who was so conspicuous in gaining liberty for the press, had already appeared

(1762). The *Morning Chronicle* and the *Morning Post* were at this time the most important of the London papers, and both possessed great literary merit as well as political influence. Coleridge, Southey, Lamb, Wordsworth wrote for the *Post* and Fox and Sheridan for the *Chronicle*. It was however in the nineteenth century when the freedom of the press became almost complete and the masses of the people began to read, that newspapers increased most rapidly. It is difficult to estimate the wide circulation and influence of the *Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily News*, *Morning Post*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, *St. James Gazette*, *The Observer*, the leading English newspapers of our day.

The story of the growth of the newspaper in the United States is a remarkable one; the development here has been greater than anywhere else. One of the chief reasons for this is the fact that in this country "freedom of the press" has always existed.

Let us briefly run over the facts of this development.

A colonial press first appeared in Boston in 1690. In September of that year Benjamin Harris published a sheet with the title of *Publick Occurrences both Foreign and Domestick*. It was suppressed. The *Boston News-Letter* followed in 1704, but its existence was short. The oldest newspaper in the country today is the *New Hampshire Gazette* founded in 1756. Most of the colonial papers confined themselves to the barest mention of the news of the day; they did not give a column to a piece of news that only needed a paragraph. If opinions were expressed, they were on the whole subservient to the opinions of those in authority. Zealous Franklins and Zengers were the exceptions, but it was they who originated and practiced that independent spirit which was infused in a new class of paper that appeared after the year 1745—the so-called *Revolutionary Press*. This new type of journalism was like the

North Briton, its contemporary in England, defiant, self-reliant, and independent. The *New Hampshire Gazette* is a well-known example of those rebellious journals which boldly abused the home government and lauded the colonists.

In the first year of the Revolution, we find eight newspapers started in Philadelphia. When the Constitution went into operation in 1789 and the freedom of the press became well assured, there were printed every week over 76,438 copies of newspapers. With the establishment of the government of the United States, newspapers sprang into existence throughout the thirteen colonies. European precedent had made the colonial newspaper a small sheet of one or two pages dealing with political and patriotic subjects, but now the size of the paper gradually increased. There were few editorials, but the articles were usually written by men of marked ability, such as Madison, Hamilton, Jefferson, or Washington, and topics

of the day were warmly debated over signed names. Partisanship was undisguised and sincere.

The succeeding years are those of the beginnings of business enterprise applied to the newspaper. We find the predecessors of contemporary American journalism using all possible means to gather and distribute news. Between 1835 and 1840, before telegraphy and the Atlantic cable were in use, the New York papers started "pony expresses" and similar expedients for gathering the earliest possible news from Washington, which was then as now the great news-center. For the same purpose a line of fast sailing-boats was put into commission to meet incoming vessels from foreign ports.

It is, however, from those mechanical appliances that have transformed the newspaper as they have altered all other aspects of modern life, that the American newspaper has received its greatest impetus. With the invention of modern machinery

and the typewriter, the use of electricity, the use of the telegraph and telephone a new era set in. The story of the development of the modern American journal is typified in the history of such newspapers as the *Herald*, the *Tribune*, the *Sun*, the *Times*, or the *World*. The sudden increase both in the volume and scope of these dailies is due for the most part first, to the enormous reduction in the production cost of materials, especially in paper and power; second, to the reduction in the price of composition due to the invention of typesetting machines; third, to the economy of time and labor resulting from the introduction of improved machinery by which the papers are printed, cut, pasted, folded, counted, and made ready for delivery by a single machine; fourth, the increased facility of gathering news, due to the free use of telephones, telegraphs, automobiles, and the like; and fifth, the vast increase in the number of newspaper readers, due to the spread of education and the reduction in

the price of the paper. Today any resident of a large city in this country can get for from one to five cents over one hundred columns of news, editorial comment, pictures, and cartoons, besides many pages of useful advertisements. The accomplishment of all this has necessitated an increase in office equipment, and many of our daily papers have erected elaborate establishments at the cost of a million dollars or more as, for example, the leading papers of New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Cleveland, San Francisco, or any other of our large cities. There has also been a commensurate increase in office force. Some of the large papers employ as many as five hundred men. In the editorial and reportorial departments more than a hundred men are busy night and day.

This picture, so hastily sketched, surely suggests a mighty growth from the humble beginnings of the *Notizie Scritte*. The great material and mechanical development of the United States has caused this

pre-eminence of the American press in material equipment; while freedom of the press and universal education has given the American newspaper its other special characteristic, namely its enormous circulation.

In the year 1850 a newspaper of fifty thousand subscribers living within a radius of thirty miles was considered a large journal. Contrast this with any one of the modern New York dailies with a circulation of nearly half a million, distributed even to points five hundred miles away. In 1900 it was computed that there were sixty thousand different newspapers in the world. Of these the United States had twenty thousand; Germany and Great Britain, eight thousand each, France, five thousand; Japan, two thousand; Italy, one thousand five hundred, and so on down the line of the nations in the following order: Austria-Hungary, Asia, Spain, and Russia. It will be noticed that this list is a good index of the intelligence and progressive-

ness of the different nations. The average of intelligence is in direct ratio to the number of newspapers. To attempt a brief characterization of the newspapers of the first four countries, one might say that in general the newspapers of this country devote most of their space to news, sports, and politics; those of Great Britain to editorial discussion and political issues; those of France to petty politics, art, drama, and gossip, and those of Germany to national politics, science, and art. But as regards the general influence of the newspapers in their respective countries, one is safe in saying that the influence of the papers of the United States is the greatest. Here in the baldest outline are the main facts of the beginnings and progress of that great institution—the modern press.

Some facts of general interest become plain by this review. One is that the newspaper of the past tended most frequently to discuss questions of public policy. The newspaper of the past, Chinese, Roman,

mediaeval and modern, had, as must have been noted, a bearing chiefly political; they were often written by clerks, notaries, or other persons employed by the government, and were constantly subject to such a supervision by censors and other magistrates as still persists in Russia. Up to the middle of the eighteenth century a rigid censorship similar to that which now controls the *Journal de St. Petersburg*, *Nouve Vremya* (*New Times*) and *Novoste* (*Latest News*) checked the action of the whole press. The newspaper, except in so far as it was purely literary, voiced the will of established rulers. The first *Notizie* of Italy, the first *Frankfurter* weekly journal of Germany and the first daily, which as we have seen appeared in England in 1702, were one and all under the patronage either of the government or of some nobleman or political faction. At an early date, governments realized that newspapers afforded an easy and direct means of influencing the people. As has been seen, part of Riche-

lieu's great power was due to his adroit use of the *Gazette de France* in shaping and controlling public opinion, and to this day each government of Europe has some great daily which frankly voices and upholds its policy. To assert then that the attitude of the government toward the press has usually determined the character of the newspaper does not belie historic facts.

It must also have been noted in our review of the development of journalism that with the spread of the idea of the freedom of the press newspapers rapidly increased in number and volume. The relinquishment of the censorship in the middle of the nineteenth century gave a great impetus to journalism in France. With the repeal of the licensing act in England in the reign of William and Mary the newspapers of Great Britain grew in number, size, and influence. In the United States, as has already been suggested, the practically entire freedom of the press is chief among the reasons for that enormous development

of news-getting and news-giving. This freedom has had unique consequences. So far has the pendulum swung that today instead of the government granting freedom to the press, it might almost be said that it is the press which makes it possible for the government to proceed. It is the press which is free and the government controlled. Indeed, the freedom of the press in the case of many newspapers of this country degenerates into a sort of license that has come to mean an utter disregard for law, and this license, as will be pointed out later, has come to be the cause of much that is evil in our press.

Furthermore, from this brief glance at the history of the press, one is able to trace clearly from the beginning the present two-fold rôle of the modern newspaper: to give the news and to express public opinion. At first the stress fell chiefly on news-giving; the small sheets sold in the streets of Italy were devoted for the most part to the collection of the gossip of the markets and to the

distribution of this news to the public. The original function of the newspaper was to act as a news-gathering and news-distributing agent. In process of time, however, governments came to recognize that the newspaper might be used effectively to further the interests of those in power. Governments accordingly turned their attention to the newspaper, and out of this situation came the tendency to put greater stress upon the expression of public opinion as distinct from the news-gathering function. Parallel with the growth and spread of this second principle of the press, there grew up a third idea as to the province of the newspaper, namely, that the daily papers should not only gather news and express public opinion but that they should also create public opinion. This idea has attained its greatest development in the American press. Moreover the American journalist has not been content to use the editorial columns in order to mold public opinion; he has, unfortu-

nately, reached the point of altering and coloring news.

Here, in these three theories of what constitutes the function of the newspaper, the evolution of the newspaper is seen. First, that the newspaper should only gather and distribute the news; second, that its function should be primarily to express public opinion, and third, that the newspaper besides collecting news and reflecting public opinion should create opinion. Historically, the first-mentioned function preceded the other two. It is only in the present day, however, that the last function—to create public opinion—has been developed to its fullest limit. This could only be accomplished in a nation of newspaper readers, whose daily interests touch the politics of the state, and in an age of mechanical development that makes possible the production of the modern newspaper with its twenty-four pages covered with pictures and distributed within a few hours at a very small price over a radius

of fifty miles to a million subscribers. In summary then, the following tabular statement will show the historical development of the newspaper:

Country	Aim	Time
Italian	To give the news	17th and 18th cent's
English	To express public opinion	18th and 19th cent's
American	To create public opinion	19th and 20th cent's

THE CITY AND THE NEWSPAPER

CHAPTER II

THE CITY AND THE NEWSPAPER

Histories of journalism are few, and most of those that we have are out-of-date, for the modern newspaper changes rapidly. The newspaper of today is vastly different from that published twenty years ago. There are a few books dealing with the history of journalism in the different countries of Europe, but these were written some twenty or thirty years ago and in no way foreshadow the modern growth of the press. The best history of British journalism that we have was written by Alexander Andrews in 1859; nothing of equal merit has since been produced in book form. Comparatively little has been written on American journalism and what has been written does not cover contemporary conditions. The story of the modern American newspaper is yet to be told; practically nothing has been written of the recent yet

wonderful development of the modern press, especially along financial and mechanical lines. There is no doubt that there is great need of such a volume and that there is a rich field lying fallow here.

The continual changes which take place in the business of producing a newspaper are due to a number of causes. For instance, the invention of the cylinder press years ago effected a change in the process of making a newspaper. Before that time the circulation of a paper was largely determined by the number of pulls one pair of arms could give the old-style press within the two hours allowed for the publication. In those days a circulation of five hundred was considered large. Again, the tremendous growth of railroads throughout all sections of the country caused another revolution. For, as the routes of travel doubled and trebled, the circulation of the newspaper grew and its area was increased a hundred-fold. With every invention and improvement of machinery and motor-

power the business of the newspaper underwent still another change. With each of these changes the sphere of the daily was broadened, and with the rapid increase in circulation there was a steady demand for more room, for more money, and for more men of ability. Thus we come to another change of recent origin, namely, that in the ownership of papers. With the need of large capital newspapers ceased to be owned and edited by the same man. Newspaper syndicates with trust methods have sprung into existence everywhere in our midst, and the policy of the newspaper has become radically different. There have been many other similar changes which any history of journalism in this country would treat at length.

Besides the lack of good historical studies very little has been written regarding the numerous problems of contemporary journalism. What has been done along this line is mostly contained in the newspapers themselves or in scattered magazine articles.

President Roosevelt and others have occasionally spoken of the power and problem of the American press, particularly as regards "muck-raking and the tendency of editors to lie." The largest mass of printed matter concerning journalism consists for the most part of reminiscences told by newspaper men. What is needed, therefore, at this time is not only a reliable historical treatise, but also an analysis of the nature of contemporary journalism. The latter task the writer has undertaken in the pages that are to follow. Of the many reasons why such psychological and statistical studies should be made of the press of this country, the two most important are: first, nowhere else has the business of journalism shown so elaborate a development as in the United States; and secondly, nowhere else has the press found so large an audience or attained to such influence as among the citizens of this nation. There are in the United States about 25,000 different newspapers with a total annual output

of over 5,000,000,000 copies. Here everybody reads newspapers and here newspapers are practically free to say what they please. This is not true of Europe where the newspapers are less numerous, have a smaller circulation, and are more restricted. For another reason, also, newspapers in this country furnish a particularly interesting field for study. The matter is well stated in the following quotation:

> Less accurate than the English newspaper, less well written than the French, less well equipped than the German, the American newspaper occupies a mean position between all three in the extent of its news service, in the freedom of its literary vehicle, and in its habit of treating all subjects from the point of the educator rather than the investigator.

American newspapers differ from each other and from the papers of other countries in the manner in which the news is printed and in the relative stress laid on the various classes of material that make up the contents of the paper. At the outset, for the

sake of convenience, it is necessary that we make our classification of newspapers on this basis of manner of presentation of news and relative stress. Thus, taking into consideration the selective elements of tone, color, and atmosphere, we are able to distinguish three types of papers: first, the conservative press, second, the sensational press, and third, the so-called yellow press.

In general, viewed from the standpoint of time, the conservative newspaper is the paper of the past, while the sensational and yellow journals represent those of the present. Viewed from the standpoint of geography, the conservative paper belongs to the country, while the sensational and and yellow sheets are found in the city. Conservative city papers, of the type of the *Philadelphia Ledger*, there undoubtedly are, but these are exceptions. As a rule, it is certainly true that the city paper is more sensational and yellow than the country newspaper. This is but natural since the city has long been the seat of

radicalism, while the country tends to be conservative. Hence, any study of modern American journalism must concern itself with our large metropolitan dailies. Indeed, one may safely say, that the modern press is a development of our cities. Therefore, before proceeding farther it seems desirable to discuss the respective influences of the country and city dailies and to ascertain if possible the extent and the causes of the increase in size and influence of the city's papers, namely, the sensational and the yellow journal, the two types to which the great bulk of the newspapers published in this country belong.

Many persons would object to the statement that such a paper as the *New York Herald* is a representative American morning daily or that the *San Francisco Bulletin* is a fair type of the average evening paper. When the American in Europe looks impatiently about a newspaper shop in London or stands before a newspaper "kiosk" on one of the Parisian boulevards,

he resents the fact that American journalism is almost exclusively represented there by the pictorial features of the *Police Gazette*, the gaudy political cartoons of *Puck* and *Judge*, or some copies of the *New York Herald* or the *Chicago American*. To the Frenchmen and Englishmen who naturally believe that these sensational sheets are typical representatives of the American newspaper, he quickly points out that the numerous conservative country papers at home should not be overlooked. The American may further argue that a large proportion of the newspapers of this country have nothing in common with the cynicism of the *Sun*, the pessimism of the *Post*, or the gaudy headlines of our yellow journals, and further assert that one has but to turn to statistics to realize that the "power of the press" after all is resident in the country, for the country papers far outnumber the city papers. His arguments, however, are not wholly sound. To be sure, figures flatter not only the active

four-paged daily of the small towns but attest forcibly the genuine influence of the humble country paper. But these figures formulate a plea upon a numerical basis and disregard the crucial question of "real influence." Mere statistics do not tell much, but often rather belie the real state of things. In the subject under consideration they sadly neglect to recognize two important factors, first, the scope and field of the ordinary city journal, and second, the rapid growth of our cities. They forget that nearly half of the population of America at the present time lives in cities of over eight thousand inhabitants. They lose sight of the fact that our big city dailies have a large and extensive circulation in the neighboring country among the farmers. Obviously it is absurd to assert that a small four-paged country journal with a subscription list of about eighteen thousand in any way compares with the huge twenty-four paged daily of a large city with over one hundred and fifty

thousand subscribers. There is no comparison. The *New York Times* with a circulation of 250,000 is worth over a thousand of the Californian *Santa Cruz Surf*, with a subscription of 2,500. Consider how many four-paged country papers it would take to equal in size and influence any modern city daily such as the *New York Sun*. After such convincing comparisons, mere statistics become a joke and we find, both as regards size and influence, that the "power of the press" rests absolutely with our cities and not with the country. It is to the city that one must go to form any estimate of journalism in this country.

With the growth of cities the field of the city paper has grown, and with the increase of communication and travel the city paper has begun to oust the little four-paged conservative journal of the country. It is true that the number of these small sheets increases every year, but as has been said, we are not concerned here with mere figures

but rather with a question of influence. The city paper today, for instance, covers an area of about two hundred miles. It supplies news not only to the inhabitants of its own city and the residents of suburbs, but it is delivered at all points of the country within a radius of two hundred miles before ten o'clock of the morning it is issued. This region has happily been called its "sphere of influence," as the political scientist terms the particular area that a country rules largely through influence and suggestion. Traveling across the continent from New York one passes through different "zones." On the train out of New York he is offered the New York papers—the *Times*, the *Sun*, the *Herald*, and the like. On the next day he is flooded with the newspapers of Chicago, then of Salt Lake, then of Ogden, and later of San Francisco. Returning via San Francisco on the Santa Fé, he passes through the "zones" of the Los Angeles, the Denver, and the New Orleans newspapers. In

this field the little local paper cannot compete with its big rival. If it survives at all its mission is simply to furnish the town gossip. It does not attempt to publish the news of the great outside world, and it exerts little influence on the minds of its readers. The city paper is full of news of the commercial and political world, of the doings of all nations and peoples, and thereby becomes a powerful force in the community. It suggests, educates, and convinces. The country newspaper is like the small grocery store in the suburban town that is at the mercy of the huge city department store. It supplies the purely local needs and no more. The story of our press is a repetition of the history of our industrial corporations. This country is the home of large concentrated enterprises and along with all the rest the press has become centralized.

In addition to this enlargement of the field and influence of the metropolitan newspaper through the improved means

of locomotion and communication, there is the national fact of the steady increase in the size and number of cities. The movement of population is cityward. The city has become the center of thought and action. Here masses of humanity congregate and thrive, and thus it becomes possible to control them more or less as a single unit. This the modern metropolitan newspaper is able to do. It can form public opinion. Moreover, the city is the unit that gives expression to our political and social life. Cities serve also as the controlling and distributing centers for our agricultural and manufactured products. In short, since cities are the centers of American life and industry, when we speak of American journalism we particularly refer to the big "dailies" of our larger cities.

Around a metropolis, within a radius of a hundred miles, towns ranging in population from fifty to one hundred thousand persons will grow up, and their inhabitants,

mingling more and more with the metropolitan life, will finally become merged in the great mass. This area is called "the metropolitan district." Although not part of the great city, the interests of the suburbanites tend to center there. They take the city's newspapers, go to its theaters, attend its conventions, and, where they possess newspapers of their own, imitate in them the tone and methods of the city's journals. For instance, around San Francisco are San José, Oakland, Santa Rosa, and Sacramento. All these towns have newspapers of their own, but these papers are mere imitations of those of San Francisco and are usually under their dominance. The same thing is true of New York and Chicago. The dailies published in Manhattan exert a vital influence over the large metropolitan area known as Greater New York. They also influence newspapers and public opinion in towns like Jersey City, Hoboken, Elisabeth, Newark, and so forth. The newspapers of Chicago

likewise make themselves felt over a large area. One finds its papers in Evanston, Haywood, Oak Park, Riverside, La Grange, and elsewhere. The papers of the large city compete so well with the small local papers that they have in each of these towns a long list of regular subscribers. Thus the newspapers of the average American city represent not merely the city in which they are published but the population of the whole area over which they are distributed. The large New York journals have each a list of over five hundred thousand subscribers spread over a district containing something like ten million people. The Chicago papers cover an area with a population of about five million persons, and have a circulation of two hundred and fifty thousand each. All this suggests the immense power and influence of the newspapers of our large cities. It shows that in spite of the numbers of the four-paged country papers, the real American journalism is to be found in

our large cities and that this urban journalism touches, as it were, the lives of about two-thirds of the country's population. The influence of the prominent New York papers is particularly striking. As Wall Street influences the money markets of the country, so Park Row and its methods determine in large measure the character of American journalism. These New York papers are watched and imitated by newspapers all over the United States.

In fine, as the cities are the controlling levers of national life, as "Paris is France, and what Paris says, thinks, and feels all France says, thinks, and feels," so it may be said that New York is the East, Chicago is the West, New Orleans the South, and San Francisco the far West, and that these four cities together give us the United States. And so the newspapers of these four cities give us American journalism, representing the characteristics, the sentiments, the desires, and the hopes of the country.

THE NATURE OF THE AMERICAN NEWSPAPER

CHAPTER III

THE NATURE OF THE AMERICAN NEWSPAPER

It is then appropriate that the metropolitan newspaper should be examined with care and in detail. The study naturally falls into three main divisions: (1) the nature of American journalism; (2) its influence on morals; (3) the causes of this influence; and it is in this sequence that I shall treat the subject.

In order to make a helpful estimate of the daily papers of this country, a brief preliminary analysis of the nature of the press in general is necessary. The subject-matter of any newspaper can be divided into five general parts, and these in turn can be split up into many minor divisions. These five main classes are: (1) News; (2) Illustrations; (3) Literature; (4) Opinion; (5) Advertisement. News includes every item

that is a report of current events; illustrations comprehend pictorial matter outside of advertisements; literature covers the field of serial stories, special articles, jokes, and poetry; opinion includes letters, exchanges, and editorials, while advertisement is obviously that large department wherein are published paid statements of what is to be had in the way of service, commodities, and the like. There have been many similar classifications of the material of newspapers. One of these divides the subject-matter into six parts, as follows: (1) events of the place in which the paper is published; (2) events of other places and countries; (3) editorial opinion; (4) quotations from the financial, stock, and cereal markets; (5) advertisements, and (6) special departments on sports, dramatics, art, and literature.

With these convenient divisions before our eyes it would be interesting as well as instructive to make a quantitative analysis of our modern press. In his monograph

on newspapers, Dr. Wilcox found that the five divisions of the first classification made above occupied on an average for the whole country such percentages of the total space as are shown in the accompanying tables. A careful glance at these tables, even though made as far back as ten years ago, will disclose many interesting facts. For instance, war, politics, business, sports, crime, and vice occupy by far the greater portion of the average newspaper's space. Opinion and advertisement are omnipresent in all papers while literature and illustration are sometimes wanting and always held in abeyance. Table III suggests the instructive fact that the percentage of space occupied by crime, vice, illustrations, and want advertisements seems to have increased steadily with the growth of circulation, while in political news, editorials, and exchange columns no apparent difference is to be noticed. A careful survey of the columns of different papers will show that a conservative

journal will devote only a few paragraphs to a certain murder or prize fight, while a sensational newspaper will give three or four columns to the same thing and accompany the account with many pictures.

But this quantitative difference in the amount of space devoted to certain kinds of news by the conservative and the sen-

TABLE I

The various newspaper matter was found to fill, on an average for the whole country, the following percentage of the total space:

- I. News, 55.3
  - *a*) War news, 17.9
  - *b*) General news, 21.8
    - Foreign, 1.2
    - Political, 6.4
    - Crime, 3.1
    - Misc., 11.1
  - *c*) Special news, 15.6
    - Business, 8.2
    - Sporting, 5.1
    - Society, 2.3
- II. Illustrations, 3.1
- III. Literature, 2.4
- IV. Opinion, 7.1
  - *a*) Editorials, 3.9
  - *b*) Letters and exchange, 3.2
- V. Advertisements, 32.1
  - *a*) Want, 5.4
  - *b*) Retail, 13.4
  - *c*) Medical, 3.9
  - *d*) Political and legal, 2.0
  - *e*) Miscellaneous, 6.0
  - *f*) Self, 1.4

TABLE II

News Center	New York	Boston	Philadelphia	Chicago	Baltimore and Washington	Pittsburg	St. Louis	Cincinnati	Minneapolis and St. Paul	Kansas City	Louisville	San Francisco	Average
No. of papers analyzed	27	12	14	10	8	8	5	4	6	4	4	8	....
Total no. of columns.....	1,936	1,014	1,044	1,742	666	594	358	298	364	252	262	674	....
Percentage of total space...	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	....
I. News	55.7	53.9	58.4	50.0	53.7	52.3	36.0	63.3	60.3	58.6	59.4	40.5	55.3
a) War news.....	15.7	19.6	18.3	18.7	18.2	17.3	15.2	15.9	24.3	21.4	18.8	17.6	17.9
b) General news.....	22.6	21.7	22.1	16.1	22.2	15.8	27.3	28.6	20.1	20.3	20.2	18.3	21.8
1 Foreign	2.8	0.6	1.9	0.9	0.6	0.7	2.0	1.4	1.6	0.8	0.7	1.4	1.2
2. Political	5.6	5.8	5.7	6.1	6.6	3.8	6.3	8.9	3.2	6.8	6.0	6.3	6.4
3. Crime and vice..	4.9	2.5	2.9	1.9	2.6	3.4	7.8	3.5	2.1	3.3	3.5	4.2	3.1
4. Miscellaneous ..	9.3	12.8	11.6	7.2	12.4	7.9	11.2	4.8	13.2	9.4	10.0	6.4	11.1
c) Special news	17.4	12.6	18.0	18.2	13.3	19.2	17.6	18.8	15.9	16.3	20.4	13.6	15.6
1. Business	7.6	4.2	7.7	10.6	25.1	10.1	10.0	10.29	9.3	11.0	11.5	7.3	8.2
2. Sporting	6.0	6.2	5.6	5.3	5.7	5.2	5.6	6.4	4.0	4.3	7.0	3.4	5.1
3. Society	3.8	4.2	4.7	2.3	2.5	3.9	2.0	2.2	2.6	1.0	1.9	2.9	2.3
II. Illustrations.....	4.4	5.2	3.0	3.9	2.3	1.9	5.2	3.8	2.2	1.9	3.0	7.6	3.1
III. Literature	2.9	2.9	3.4	4.9	1.2	2.7	0.7	0.1	1.4	0.8	1.5	2.6	2.4
IV. Opinion	7.1	7.2	6.6	6.7	7.0	5.4	3.8	3.8	6.6	11.8	5.3	5.2	7.1
1 Editorials	4.4	3.7	3.6	4.7	3.1	3.2	3.0	2.9	3.7	4.2	3.8	3.2	3.9
2. Letters and exch. ..	2.7	3.5	3.0	2.0	3.9	2.2	0.8	0.9	2.9	7.5	1.5	2.0	3.2
V. Advertisements.....	29.9	30.8	28.6	34.5	35.8	37.7	30.2	29.0	29.5	27.6	30.7	....	32.1

TABLE III

AN EXAMINATION OF NEWSPAPERS IN CLASSES AS TO CIRCULATION*

	40,000 Circulation or More	7,500 to 20,000 Circulation
I. Crime and vice	4.2	3.6
II. Illustrations	5.2	1.9
III. Want advertisements	6.6	3.8
IV. Medical advertisements	4.1	3.8
V. Political news	5.7	7.0
VI. Letters and exchanges	1.9	4.4
VII. Editorials	3.8	4.4
VIII. Political advertisements	1.0	3.6

* In news of crime and vice, in illustration, and in want and medical advertisements, the percentage of space occupied shows an almost steady increase with the increase of circulation, while the opposite is true in political news, editorials, letters, exchanges, and political advertisements.

TABLE IV*

	New York	Philadelphia	Chicago	St. Louis	Omaha	San Francisco
Crime	5	3	2	8	2½	4
Sports	6	5½	3½	5½	2½	3½
Politics	5½	5½	6	6½	11	6½
Business	7½	7½	10½	10	7½	7½
Literature	3	3½	5	½	4	2½

* Figures show the percentage of the total space devoted to each particular branch of news.

TABLE V

Subject-Matter of Editorials	Amount of Space	Percentage
War	344	48.9
Politics	218	31.0
Foreign affairs	42	6.0
Miscellaneous	39	5.5
Business	16	2.7
Literature	10	1.4
Social news	7	1.0
Crime and vice	6	0.9
Sporting news	2	0.3

sational newspaper does not afford the best basis for a classification of American newspapers. It is only in a qualitative analysis that a satisfactory basis for classification can be formed, and this statement can best be illustrated and explained by a comparison of three well-known papers, the *Boston Post*, the *New York Herald*, and the *Chicago American*. They will serve as typical examples of the three separate groups of daily papers found in this country.

The first paper, the *Post* exemplifies the type of a good conservative paper. It gives the daily news sanely and as far as possible presents the truth unvarnished and without much comment. Its chief attention is given to politics and business. It has few photographs, its editorials are straightforward and unbiased, its news columns give no undue balance to the unusual, the morbid, or the vulgar. The aim is evidently to act on principle, to be nothing more or less than an unprejudiced

agent for reporting the events of the day. There is no direct attempt to arouse excitement, to play upon the passions, or to flatter the whims of the public. There is really nothing in it that is conspicuous, loud, or melodramatic. The *Post*, like all others of its type, at once voices and leads middle-class intelligence. Respected, if not popular, it has a small but regular constitutency. This satisfies its editors, who do not seek primarily to catch subscribers but to educate and develop sound public opinion. Such papers are the lineal descendants of the colonial press.

The second class of papers consist of the sensational journal, of which the *New York Herald* may be regarded as a fair example. These sensational papers go a step farther than the conservative journals, for they not only give the news as they find it, but they color it, or as the newspaper slang goes, they "doctor" it. Even in the "make-up" of the newspaper there is an appeal to petty curiosity. Here begins the habit of

giving greater space to crime, sports, and society news. Big headlines and a greater number of photographs are interspersed among the news. The editorials begin to swing more and more with the shifting of public opinion or at the dictation of the owners of the paper. One becomes conscious of a definite editorial policy which follows rather than leads, of an eye to expediency and a frank hunt for subscribers. While the conservative paper writes *for* its readers, the sensational journal writes *to* them. Under this policy, the paper becomes spectacular, excited, changeable, declamatory, and often argumentative. This class of newspaper, while it presents its accounts of daily events attractively and vividly, inclines to cater to the standard of mediocrity. In short, its taste is usually commonplace.

There is finally the yellow journal, often held to be the most typical form of American journalism. Without stopping to enlarge upon this point, the writer is inclined

to doubt this position. There is little question that yellow journalism is a large factor, and any account of American journalism would be incomplete without it, but a careful examination of the different newspapers of the country leads one inevitably to the opinion that it is not the most distinctive type. That position is held by the sensational newspaper. An intensive study of yellow journalism would be interesting, but since the aim here is to center attention on what is most typical—namely sensational journalism—only a brief analysis of yellow journalism will be attempted.

Quantitatively, an examination of yellow and conservative papers shows that the former class of papers devote 20 per cent. of their space to reports of crime and vice while the ordinary conservative newspaper gives but 5 per cent. Qualitatively, yellow newspapers are usually distinguished by a flaring make-up, that is, striking headlines in glaring type and many illustrations to

give as vivid a description as possible of crime, sport, divorce, and, in general, the dramatics of life. Every item of news is worked up into a story told with a rush and a dash, the aim of which is to excite the reader. Every avenue of suggestion is used for sensational purposes. Editors manufacture news; men with vivid imaginations and clever pens are paid large salaries to compose fictitious "writeups." Other men are paid big sums to make "scare headlines" in large red or black letters. When it is remembered that it was an editor of the *St. Louis Globe*, who defined the most successful newspaper man as "he who best knew where hell was going to break out next and had a reporter on the spot," it will not be surprising that statistics show that the city of St. Louis has more yellowness in its papers than any other city in the country. But what is especially distinctive of yellow journalism is that when hell is quiet and there is no sign of an

eruption a reporter is immediately sent to make one at any cost.

It is at this point that the distinguishing mark of the yellow journalist is plain. All the melodramatic methods of the sensational press are used, every detail of hell is exposed, but a truly yellow journal does more than this. The essential characteristic of the yellow journal is that it creates news. Another of its methods is to select news from what is available with a view to attract supporters to its own opinions and to cajole readers to its ends. It discards pages of news that the public ought to know about. Its aim is to fix prejudices, to arouse feeling, and for its own purposes to prey upon the lower passions of the great mass of mankind. It is not forgotten that yellow journals are often progressive and generous; that they frequently employ the best talent and pay the highest salaries; that they use the latest machinery and the best methods to gather and to distribute news; that they often

send grafters to jail, and, whether from self-interest or not, sometimes defend the rights of the people, especially the poor and helpless of the community. The yellow journal might be likened to a living creature with a heart but without a conscience. This sounds like a paradox, but nevertheless it is so. As Miss Commander said in the *Arena*, "While other papers have opinions, it [the yellow journal] has feelings as well." It loves and hates, pities and protects, despises and exposes at the same time and in the same breath.

Yellow journalism is a distinct product of America, but it was not created by public demand here. It was largely the self-created "hobby" of a rich man's son, who wanted to dabble in frenzied journalism. He saw clearly the reputation as well as the financial success of such a newspaper. It has many of the characteristics of the circus poster and the patent medicine "ad." It is a big advertising sheet full of news, pictures, and comment. All

classes read it to see what it has to say, even though they may not like it. Moreover, what it has to say is often said well and in an original way. Its circulation has grown enormously; its many advertisements have brought it great wealth. Even the conservative newspaper has sometimes imitated it, to become sensational where it has not become yellow. The mercantile value of the yellow journal having been proven, newspaper publishers began to search for writers and editors who could invent things and originate ideas, who could draw morbid pen-and-ink frenzies and "fat purple cows." All this took the public by surprise and at once became a big financial success. The public wanted to be amused and entertained and yellow journalism was invented to cater to this taste; it became the circus clown and acrobat in modern journalism.

Yellow journalism acts as well as talks. We often find yellow journals devoting as much if not more space to the affairs of the

business world, of the commercial and agricultural conditions of the country, to the fluctuations of the money markets, to the proceedings of Congress and the like, as do many conservative papers in the same community. But in spite of these seemingly beneficent characteristics, the fact remains that a type of journal which is constantly used for ulterior motives, whose policy is always impermanent and generally selfish, whose appeal is to the primitive passions and low taste, is a menace to our national life.

What has been said above indicates some of the chief points of difference between yellow and sensational journalism. The sensational journal may justify itself by the fact that, in flying in the face of tradition, it sometimes breaks down false proprieties, even though it does not build in their place. But when this fashion of voicing the latest thought is set in motion by an unscrupulous greed for power and gain, when men desiring wealth and pres-

tige play upon the passions and follies of weak human nature in order to get them, then the sensational journal becomes yellow and its influence is of the worst.

Let us turn now to the most typical form of American journalism, namely the sensational newspaper. Examining it we find twelve principal characteristics. They are as follows: (1) "catering" to the public; (2) "playing-up" news; (3) "seeking" after news; (4) "doctoring" news; (5) "sensationalizing" news; (6) "trivializing" news; (7) "falsifying" news; (8) "muck-raking" by means of the news; (9) "advertising" by news; (10) the irresponsibility" of the journalist; (11) the so-called "partisanship" of the press, and (12) flouting the law.

The next step in our argument is to see what each of these twelve traits of our press means. By way of introduction it might be said that almost every paper has a "policy," and it achieves and maintains this policy by "editing" the news. This

it does by suppression, exaggeration, emphasis, depreciation, and the thousand and one tricks known to the trade.

As to the first characteristic, "catering" to the public, the late J. S. Bennett, the father of modern journalism, once addressed a young man who was speaking eloquently about the "mission of the newspaper." Replied Mr. Bennett most sagely, "Young man, to instruct the people as you say is not the mission of journalism. The mission, if journalism has any, is to startle or amuse." This is, in a nutshell, the thought behind all sensational journalism. In the sensational newspaper the people are written to; they are not forced to lift themselves to any standard above their own. This common policy of "catering" is further illustrated by the story of an editor who, when offered two sonnets by the same poet, accepted one and declined the other. Presently, much to the surprise of his visitor, he was heard praising the one that he had returned. "But it

was the other which you printed," exclaimed his puzzled auditor. "Oh, that was my choice for the newspaper certainly but personally I prefer —." What he meant was that the modern editor has no mind of his own, for he merely represents the policy of his employers and the mind of the public. No one would think for a moment that Mr. Brisbane's favorite reading consists of the editorials of the Hearst papers. The editor does not think of what he prefers so much as of what the public wants. The modern editor of any one of the big dailies says to his readers, "I am no mycologist. This dish may be a toadstool or it may be a mushroom for all I know, but I hope you will find it appetizing. It is what I imagine you prefer as a dish." It is in this way that the editor is an important factor toward determining public opinion and public taste. He is always scheming new methods and new dainties to please the insatiable appetites of the American people for news. We are

a reading nation and desire to read news that is full of vim and pulsating with life, with excitement, and with strife. An editor therefore who coaxes our appetites by "dishing-up" news in a sensational style is successful. Give the people what they want, is the maxim of most editors.

The presentation, or "playing-up" of news is another of the important features of all modern journalism, especially the sensational press. Who could imagine one of the daily sensational journals without huge headlines of a startling nature, big and striking illustrations, and heavy lettered type in which current events are presented in the most alluring style. Nowhere else is the system of using elaborate headlines so prevalent and common as in this country. To work up an "extra" by spreading in some startling and novel fashion a big scare headline in red ink clear across the first pages has become an art for which men are paid high salaries. This headline is designed of course to

catch the eye and to sell the paper—a small touch of journalistic advertising and nothing more. Often, however, when one purchases such a paper he finds that although the "extra" reports a frightful wreck in which many were killed, the news columns show that only two or three were slightly hurt. In brief, headlines are "bluffs" used to exaggerate and misrepresent the news in order to stimulate the public to buy. The editor who is selling his news as a commodity is anxious to create a demand; he is selling news, and he believes that the best way to advertise his goods is to varnish them with black ink and to garnish them with frills. He is right in his judgment of the American people, for although fooled often in the past by these "extras," they cannot resist the cry of the newspaper body peddling his wares. Again and again they succumb to the editor's bluff. Much of the foreign news is the same in all the dailies; the chief difference is in the local news.

To illustrate: A diagnosis of a hospital record will appear in a conservative newspaper as only a three-line paragraph, while the same bit of local news will in the sensational journal grow into the length of a column or more, displayed with photographs and headlines. A well-known newspaper correspondent who has achieved national fame as a journalist writes to those who desire to become newspaper men and gives them the following advice: "Look for something human, pathetic, picturesque, humorous, or peculiar in some way or other—then write that. Make a 'special article,' as we say. Nothing is too old or hackneyed—the flight of a runaway cab, the torturing of a neighborhood by a loud-talking parrot, the behavior and comments of the crowd at a fire—any one of ten millions of subjects will serve, provided you know how to bring out whatever it was that interested you. Two or three such bits of work will be more apt to get you a place on a paper than anything else that you can

do." Frederic Hudson, once manager of the *New York Herald*, held that every newspaper should have some one great piece of news or story of wide interest in every issue—some "extra" with a huge headline. The tools with which the sensational press "plays up" the daily news are the large flaring scareheads in heavy black and red type, photographs, faked and doctored, and humorous and scathing cartoons.

Today it is the chief business of a newspaper to gather news, or, as the phrase goes, "to chase news." One of the chief differences between the old newspaper and that of the present lies in the fact that formerly newspaper editors contented themselves with what came to them, whereas now our editors reach out after news. To succeed as a reporter, one must have a "nose for news." We find as a consequence a wild chase for news in a frantic desire to fill space and a consequent inaccuracy or even absolute untruthfulness.

There has grown up with the rise of our papers a special class of newspaper men whose business it is to ferret out strange stories, to discover mysterious crimes and their perpetrators, and to secure news from persons who are doing their utmost to conceal it from the public view. Documents are found and even stolen. During the last presidential campaign, one of the owners of some of the biggest newspapers in the country had in his possession personal letters and correspondence that had passed between corporations and certain private individuals. With these letters in his possession he swung public opinion against both corporations and individuals. The question that disturbed everybody at the time was, how did he acquire those private letters? Later developments showed that they had been stolen and it is said that they were sold to the editor for the large sum of twenty thousand dollars. There have been many similar cases. Indeed, the practice of reporters to get

news at any sacrifice and in any way is too common to need further elaboration.

Another method pursued by some papers to obtain the news desired is "shadowing." A reporter writes of one of his experiences at this kind of work: "Believing that this millionaire knew something in which the public was keenly interested, I followed him for days as I would have followed a balloon, a kidnaped girl, or the general in command of an army." "Get what you're sent for at any price," is the constant order of the city editor to his anxious reporters. As long as the news is obtained, no one bothers about the questionable means used to get it. As one editor blatantly wrote, "If a reporter gets what he is told to, he is a good reporter; if not, he is no good. There is no half-way in this course of schooling." This is the average standard of a good reporter. Anyone who by means of "hook or crook" will get the news and write it in an attractive manner will make a success as a reporter. Subjects of a

private nature are of interest to the public and must be opened to the public. It matters little how much pain and suffering is caused so long as the newspaper has news to print. That is business, so they say. "I've got to do it," seems at once to be the motto, the excuse, and the exultant battle-cry of every earnest worker attached to any one of the big dailies.

It will be well to quote on this vital point Julian Ralph, a veteran journalist of the first rank,

> To attain difficult ends, correspondents have had themselves shut up in prisons and in mad-houses, have crossed the ocean in the steerage, have braved the terrors of the cholera in Hamburg and the plague in India, and have invaded every lawless land there is. With them, and with all others, the deeds they have done and the methods they have employed have been invariably weighted by their own consciences, and so it must ever be in such cases.

Mr. Ralph then relates a humorous anecdote to illustrate his thought.

The great statesman, Gladstone [he says], on one occasion, took the question out of the sphere of the correspondent's conscience and settled it himself. It was when Homer Davenport, the well-known cartoonist from America, went to Hawarden to see the aged chieftain in order to familiarize himself with his face and draw it. He met Mr. Gladstone on the road near his house. He told him he was a tourist from Oregon. "And did you come all the way from Oregon to see me?" Gladstone inquired. "I did, sir," was Davenport's reply. "Then," said the ex-premier, "all I can say is that you must be fond of travel. Good morning, sir."

Another story à propos to our discussion is told of a reporter who went to Rudyard Kipling's room dressed as a mechanic and there talked with the novelist in that disguise. There are a thousand more stories of similiar nature showing the questionable methods taken to obtain the desired piece of news, but these few instances will suffice for our purposes.

This pursuit of news, this competitive spirit, this fierce and perpetual struggle is

an important characteristic of the sensational newspaper of the present day. Indeed the immediate cause of the tendency toward exaggeration and sensationalism in our American newspapers might almost be affirmed to be this inordinate desire to find "a story." Max O'Rell, the famous critic, cleverly describes the American newspaper as a "huge collection of startling and amusing short stories." Every reporter is cautioned never to fail to run a story down, to follow the slightest clue, to obtain pictures at any cost, to endeavor to discover some unique feature that may entitle the "assignment" to the dignity of a scare "head" or a four-column "writeup." Under this system of selection, trifling matters are often given prominence at the hands of the ablest newspaper men, while weighty matters are thrown to "cub" reporters; this elaborating of one "story" usually means the cutting down of another which contains more sober and instructive matter. It is a

question of stress, of the amount of emphasis given certain kinds of news, and the ultimate cause lies plainly in the fact that the public supports and approves this vagrant use of fertile imagination. Since the public patronizes, the paper takes full advantage of its opportunities to fill its pages with non-essential and sensational news, illustrated by photographs, cartoons, and other kinds of pictures. Hence that strenuous and incessant competition for life and death going on all the time; that frantic struggle after news. Yet while this is dependent on the American appetite, it must be remembered that this appetite has been largely developed by the papers. Here there is plain evidence of an interplay of influence between the paper and the public.

Another obvious aspect of sensational journalism is its practice of exaggerating and "doctoring" the news. Mr. Edwin L. Shuman, a reporter of long standing, writes in his book, *Practical Journalism*,

that the practice of supplementing bald statements of facts with the imagination, is widespread in the world of journalism. He jokingly comments upon the current idea of a chair of journalism and a chair of morals in the same university and upon the confusion and doubt into which a student would be thrown if he attended both courses at the same time. The vividness with which the merest rumor is unreasonably magnified and worked up is too well known.

It is related of Ballard Smith, a distinguished editor and correspondent, that once during the "silly season," when things were dull, he called in a few reporters to help him read the afternoon papers and try to "make a piece of news" for tomorrow's paper. Everything was read, even the advertisements. "I have it!" he cried out after half an hour's reading, and, catching up a big pair of shears, he instantly clipped out a three-line paragraph and handed it to me. It was simply an

announcement that a tiny baby girl had been found in a vacant lot of ground in Harlem. The only uncommon feature of the case was that the infant was richly dressed. "There!" said he triumphantly. "It is five o'clock, and by midnight we should have a page, or nearly that, of this in type or ready to be set up. You write the main story. See the place where the baby was found, the policeman who found it; follow it to Matron Webb's room in the police headquarters, where all the foundlings are first taken, and get a long, full account from the matron of her experiences with such cases—the most remarkable, the strangest, the most pathetic, moving, or stirring experiences she has had. Then jump, into a cab and go to the asylum where these babies are brought up, and to the Potter's Field where they are buried. The idea is to hang the whole story of the treatment of foundlings upon the case of this beautiful, richly dressed baby which you are to use as the text. Before you start,

map out the work bearing on the subject for the rest of the staff to do. You can have twenty reporters if you need them. We will drop everything else and tell the public, for the first time, the story of a foundling." Thus a mere hint becomes a five-column article and a mere rumor becomes an "extra."

A story is told of a lively impressionist who came to Paris to take charge of the local edition of a well-known New York paper. One Sunday afternoon he rushed a hurried order for an "extraordinary" on the ground that something unusual, something like a new French Revolution had begun in the capital, that an attempt to assassinate the President had failed, and that armed troops lined the different streets to the Palace. All that had really happened was this: He had seen the President driving to his palace at a fast pace with a terrifying escort of cuirassiers armed with revolvers, and as he never before had seen this imposing piece of pageantry

which so delights the Gallic Republicans, he became excited and flashed the news of revolution across the Atlantic. This was "good" journalism, no doubt, but suppose, on the other hand, that a French correspondent were to cable that President Roosevelt had decided to abolish the army because he saw him receive some military officers in mufti. How often do newspapers bring out in one evening four or five "extras" when really nothing new of any importance has happened. Anything to sell the papers and make money. "Extras" are invented just for this purpose. Anything will serve for any "extra;" and, as has been already suggested, all it needs is a rumor of a murder, an assault, a theft, or an accident.

This characteristic tendency to exaggerate and "write up" every rumor is further demonstrated in the recent "war talk" between the sensational papers of Japan and of this country, especially those of the Pacific slope. In spite of the fre-

quent exchanges of courtesies and renewed protestations of friendship between the governments of Washington and Tokyo, these papers continued to bring fresh reports of a growing estrangement between the two nations, of secret alliances, and quiet military maneuvers. So the public has had a regular "war of words and rumors" within the columns of these unreliable sheets. I have just returned from a trip to Japan, where I interviewed some of the more educated Japanese. In reply to my questions they were positive in their assertion that it was a mistake to think that Japan wants to fight or that she will fight this country. They openly acknowledged that their country was in no condition for a war. They also frankly admitted that they are at present burdened by enormous taxes growing out of an immense war debt, and there has been a failure of crops for three successive years. But in the face of these facts, the sensational newspapers of this country would have us believe that war

is imminent and they have convinced many people that such is the case. Again, the newspaper correspondents, who reported that the Oklahoma constitutional convention was controlled by Indian delegates who filled the constitution with a picturesque array of radical planks were as far as possible from the truth, for though it appears that there actually were two Indians who were members of the convention, they belonged to the minority and expressly disapproved of the radical planks. These are but a few of many instances illustrating the persistent habit of our typical American newspapers to "doctor" news.

The fourth and perhaps most striking characteristic of American newspapers is the "sensationalizing" of news. This streak of yellow runs through most of our large city dailies. With the rapid growth of the country and therefore of the press, newspapers give more and more attention to crime, sporting news, and to the erratic

behavior of "society." Theft, murder, and assault are given page upon page in which detailed and morbid accounts are accompanied by all kinds of revolting pictures. The typical sensational journal in New York is often ridiculous, often maddening, sometimes disgusting, and occasionally downright wicked. There have been many examples of this kind of journalism in the New York newspaper accounts of the murders, assaults, and unusually numerous crimes of varying seriousness with which the New York police have recently had to deal. To such an extent was this kind of exaggerated news exploited that some of the more conservative papers were forced to enter a vigorous protest.

The *Evening Post* said: "No one attempting to derive an estimate of the present conditions in New York from the front page contents of many of our newspapers could be blamed for concluding that society is on the verge of deplorable anarchy. . . . .

The alarm is being sounded, not only by publications to whose thunderous and shrieking headlines we have grown accustomed, but by papers which professedly aspire to higher journalistic aims." Similar accounts of a suppositious reign of crime that raged a year in San Francisco (known among newspaper men as the "Siege of the Gas-Pipers") materially injured the best interests of that city. As will be recalled, a series of horrible murders and thefts occurred at intervals during a period of a few months. No trace of the perpetrators of these crimes could be found. The hunt of the police seemed hopeless. Soon the papers of the city determined that the city was besieged by a gang of notorious criminals. These accounts were spread over the country, and by what was gleaned from the newspapers it seemed as if San Francisco was in the very throes of a criminal outbreak. The criminals when finally discovered turned out to be two young men, one of whom was barely eighteen. In a

similiar way, a false report cabled east and to Europe of the many cases of bubonic plague breaking out in Chinatown was most harmful and has done a great deal toward keeping visitors and business from our shores. This much is sufficient to illustrate that there is a growing tendency in our newspapers to tell exaggerated and disgusting stories and to relate sensational tales of vice and of the sporting world. The detailed discussion given in our sensational press of the Thaw, the Needham, and the Durant cases is full of danger to the morals of the average newspaper reader, especially the young, who devour outright everything they read.

Our newspapers have a tendency also to print that which is ridiculous and trivial in its nature and this common habit I have called the "trivializing" of news. Our newspapers are filled with stories of foreign courts, with the intrigues, scandals, and erratic doings of the nobility. The gambling and suicides at Monte Carlo are given

daily notice. All that is frivolous and eccentric in society, the so-called "400's" and "500's" of American society, is given special attention. Foreign and home politics are neglected for this, or are given a less conspicuous place.

This daily printing of the ridiculous is well exemplified in the story told by a grizzled "vet" who was acquainted with English and French journalism and who epigrammatically remarked that, "The French newspapers are the best written but the worst informed, the English papers are the worst written but the best informed." "And the American newspapers?" asked a representative of this country. "The American press," replied he, "oscillates between the two extremes." Thereupon he produced from his overcoat pocket the greatest of the New York papers and read an account cabled from Paris by a special correspondent. It told with much detail of a cab-horse who knew his way about the Villa Lumière so well

that it was only necessary to whisper in his ear, "Gare St. Lazarre," or "Moulin Rouge," in order that the animal should draw the cab to the desired destination and by the shortest route. This is but one of a hundred cases, where ridiculous matters creep into our most sane and reliable journals. Reporters seem to delight in writing nonsense. In such matters, American journalism has been universally jeered at and it has deserved the jeers. It is only too well known, that there are certain schools of journalism which aim to give prominence to the ridiculous and incredulous even while they lampoon hypocrisy, jeer at conventions, expose pretenders, demolish false idols. These same newspapers also tend to destroy faith in standards, to satirize the honest, the simple, and the pure.

Perhaps the greatest accusation that can be made against newspapers of this country is that they have a habit of printing "false" news. Our foreign correspondents' igno-

rance of the politics, the language, and the social institutions of the country in which they are stationed has been largely at fault, and for this very reason our foreign news columns have been the cause of much merriment to journalists of other countries. We have a good proof of this in the famous Dreyfus case, when reams of "stuff," not containing one ounce of truth, were brilliantly written and accepted as true by the American public. News was manufactured by the wholesale. Brilliant journalists were highly paid to write just for "extras," which were published during the trial sometimes ten times a day. The innocent public was daily given prejudiced and untrue accounts of the trial. Faked pictures were made. Facts were misrepresented and the public was deceived.

The average reporter acts on the dangerous principle that false news is better than no news. He often goes still farther and says that false news is even better than true news if the former is of more interest to the

general public. To illustrate this tendency to falsify news, a humorous story is told of a Parisian foreign correspondent of one of our newspapers who at a moment of considerable political tension at the French capital received a cable from his editor in New York which ran something like this: "Interview Delcasse on the situation." "He showed me the telegram" says the narrator of the story and asked,

"'Do you think I could get the interview with the minister?'"

"'No,' I hastily replied."

"'Do you think that you could get an interview from Delcasse?'"

"'No,' was my immediate answer."

"'Could anyone interview him on this situation just now?'"

"Again my answer was a vehement 'No!'"

"'Very well, I will go home and write the thing myself.'"

And he did. His paper reproduced his copy word for word, with enormous head-

lines and faked photographs. Yet this correspondent was unacquainted with Delcasse, had never seen him, and did not know the A B C of that intricate and difficult subject—French politics. Faked interviews are often written up in this way, and this is but a typical example of what I have termed the "falsifying" of news.

The most fruitful fields for false news are a war campaign, the intrigues of foreign princes, or the adventures of some young spendthrift. To illustrate still further this common practice of altering and perverting the news and sometimes inventing it, an astute editor is reported to have publicly said that he believed in sending to cities young men who knew nothing about them, because their impressions, even if they were not to be trusted, were still attractive and novel. Perhaps it is for the same reason that a Frenchman's description of a baseball game makes such enjoyable reading for the baseball "fan." It seems that there is no profession or trade in the

world in which so small a premium is placed on great ability and honest work and in which the opportunities for scamped work, shoddy work, bluff, flash, and meretricious work are so many. Men with fertile imaginations seem to make splendid reporters. Men who can dream stories and write news are in constant demand and are paid high salaries. In sober moments the public really prefers the vivid reality of things as they are to garnished nonsense. Ordinarily, however, it wants "fake" stories, for these are interesting and exciting. "Fakes" are not only encountered in the "doctoring" of news but in the "making" of photographs as well. Fake pictures of persons and accidents are daily printed in newspapers. Many of them employ an expert artist who executes in wash a picture as directed, and from this a photograph is taken and these "fake" photographs themselves are altered and changed to suit the fancy of the managing editor. Another splendid instance of this

"falsifying" of news occurred the other day when all the San Francisco newspapers reported in glowing terms a vaudeville show that had not taken place. They must have written their account of it from a progamme that had been distributed. From notices of dances, theatricals, and receptions newspapers write big stories without even sending a reporter. Reporters under such circumstances are unnecessary. Moreover, photographs are often printed that have no resemblance to the person referred to. How many times have unfortunate celebrities seen another's picture substituted for their own!

The eighth characteristic of American journalism is the present tendency to "knock," the tendency which received from our President the name of "muck-raking." Our papers are always ready for the attitude of criticism, opposition, and attack. They oppose and attack our political and social institutions. They lay stress upon all that is evil in human nature and public

life. In this way they develop a skeptical turn of mind among the people. They give the impression that all men are "grafters" and that all decent movements for reform are mere pretenses. This habit of belittling everything is full of danger. The average city daily seems to see no good in our present national life. If one judged from the statements of newspapers, wickedness and corruption seem to stalk in the open unmolested and even invited. Thus the worst side of our national and city life is presented to our gaze in big, black, ugly print and this tends to create and encourage a feeling of pessimism and distrust among the reading public. Because of this utter disregard by our press of persons and institutions President Roosevelt was moved to make his famous "muck-rake" speech that will go down in history as a classic of its kind. As an illustration of this characteristic of the press, take the attitude of the New York papers in branding the latest utterances of

President Roosevelt against the trusts and their evil doings as "unrestrained and unregulated" and as "full of much alarm." This is but two of many instances where the community is sadly neglected by its newspapers, whenever the interests of these newspapers and their officers are at stake. This tendency to write about the evils and sores of society seems to be growing with our papers; they write for the most part about morbid, pathetic, and criminal events. They are always negative in their comments.

"Advertising" by means of the news columns is a more recent development of modern sensational journalism in this country. By this term "advertising by news," is meant the common practice of so writing and selecting news that it will be an advertisement to the paper. In this way the paper will gain new subscribers and its increased circulation will in turn increase its number of advertisers. To understand fully this latest characteristic, one must study the process of the "com-

mercializing" of news. Modern American journalism is menaced by the absolute dominance of the counting-house. Wall Street dictates to Park Row. The Almighty Dollar rules the day. The advertising columns more largely determine the policy of the newspaper than do its officers. It is largely sensational in order to attract the attention of people to the advertising columns. The modern newspaper is owned today not only for power but for financial reasons. It is maintained only so long as it returns a decent revenue and is run at a profit. It is primarily a money-making scheme and therefore like the up-to-date business man, the newspaper owner seeks first of all to satisfy the demand of his subscribers. Therefore our editors and reporters are ordered and forced to write only that class of news that will gain new subscribers and increase the number of pages of advertisements. This characteristic is becoming more and more a permanent one.

Among the features of modern journalism which repel men of education and individuality, one of the most prominent is the tendency toward what the writer has called for want of a better term "impersonalism." Today the practice is to write unsigned articles and under this privilege many reporters indulge in a license that they would not dare to assume if they signed their names as did our forefathers. The cause of this sense of irresponsibility can be traced to the change of ownership from the private editor to the group of individuals of the corporation. It is this large and corporate nature of the newspapers which induces irresponsibility by removing personal responsibility. Reporters feel that they are not compelled to give an account of themselves; they are exempted from blame. They are accountable to no one but their employers and so are not immediately subject to the law. With the change of ownership from the individual, who was generally the editor, to the stock

companies now controlling our large morning dailies, the effacement of the individual has been complete. The present organization of the modern newspapers calls less for individual leadership than it does for organization and system. Journalism under the old system of individualism was a profession, but today it is nothing more than a trade. The large newspaper is an institution that requires a large capital to insure success. Such sums are usually beyond the means of a single individual. As a result, newspapers are owned by corporations, political parties, and capitalists. What we really need therefore is a revival of the old type of journalism which was the clarion voice of vigorous personality and responsibility. Men then were careful of what they wrote and were fastidious in their language. Impersonalism in modern journalism means irresponsible journalism such as we have today. Irresponsible journalism means decadence of power and the gradual decline of journalism as an

educative force and as a moral factor in the community. Hence, unless American journalism is saved from mercenary impersonalism, it must ultimately degenerate into a mere bargain-counter sale of advertising space and irresponsible narratives of daily events.

The next characteristic of our newspapers needs but passing notice, for it is quite familiar to most readers. It is "partisanship." Almost all papers are members of some one of the great political parties. They owe allegiance to some political organization and print news in the interest of that organization and to the detriment of their opponents. In order to do this, they of course alter and twist facts to suit their partisan views; they only give one side of the case. Generally the leaders of the party own and control the papers. In fact most editors "do" politics in their own interests and "do" this politics with their paper. The presidential campaign for 1908 between Taft and Bryan was con-

ducted chiefly by men who were in some way connected with a newspaper. The whole campaign was not, as of old, one of the "stump" but rather one of the "press." It was through the news columns that the party leaders hoped to make votes. The intelligent reader can tolerate any kind of editorial vehemence or partisanship, but he is impatient with any prejudice in the news columns. So familiar is the fact that papers are printed in the interest of some particular group that intelligent people make allowance for just such partisanship and read between the lines. The average reader, however, is easily deceived and believes what he reads.

I will now turn to the last and twelfth characteristic of American journalism: the habit of our papers to flout public law and order. They belittle our public officials, they throw mud at our leaders, they criticize and assail our President and other representatives of government. They sneer incessantly at public institutions and talk

lightly of our laws. They deride the police. In brief, they not only disregard the law themselves but encourage a disrespect for it among the people. The following clipping from one of San Francisco's morning dailies will serve as an illustration of our point. To quote:

> Though William E. Dargie, owner and editor of the *Oakland Tribune*, ran away to avoid having his deposition taken in the libel suit brought against him by the National Band of this city and is still a fugitive, the legal probing into Dargie's motives for defending the grafters is going ahead. . . . . Yesterday the deposition in the case was taken. It revealed as the author of the alleged libel a city newspaper man, the political editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. He told how Dargie had hired him some weeks before at fifty dollars a week. He admitted that he did not know personally that any of the statements in the alleged libel were true; that he made no effort to verify what he wrote; that he could not remember who told him any of these things, nor when, nor in whose presence.

In a word, the newspapers seem to consider themselves immune from the law and

as a consequence freedom of the press has come to mean license and a public nuisance.

Such in detail is the nature of the American press—a press whose main ambitions are on the whole to attract attention, to play upon the people's whims and moods, to seek madly after news, which is then doctored, faked, and twisted to suit the interests of the paper and the taste of the frivolous and the curious; a press which is essentially commercial and irresponsible.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE AMERICAN NEWSPAPER

CHAPTER IV

THE INFLUENCE OF THE AMERICAN NEWSPAPER

A cursory review of the general influence of the American press points to the fact that newspapers exercise an influence in America more far-reaching than in any other country. Archbishop Corrigan once remarked:

> Nowhere in the world has the press found a larger and more receptive audience than on our shores. Here everyone reads; everyone, even the poorest, is rich enough to buy the daily papers; here more than elsewhere, in our characteristic hurry to save time and labor, we are willing to allow others to do our thinking and to serve us not only with the daily history of the world, but with lines of thought and suggestions of conduct ready for use.

Herein lies the great power of the press, its power to suggest to a whole community what it should think and do. Herein lies the great opportunity of any newspaper to

become a powerful influence in the body politic for good or for evil. There is danger as well as hope in this opportunity, and the public must suffer the consequences of the choice of the editor whether he will dedicate his paper to the interest of the community or not.

The average American is an inveterate newspaper reader. There are many reasons for this, but the most important one is the high level of education and intelligence among the common people of this country. In Europe, as a rule, it is only the upper and middle classes that read newspapers. There the great masses of the plain people are either too ignorant, too busy, or too indifferent to read. England is an exception to this rule, for there, as in the United States, the average English mechanic and laborer subscribes to a newspaper. It is reckoned that in the United States more than 5,000,000,000 copies of newspapers of all kinds are published annnally. In 1896, there were 20,630

newspapers published in this country and it is safe to say that today there are over 25,000. This is more than double the number published in any other country. A glance at these figures readily convinces one of the immense power the press may wield to the advantage or the detriment of the nation. This power is enormously increased by the fact that it is the plain people that make up the great mass of the reading public and that it is to this group that the newspapers cater and appeal. For the most part, the average man seeks his theology, his politics, his creed in the newspapers. The newspaper is the source of his knowledge, and what it publishes he believes as "gospel truth." The modern American newspaper is to the average American reader what the Grecian oracle at Delphi was to the ancient Greek.

When one stops to reflect upon these significant facts, one is appalled at the influence of the press and startled by its

opportunities to do harm. Great power always brings with it many temptations; the great man is always confronted by the hardest temptations, and so any organ that can control the thought and conduct of a people is face to face with temptation and the interest of the community is at stake. In view of all this one may well ask, What is the influence of the schools and other educational agencies as compared with the daily paper which records every important act and utterance of humanity? The newspaper overshadows every other educational agency. The lecture-room, the pulpit, the public meeting, the pamphlet, the book are relatively unimportant, for whereas these reach but a small minority of the people during irregular intervals, the daily paper comes constantly in touch with the great masses who read it and depend upon it for their information and recreation. Ready-made opinions appeal to people who have little time and less zeal for discussion. Nowadays most of what we

wear, eat, and think is "ready made." We realize better the significance of this statement when we remember that today one gets for a penny a mass of reading-matter equal to the contents of a thick book and often produced at an expense a hundredfold greater than that of a book. One is told what is going on over the wide world, what men are thinking elsewhere, and what is being done in every department of literature and art. So crowded is the reader with a mass of news and so pressed is he for time that he is often at a loss to give a connected account of the really important daily events, even after he has read a newspaper for an hour. His rapid review of the headlines and paragraphs muddles his brain and his extensive reading of the columns confuses him. As a result, he is unable to digest what he has read.

So keen is the competition between newspapers to give variety and plenty of news, that they go to much expense and trouble to outdo each other in giving the most news

for the least money. In order to do this, they are forced to "pad" and to put into print much that is extraneous and much that could be omitted. They are confronted with the demand and they care not what it is, so long as they supply it and sell their papers. All this of course poisons the mind and loads it with exaggerated ideas and half truths. As the wise man said, "He who is half-educated is a dangerous man." To develop this thought a little farther without anticipating what is to follow, it seems appropriate to remark here that all information that is useless is worse than useless because it distracts attention, wastes time, and dissipates energy. This is at the expense of the country, for it suffers when the attention, time, and energy of the people are spent on nonessentials. How much better would it be if this same amount of time, attention, and energy were devoted to the interest of the state! The newspaper has developed a class of "newspaper readers" who devour every word,

every column, and every page, and who quote it, believe in it, and live by it. Most people's reading stops at the newspaper, and even those who do not take their opinions direct from leading articles have their intellectual standards and their method of reasoning impaired by reading the main body of the newspaper. In view of this, one feels strongly that if our newspapers only knew what was demanded by the best standards and were ready to act on this knowledge, our rate of national and individual progress toward a reign of equity and reason would be amazing.

I am not losing sight of the fact that there are plenty of cases in which the power of the press has been exerted for good. I have already referred to the many exaggerated stories printed in connection with the Dreyfus trial, but at the same time it should be borne in mind that certain aspects of that trial afford an excellent example of the value of the press. The French courts tried to disregard the truth and to do this

they attempted to exclude the reporters. The foreign newspapers, however, made so determined a stand that the French government finally surrendered. One might well say that it was public opinion formed by the foreign press which compelled the French to give Dreyfus another trial and to set him free. Another instance of the good done by newspapers is told in a story that a reporter relates of his first assignment:

> Half a dozen New York correspondents went to the jail in Newcastle on the day set for a whipping. When we asked the sheriff to allow us to go in the jail-yard we told him plainly that if the woman was whipped we should be the means of arousing such indignation throughout the land that he would find no hole or corner in which to hide from the outburst of scorn and wrath that would pour down upon him.

That whipping did not take place; moreover, whipping criminals was abandoned for the future. Another instance of the power of the press in a good cause can be

seen in its fight for the abolition of the convict slave trade in the southern states, especially Georgia. Further, besides forming public opinion on important political and social problems, newspapers are influential in small things. To relate another experience of a reporter:

To descend to a little thing, as it will seem to my well-to-do readers, I once put an end to an unjust law preventing the playing of barrel-organs in the streets of New York. I say I did it; *in truth, I aroused the forces that did do it.* I had many thousand times seen what the playing of a street-organ meant to the poor in the crowded tenement districts. I had seen how the children danced to its music, how their mothers came to the windows to lean out and listen, how the lads and the men drew near and whistled or sang the tunes. . . . . When the aldermen declared that the street music must be stopped I thought only of the million who loved it and who got far too little pleasure. I wrote to all the newspapers, I interviewed the editors, I published letters, editorials, and descriptive accounts of what I had seen in the world out-of-doors. The law was never put into effect and soon afterward it was annulled.

This shows what a single reporter who set in motion the forces which mold and change public opinion accomplished. A single individual, allied with the press, was strong enough to defy the city fathers who had decided that this kind of music was a public nuisance.

But it is not in good causes, little or big, that the power of the American press is for the most part exerted. On the contrary, our newspapers tend directly to affect the morale of the community along the lines of its vices rather than of its virtues. By vices are meant tendencies essentially savage and non-social, and these the mass of newspaper material stimulates and perpetuates. The newspaper has become in fact a medium for a persistent pandering to the primitive love of sensation and to prejudiced judgments of persons and nations and of the ultimate facts of life. In short, it appeals to the worst instincts in man: to his brutal passions and morbid imagination. Its tone for the most part tends to

create a satirical and skeptical point of view concerning government, a contempt for laws, and a distrust of those who are empowered to make and carry them out. The love of disaster to others is cont nually kept up, the appeal here being to a common weakness—to jealous human nature. In the field of industry current prejudices are strengthened, just as in literature standards of mediocrity are set. In all fields of thought and action, the love of the commonplace is catered to and developed.

It is perhaps somewhat of a truism that reading affects habits of thought and that habits of thought give rise to habits of action, but any truism which continues to interpret acts, bears repetition. Man is largely a bundle of instincts; habits play a big rôle in his daily life and his morality is largely made of these two elements—habits of thought and habits of action. Any influence then which bears upon these two elements affects his character. It has been wisely said, "Tell me what you

read and I will tell you what you are," and this saying is most emphatically true, especially of the non-intelligent and non-cultured reader.

Let it be conceded then that what the individual reads reacts upon his character. If he is in the habit of reading that which is ugly, vulgar, and low, he himself will form habits that are ugly, vulgar, and low. If a man's reading is confined to the nonsensical and the brutal, he ceases to be able to detect brutality and nonsense. If he reads nothing but what is ugly and tasteless he loses his sense of beauty and his taste. A bad newspaper is as insidious as the music hall or the musical farce. It wields a great power through suggestion: it hints and gives ideas, it suggests lines of thought and conduct, and through the medium of suggestion it affects the morale of the community.

Morality is the product of civilization; it is the result of human reasoning and of acquired instincts which shape the environ-

ment about man just as that environment reacts to reshape those instincts. It follows that it is by a study of the social forces which tend to shape already established instincts that one can get the direction of social development, and chief among the social forces playing upon men in society today is the modern newspaper.

When we stop to consider the above truths and relate them to the fact already mentioned, that in this country the daily paper is regularly read by millions of readers of average intelligence, the tremendous power of the press is obvious. We must remember also that it is only within a comparatively short period that many people have read newspapers. A few decades ago it was considered a luxury to subscribe to a newspaper. The reading of a newspaper was a privilege given to only a few. Newspapers then represented certain classes, and the classes that habitually read daily papers were business and professional men interested in the larger

affairs of life. As a result of this, the newspaper was dignified and excluded all traces of sensationalism. It is very different today. Newspapers are read by everybody everywhere. No one is too poor to buy a paper; no one is too ignorant to read. Newspapers are now for the masses and not for the classes, and this fact largely determines the character and policy of the paper. It prints that class of news which caters to the masses, namely, that which is sensasional and commonplace.

When the present-day newspaper growth began, there were 20,000 to 30,000 persons who had their newspapers but there were 100,000 of the middle class and 1,000,000 of the poorer class who had no newspaper. The elder Mr. Bennett went after that million and hundred thousand, and all that newspaper men have since done has been to appreciate and elaborate his conception of the field and scope of the newspaper.

In our review of the influence of the American newspaper we shall consider it

under the following heads: (1) Its influence on the reader of average intelligence and education, with reference to his habits of thought and the development of his ideas along political, economic, and cultural lines; (2) its influence on the ignorant masses, i.e., the class which in Europe does not read at all but which in America has risen above the level of the illiterate; (3) its influence on the young; (4) its influence on the national life. In considering these topics, the twofold influence of the newspaper is to be borne in memory. First, those who read are directly affected not only by what is printed as in the case of other printed matter, but also by the feeling that the paper, which goes regularly to a large list of subscribers, is in a sense the voice of these subscribers. That is to say, the influence of newspapers depends in part upon the opinion of their readers. This statement appears to be paradoxical, but as will be seen later there is much truth in it. Secondly, the skilful editor succeeds

admirably in so selecting and altering news that he disguises leadership under the semblance of public opinion. It is this latter phase of newspaper influence which particularly interests us. It is the way a newspaper prints its news and the purpose it has in view which concern us more than what it prints. In other words, we are concerned with the policy, motive, and method of modern newspapers.

The keenest interest of the average American is centered in government and politics. Let us see what message the press carries to its readers on this subject.

The influence which newspapers exercise upon political opinion in this country can hardly be exaggerated. It may be said that state and even national elections are frequently determined by the attitude of the press toward office holders and the laws on the statute books. Here is a gigantic force in the community capable of molding public opinion and actually doing it by methods outlined in chapter one.

Instead of an ideal non-partisan press offering to inquiring minds a correct statement of the facts concerning the character of the candidates, the nature of the campaign issues, and the like, we find a press frequently and deliberately misleading the people by partial or self-interested statements. Let us see how this effects our city and state governments.

In the first place, it keeps the best men out of public office. Every class, whether it be the "vested interests" or the ward politician, fears the enmity of the newspapers. The candidate who has the papers of his town against him has small chance of election. When a journal is anxious to have an official do a thing, it at once proceeds to show him that he must submit to its will. The average official submits without a protest. He knows how to be good when it is to his interest. Let an official go counter to a newspaper's policy and at once it sets the public on his trail; it uncovers or manufactures un-

savory details of his private life, and like a bloodhound seeks every clue that will result in his downfall. Often, as a result, public officers are reduced to mere delegates and dare not exercise any independence of thought, as, for example, in the famous Pennsylvania case that gave rise to the Grady-Salers libel law of that state. In thus intimidating public officials, newspapers meddle with the law; they pervert the law. During election campaigns, the newspapers collect scandalous or highly laudatory data about candidates and in every way color their issues in favor of the side which they are supporting. Only too often it is newspaper influence that has persuaded a city to elect unrighteous or incapable officials. Men seeing how public servants are badly handled by a partisan and adverse press turn away in disgust and refuse to take any interest in public affairs. Men of refinement naturally shrink from having the glare of publicity thrown on their private business and family life. It

seems fair to believe that this is one of the chief reasons why the nation lacks intelligent and patriotic public officials and so becomes the prey for class, as well as party, politics. There are some newspapers in this country that divide the voters on class instead of on political questions. This class distinction is made on the basis of wealth. An eminent divine, once a public servant, truly wrote:

> The indiscriminate criticism and abuse of public men cannot be too severely reprehended. It lowers the tone of the press and is destructive of public morals. Many good men are deterred from entering political life out of personal, family, social, or business considerations which have arisen from a justifiable fear of the reckless attacks that may be made upon them. Sensitive natures although conscious of high moral rectitude will thus shrink from serving the people.

This ruthless and indiscriminate abuse of public men by our newspapers is one of the unfortunate conditions that attach to the freedom of our institutions. As has already been said, it tends to prevent a

really meritorious class of citizens, a class greatly needed and wanted, from entering political life. It keeps away successful business men, who would make splendid administrative officers for our cities. A glance over the majority of American newspapers will readily convince one that our press resorts more to vilification and calumny than to argument and reason. Newspapers in their praise and blame run in ruts, so that no matter what a man does, it is easy to predict what the paper will print. If it is a man they are in the habit of vilifying, they will say harsh things about him, no matter what he may have done. If it happens to be a man whom they have in the past been in the habit of praising they will praise him again even though he may have committed a crime. On the other hand, when they first form their opinions of men, as of institutions and things, newspapers are hasty and impetuous. They are, moreover, aggressive in forcing their news upon their readers.

It is not forgotten that Nast's cartoons of Tweed and his ring were entirely justified and brought iniquitous Tammany Hall to justice. Yet the cartoons of Davenport have been used to vilify the character of honest and illustrious statesmen. His hideous characterization of McKinley and Mark Hanna were entirely unwarranted. They were downright brutal. Many assert that these cartoons were responsible for the shooting of McKinley. From such newspaper standards as these it is a relief to turn to a paper like the *Evening Post*, a splendid example of the higher type of paper. There are many such papers in this country, but unfortunately they are in a small minority in the city. The average city newspaper fails to realize that freedom of speech should not mean lawlessness of the press. In adopting a policy of partisan calumny or praise, the newspaper helps to bring about the deplorable situation in which the government of cities, states, and nation is rele-

gated to men who are in many cases vicious or unduly self-seeking.

Besides electing their own officials to governmental positions, newspapers often have constructive policies in regard to legislation. They have bills which they formulate and push through with the aid of their representatives in the legislature. Many editors hold political office. A careful survey of the roll of municipal, state, and federal officers shows the names of a large number of newspaper men, and the papers these men edit too often take an unwarranted share in controlling legislation. They not only present or cause to be presented measures which are nothing more than their own pet schemes, but they make readers believe these are indorsed by huge monster meetings that never were held. Petitions will be acclaimed, petitions which they themselves have gotten up and in favor of which they manufacture fake organizations and individuals. On the whole, it may be said that the influence of the press in the

field of politics tends to accentuate partisan strife, to swing elections in favor of given groups, to push legislation which at best has local rather than general welfare in view, and to bring the public mind to an attitude of sneering distrust of all those who are engaged in carrying on the work of government.

Newspaper policy is not limited in political matters to mere interference with the election of public officers or the passing of laws; it sometimes promotes movements against the very laws themselves. It has often been noticed that a prominent characteristic of the American is, to use Kipling's words, "the mocking devil in his blood . . . . that *bids him flout the law he makes*." If this tendency to lawlessness is due to other causes, if it cannot be said that the American press creates this spirit, it certainly cannot be disputed that it tends to perpetuate it. Its attitude is too often revolutionary and irresponsible; it preaches violence and advocates mob

rule. It follows naturally that here is an influence tending to lower public taste, to excite a morbid imagination, to incite to rebellion, and to arouse the brutal impulses. In the recent "graft" cases in San Francisco, where a lot of boodlers and those who bribed them were arraigned for public investigation, it was almost impossible to find jurors who had not been prejudiced by reading the papers. So far-reaching had been the prejudiced message that the newspapers had borne to the citizens of San Francisco, that it was difficult to find twelve men who were able to believe they could render an impartial verdict. Many papers preach a disregard for the laws of the country and the institutions of society. They sneer and laugh at them; they disobey and question them. The habit of "muck-raking" seems instinctive. One cannot lay too much stress upon the significance of this common characteristic of the newspapers.

In Europe the state and society is pro-

tected from abuse and slander by the office of the censor. In this country where there is freedom of the press, where newspapers seem to say and do as they please, paying no heed to the law or any moral restraint, there has grown up a loose conception of the responsibility of the press. Newspaper men seem to consider themselves not bound by the same laws as other individuals. The journalist hides behind the newspapers and thinks that he is protected from blame. He therefore defies and abuses the public law. Too often do our newspapers intimidate jurors and judges. They question the decision of the courts, they threaten lawyers if they dare push a case, they make and unmake justices, and all this goes to create in the people a disrespect and lack of confidence in its department of justice. As soon as you impeach this arm of government, which more than any other should be kept free from politics and individual self-interest, you attack the bed-rock of organized society. Without

it you have anarchy. It is quite a frequent occurrence in these days for anyone to pick up a newspaper and read columns of abuse of our courts and judges. Often on account of this justice miscarries. Newspapers, and here I refer to the personnel as well as to the organization of any one of our modern papers, feel that they can elect or reject a judge. They can; and therein lies the danger as well as the evil. In most of our cities where there is a movement to wipe out graft and to bring "grafters" to justice, we find newspapers, to whose interest it would be to set free the criminals, hurling abuse at the courts that are trying to do their duty and uphold the law. Through the insidious means at their command the papers destroy the good will and confidence of the people. Judges are afraid to mete out justice under the circumstances; they are threatened with defeat at the next election—and if they disobey they are generally defeated. A good example of this is going on in San

Francisco at the present time before the very eyes of the public who are being hoodwinked and used by the newspapers of that city. An attempt is being made to bring to justice men who have wilfully bribed and others who have been bribed; men who have misused public office and sold privileges to corrupt corporations. At first all the papers in the community were naturally on the side of good government and favored the prosecution of the criminals who were a disgrace to society and an insult to San Francisco. But when the forces of the "higher-ups" and the powers-that-be were set in motion, a change of front was noticed among a few of the papers of the city. Through jealousy, pressure from corporations, and through self-interest, they joined forces with the "grafters" and commenced to abuse the prosecution which a few months before they had lauded. The following letter is suggestive of the character of the influences and forces which are called into play:

MARCH 13, 1908

Mr. E. S. Simpson, Managing Editor "Call," San Francisco, Cal.

DEAR SIR: Contrary to the avowed assurances of Willard P. Calkins, the president of the Calkins Newspaper Syndicate, as repeatedly expressed to me by Mr. Calkins himself, I found that I was expected to antagonize President Roosevelt and to suppress public news favorable to him.

When, in response to a request from Mr. Calkins, I expressed my sincere admiration for President Roosevelt, my article was suppressed. I also found that I was expected to write covert arguments in favor of Schmitz, Ruef, Glass, Harriman, and the San Francisco boodlers.

Because I refused to do so and because I wrote and published an editorial article deprecating the release of Schmitz and Ruef, I have found it advisable to throw up my editorship of the Calkins Newspaper Syndicate's organ in Fresno.

At the same time with my resignation the Calkins Syndicate has been favored with the resignations of Mr. Clifford J. Owen—and of half of the editorial staff. . . . . Arthur Street, the editor of the *Pandex of the Press*, writes me from Chicago that he, too, has thrown up his editorship and part ownership of that magazine, now under the

Calkins control, for reasons almost identical with mine.

. . . . . .

Yours truly,

(*Signed*) EDWIN EMERSON

P. S.—Enclosed find my last editorial article on the Schmitz decision. The views expressed in this editorial were denounced as "the limit" by the Calkins Syndicate's editorial manager and led directly to my resignation.

Here we have inside information; here we have the subsidizing of the press, here we have the control of the counting-house over the editorial staff; here we have the suppression and alteration of news to suit the whims of one man, in brief, we have here a typical example, nothing more or less, of the average sensational newspaper throughout the country.

In San Francisco they are trying to defeat justice. They are using the same old tactics; they attack the personal records of the prosecutors themselves, they unearth past history, and make the most of the

little they can find. They buy jurors, they kidnap witnesses, they intimidate judges. They have also questioned the good faith of the prosecution and attacked the means utilized by the prosecutors. As a result of all this abuse the people have begun to lose faith in the prosecution and public interest lags. This is the very thing that the newspapers aim at. As a consequence, these corruptionists remain free after months of trials which have cost many thousands of dollars. There is small doubt in the minds of the people that those on trial are guilty, but through the clever manipulation of the newspapers, public opinion has swung from the fighting mood to one of indifference. The newspapers did not maintain that the men standing at the bar of justice were not guilty; all they did was to question the records of the prosecutors and to impeach the decisions of the courts. In the present election these newspapers are making strenuous efforts to defeat those

judges who in their eyes have favored the prosecution. It is a deep-laid scheme to defeat the movement for good government. It should be said also that the papers on the other side, those that favor the prosecution, have used the same methods as those lined up with the "grafters." Today their columns are full of abuse of those courts and judges that have not favored their side of the case. How, under such a perverted notion of the way to attain justice, can we in this country expect to get just verdicts? How can we expect justice at all, when the press which controls public opinion changes at will, when it defies censorship, and when it asks for complete freedom from the law. It has no more right to ask this than any other corporation. All others are held responsible for their acts. This statement may seem to the reader to exclude too completely any consideration of the libel laws. As a matter of fact, as we know, libel laws are on the whole inoperative. They are seldom put

into operation. An individual fears the abuse of the newspaper. There are very few men in this country who would dare sue a newspaper for libel. Each one knows well that the newspaper would pour forth more abuse and would seek to pervert every detail of his life, public and private. The public fails to realize that a paper that steals a man's good name deserves a heavier punishment than the man who steals his property. Few of us ever reflect upon these simple things.

One of the most culpable features of American journalism lies in its appeal to the unreasoning and primitive emotions in man. There is need of some check to protect society either through censorship or some other system by which newspapers should be held responsible to the law for what they do and say. In the year 1856, Andrews in his *History of British Journalism* wrote in this prophetic vein:

> This is the only danger that we can foresee in the cheapening of the press—that, appealing to a

class whose passions are less tutored and restrained, it can gather a mob, and raise a cry of "Rescue," if the law lays its hand upon some assassin whom it should scorn to shelter with its privileges.

Like many prophetic remarks of its kind, this is only half true. And yet when one stops to reflect that our morning papers are devoting five-eighths of their first pages to hideous accounts of crime and other social atrocities and that the evening papers warm over these same revolting dishes, then one is forced to realize the danger of the situation. To illustrate this let us take a noteworthy example.

A murder was committed by a jealous husband, one Ismond, a barber, who claimed that on going home in the evening he found his wife and his victim, whose name was McLeod, sitting on the same sofa in a compromising position. The following extracts from the account given by the papers are fairly typical of the point of view from which the public is led to regard such

tragedies: "Ismond is given a good character by the neighbors and by his fellow-workers. The neighbors seem to justify him. . . . . 'The only mistake that he made was in not killing both of them,' said a gray-haired woman across the road, 'if what he suspected was true.' " The public authorities expressed similar views. The influence of such an article is surely harmful, since it tells the public, old and young, that a husband is justified in taking the law in his hands and killing when for any reason he feels that he has been wronged. It further tells them that the proper thing to do is to murder first and then find out if his suspicions are correct. Another typical example of the way newspapers incite to unjustifiable murder is their tolerant and even laudatory attitude toward lynching. Southern journals in particular uphold violence and incendiarism and have probably been the mainstay of much of the recent rioting in the South. When it has printed opinion to back it, a crowd is

quickly and easily persuaded to take the law in its hands and to administer punishment in a spirit which says, "The law of the country is either not sound or the administration of justice is not what it ought to be. We, the people, may make or break the law at will. We are the law."

Another function of the sensational paper which brings it close to the courts is its self-imposed responsibility as detective. It poses as protector of society; it assumes the task of ferreting out evil and exposing it to the public. Besides this function, it undertakes to obtain injunctions, to issue complaints, to file suits, and under "dummy" plaintiffs to make charges. If the decision is rendered in its favor, it conveys the idea to the public that justice has been done and the law upheld, but if the verdict is against it, then it threatens the court and tells the people that justice has been perverted and that the judge is unfit to sit on the bench. A business man once, in discussing an injunction granted in one of

these newspaper suits arising out of a water scandal, remarked, "Why, of course the judge granted the injunction. Everybody knew he would. There is not a judge on the bench who would have the nerve to decide the other way with all the row the newspapers have made about it. He simply knows on which side his bread is buttered." This aptly expresses the situation. It is certainly true that out of spite newspapers have sent many an innocent man to jail. If they take a dislike to one who is charged with a crime they will print all sorts of revolting pictures of the criminal that do not bear the slightest resemblance to the original. They will alter the news and give the public an utterly wrong impression of the man and his case. Sensational headlines are used to convince the public and the jury. A man is ofttimes a grafter before he has been convicted; they take it for granted. A man is shown to be guilty before he is proven to be such, and in this regard our newspapers seem to believe

in the French system, which says a man is guilty until proven innocent. Cases are numerous where newspaper articles have influenced a jury. The courts of Massachusetts have awakened to this fact and have imposed heavy penalties upon any newspaper which attempts intentionally to prejudice a jury while a case is being tried. The English courts are more vigorous and severe. They lay down the rule that a person accused of a crime can only properly be convicted on the evidence which is legally admitted and not upon the hearsay and gossip of the newspaper and the public.

But all improper influences upon legislators or judges exercised by newspapers are as naught in comparison with their systematic and constant effort to instil into the minds of the ignorant and the poor, who constitute the mass of readers, that justice is not blind but bought; that the great corporations own the judges, particularly the federal judges. Abuse of individuals is nothing as compared to this constant at-

tempt by papers to convince the people that our institutions are rotten to the core and that the wealthy are the privileged class. Much harm is done to the bulk of the American people in thus creating false and vicious impressions. They come to think that the newspapers are giving a true picture of the state of affairs and that every man has his price. They conclude that the poor man has little chance for justice; and so class feeling is aroused and the masses look with hatred upon those who are rich.

Cartoons are used effectively to fix these prejudices. They exert a subtler and stronger influence than mere comment. They are more effective than an editorial or campaign speech. Behind the humor of the picture there is a deeper meaning, and so in the laugh that follows there is left a bitter impression upon the mind of the reader. The cartoon has caught his eye and engrossed his attention. It has made him think. Take, for example, the car-

toons of the big Carthaginian labeled, "The Trusts," holding a squirming federal judge in his huge fist, which are likely to appear whenever an injunction is granted. It cannot be estimated how much influence these have had upon the working classes, but this much is known, that they have engendered bitter antagonism between labor and capital. These cartoons have helped to make that great problem of "labor and capital" which now distracts the nation. Another cartoon, that of Justice holding her scales with a workingman unevenly balanced by an immense bag of gold, has done much harm with every laugh it caused. That picture of a hideous monster of a man dressed in clothes with dollar marks, with a judge protruding from his pocket and a workingman under his foot, is but another example of cartoons that encourage a disregard for the law and stimulate bitter class antagonism. If the readers believe such cartoons, and many do, nothing but pessimism and strife can be

expected in the future. The stability and integrity of the nation rest upon the courage and hopefulness of its citizens, and anything which undermines these traits is an attack upon its security and honor.

Before leaving this aspect of the influence of the American press upon the political opinions of the general reader, it is but fair to note that there is much that the newspaper has done which is constructive rather than destructive. The press has undoubtedly done good work in spreading the theories and practices of municipal reform, in promoting the fight for municipal ownership, for pure food, for clean streets, and all other forms of good municipal housekeeping; it has sometimes led campaigns for the purity of the ballot against the united forces of the "machine;" it has itself many times initiated the prosecution of bribery, of land steals, insurance frauds, and the like. It is the press which has exerted itself in behalf of better poor laws, advocated good tenement laws, child-

labor laws, and general protection of labor's interests. Both by the wide reach of their appeal and their own generous gifts newspapers have raised money for those whom earthquake, flood, or fire have made desolate. When Chicago, Baltimore, Galveston, San Francisco, and many other smaller cities suffered disaster from quake, flood, or fire, it was the newspapers that issued the first calls for aid and they themselves added to the large sums sent from all over the world to the needy. They have also started benefits for widows and orphans, sent children of the slums to the country, and given deserving students and teachers coveted trips to Europe. Whether because it adds to their reputation or because they are actuated by less selfish motives, newspapers are often found favoring good legislation and supporting competent men. Despite the frequent changes of front of the yellow journal, despite the fact that whenever its policy is attacked, whenever the interests of the owners of the

paper are in question, the average newspaper will forsake the public weal for its own selfish benefit and power, the newspapers do frequently voice sound opinions regarding public law and order and the administration of justice.

Take again the press's attitude toward economic questions. Within the last decade these questions have come to receive as much attention from the newspapers as politics.

Most newspapers publish daily accounts of the money and labor markets. Their influence in this regard must not be too lightly judged. Too much stress cannot be laid upon the influence of the papers on industrial problems, for the citizen's opinion as to whether a strike or boycott is justifiable or not depends largely upon what he reads in the newspapers about the dispute. The average man's knowledge of the trusts, the money markets, the economic movements and policies of different states can only be formed by what the

newspapers give in the way of reliable facts. Besides influencing man's economic opinions, they affect his economic conditions by helping to decide strikes, by attacking trusts, by bringing on panics, by causing fluctuations in the money markets. Business men say that newspapers can hinder or cause a slump in the stock and produce markets. The ideas of the average man about the purposes and actions of labor unions and employers' associations have scarcely any other base than that which can be got from the papers. The mass of opinion in regard to the problems that need adjustment between labor and capital swings with that of the newspapers. Like the knowledge of all the facts of trade manipulation, of fluctuations of stocks, and of the prices of wholesale and retail commodities, the details and progress of mechanical production come to most people through the advertisement or other columns of a paper.

Among its various tasks, the American

newspaper may be said to have set itself the duty of contributing to the culture of its readers. The word culture is here used in a broad sense to include all sorts of education and training.

Education is a moralizing influence; an ignorant man is generally brutish and vulgar; the educated man is usually kind and cultured. Through knowledge one comes to know the true, the good, and beautiful. Through knowledge come morals. Morals are the code of an educated man who can exercise self-control and fortitude in relation to his fellow-man. The salvation and hope of the nation therefore lies in the education of its people. Hence, anything which tends in any way to effect the education of the masses thereby affects the morals of the community. The *kind* of education is the important factor in the shaping of efficient democracy; the American newspaper tends to give a kind where good and bad are mingled but where the bad is the more accessible and

attractive. The modern American newspaper is our national educator of the plain people, young and old.

As has already been shown in another connection a goodly part of the daily columns of papers furnishes news and information about artists and art, about writers and literature, explorers and explorations, travelers and travels. The ideas of the average American reader concerning painting, books, and music are largely based on what he reads through this channel. The brilliant and intelligent "write-ups" of the dramatic critic, when believed, determine the theatergoer's impressions whether new plays are good or not. A page is given to a review of the latest books, and photographs of famous pictures often appear. Special articles are eagerly solicited from well-known authors or explorers and the highest market prices are paid for them. An explorer of international fame recently received eight hundred dollars for a thousand-word article. Two thousand

a year was offered a prominent divine for a monthly sermonette of five hundred words; while a renowned author was paid as high as a dollar a word for every thousand-word story that he would care to write. At the present time in the San Francisco *Call* there is an international literary contest going on between two well-known authors. One is an American author, Mrs. Mary Wilkins, and the other an Englishman, Mr. Max Pemberton. The merits of these two authors are to be judged and voted upon by the reading public.

Prizes are offered for correct answers to puzzles, for the best letter on some subject, for the wittiest joke, for the cleverest way to meet an emergency, and the like. The women are told what the latest fashions are. The housekeepers are schooled in the art of cooking. Physical exercises are discussed, illustrated, and explained. Big prices are paid to specialists for articles on such subjects as food, shelter, and clothing, the care of children, and so forth. Much

useful medical information is given. Personal hygiene is taught. The aim would seem to be to tell the people everything that will make their life more healthy, comfortable, and intelligent. Letters of inquiry are solicited and promptly answered. Courses in science and technical subjects for the general reader are offered by university professors. When necessary, money as well as time is lavishly expended to acquire the information that is thought desirable. From June to September a number of information bureaus are kept open to report without charge on summer trips, hotels, resorts, etc. Printed almanacs which take the form of condensed yearly encyclopedias are distributed by the paper free.

Another encouraging sign of modern American journalism is shown in the "Home-Study Circle" conducted by specialists, professors, and experts, which aims to serve as a source of information for the average reader. The courses offered

cover the fields of literature, science, and art. Equally instructive and practical is the Household Department which furnishes menus, dress patterns, and the like, and the Question Bureau which answers all questions through experts employed for this task. Thus we find that the modern up-to-date American journal aims to be the national storehouse of useful and scientific learning. In spite of its money seeking and its thirst for readers, it recognizes, however dimly, that through its columns it can perform an invaluable service, since progress is ultimately based on the intelligence of men and democracy depends upon the education of the majority.

Thus we see that the educational possibilities of the newspaper are immense; but that it does not always educate in the highest sense is apparent to all. So long as the newspapers continue to print the great mass of trivial stuff which now fills their columns, they will be a failure as an instrument of education and at best will

offer for the intellectual life of their readers only commonplaces or ill-proven facts. In brief, if we sum up the total results of newspaper endeavor along educational and cultural lines, the real gain is small. Mr. Leslie Stephen says, "The world is better, no doubt, even for an honest crossing-sweeper. But I often think that the value of second-rate literature is not small but simply zero," and if this is true, the average literary work of the American newspaper, falling short as it does of any high standard, is almost nil. The press itself avows its own limitations. On this point a reporter uniquely defended and explained "yellow" journalism with the remark, "We don't think that our paper is 'nice,' but we do know it reaches the people. It is our intention to teach the people, and the first step is to get them to listen to us. We believe that it is better to raise a whole city one inch than to hoist a few men and women ten feet in the air." Thus the sensational journal working on the theory of the

"divine average" sophistically teaches and preaches mediocrity or worse.

The two principal educational forces in this country are the public schools and the newspapers. With the young, the public schools deal more or less successfully. But among the mature we have great masses of people, who are as densely ignorant as they are poorly housed. Some did not go to school when they were young, some lived in districts where there were no schools, and others are illiterate immigrants from countries where the education of the poor is entirely neglected. Let us glance at a few general figures. Over 2,250,000 males of voting age are classified in the census for 1900 as illiterates. There are 1,500,000 over ten years of age who are unable to speak English. There are living in our midst over five million male voters of foreign birth. We have a foreign population of over 12,000,000, a heterogeneous mass that has not been assimilated. To a much greater extent than the school, the

newspaper is the agent of assimilation; it is the press that makes Americans out of this vast army of foreign immigrants. Besides this large number of foreign, we have native, population of considerable size at "a low level of intelligence." It is apparent then that the principal problem confronting us in our struggle to develop an effective democracy is the education, assimilation, and uplifting of this great mass of people. We can enlighten the children by means of compulsory school acts but we cannot force knowledge upon adult men and women. Many theories have been advanced as to the best method of meeting this difficult situation, but none are satisfactory. The Settlement fails. The one institution however that is coping with this problem and getting practical results, even though those results are not always what they should be, is the press, especially the "yellow journal." It is giving to the foreign portions of our population American standards, ideas, and the

general feeling of the community. In brief, it reflects the opinion of the average American. Thus we have the American newspaper not only as the giant molder of public opinion but the monster mechanic that shapes and reshapes the mental make-up of the plain people. It is the educator of the plain people, especially of that great section of the population which in countries other than America does not read at all.

Another important question connected with the influence of the press is its effect upon the mind and intelligence of the young. The growing youth is too immature to form a judgment or to discriminate in his reading; he accepts what he reads. His susceptible mind is not only, as someone has aptly put it, a "package of instincts," but it has a remarkable aptitude for absorbing everything it runs across. Imagination and not reason as a rule play the largest part in his daily life. When we realize how easily he is aroused, persuaded, and taught by everything and everybody

about him, the tremendous influence that a newspaper may have upon him becomes apparent. He is enticed by its colored pictures; he is delighted by its cartoons, and he reads all the accounts of crimes with great glee. Inexperienced and irresponsible youth knows little of the real world; it lives in a world of its own creation, a world formulated in terms of what is read, seen, or heard. For only too many young people the world is mirrored by the daily newspaper. And what do they see there? Nothing but an exaggerated world. They find in the dailies detailed accounts of murders, suicides, prize fights, and horse-races. As a consequence, in their imaginations this world becomes a place where such things are usual. Photographs of crime and of sporting events intensify this point of view. A child brought up in healthy surroundings and given the best literature to read generally turns out good, sane, and normal, but a boy who reads dime novels and sees the world of his imagina-

tion peopled with Indians and cowboys, outlaws and detectives, often goes to the bad. That is the natural outcome. If it be true of man that he is the creature of his environment, yet more emphatically is it true of the growing boy that he is the creature of the many social forces that play about him. If the world of his imagination is degenerate and vulgar, he will become degenerate and vulgar. If the child reads newspapers which furnish a vast amount of this lurid stuff, his field of vision becomes shockingly limited and his imagination feeds upon the pathological side of human nature. Think of youth reading the detailed accounts of the Durant and Thaw cases. Or, to take another side of the material, think of the vapid nonsense with which a young person's head is filled when he reads accounts of the social "doings" of "gilded" society and of the latest events of the sporting world. Such matter would spoil the best bred child. It undermines future generations.

It is not the adult but also the young person, and perhaps the latter chiefly, who turns daily to digest the silly notes on society, to follow the immoral antics of degenerate noblemen and the vulgar new rich. This sort of thing has turned the head of many an innocent youth. As is well known among educated people, social circles are as distinctly drawn on the basis of birth, education, or money in this country as in other countries, but in spite of such well-defined sets in New England, the middle states, and the South, the press leads the public imagination to picture all social leaders as belonging to the "400," and these "leaders," in the fancy of the people, invariably possess millions and are surrounded by persons who meet solely for the display of superlatively costly flowers, rich gowns, and golden dinner services, and whose only aim in life is to find some new means of stimulating their jaded interests. What can all this do but form in the young as in the old a desire for the

frivolous, for the vulgar, and for the non-essential? Add to this the training which the omnipresent sensational newspaper gives in the habit of desultory, haphazard reading, and then consider how far the press of today may be expected to aid the young reader in forming habits of mental sobriety and self-control. Is it not on the contrary helping him to acquire the habit of wasting valuable time and energy on unwholesome trash? Is it not safe to believe that much of that lack of mental discipline, of self-directed thought, and capacity to concentrate one's mind, which characterizes too many Americans, is due to an early habit of indiscriminate newspaper reading?

A good deal also might be said about the influence of the pictures of the "comic supplement." It is not ultra critical to say that a sense of humor developed on such cheap "funny" pictures as most of these are will never travel as far in the enjoyment of true nonsense as the child who learned to laugh by way of *Alice in Wonderland*

or Lear's *Nonsense Book* or Burgess' *Goops*. When a young mind is nursed with trash, stunted with the trivial, and poisoned with the untrue, its possessor will not become that intelligent and independent citizen on which sound democracy depends. That it is the frothy characteristics of a paper which chiefly attract and hold the interest of the young, while what is solid and worthy is apt to escape notice, is one of the serious elements in this whole question of the influence of the newspaper. To read the newspaper properly one must be able to discriminate between what is false and what is true, what is important and what is trivial. The young child cannot do this.

In the December (1908) number of *Current Literature*, the following paragraphs appeared under an article entitled "Sounding the Doom of the 'Comics.'"

It begins to look as if the death knell of a time-honored feature of American journalism—the

comic supplements of the Sunday newspapers—had struck. A tide of protest is rising all over the land, and the very existence of "Foxy Grandpa," the "Katzenjammer Kids," "Happy Hooligan," and "Buster Brown"—those darlings of the heart of childhood—is menaced. Mothers' meetings have declaimed and educational conferences have resolved against them. One lady speaker before the recent American Playgrounds Congress in New York registered her conviction that the comic supplement is "debasing the morals of the children," by emphasizing and apparently condoning "deceit, cunning, and disrespect for gray hairs." And now a leading New England newspaper announces its abandonment of this feature. "The comic supplement," it says, "has had its day. We discard it as we would throw aside any mechanism that had reached the end of its usefulness, or any 'feature' that had ceased to fulfil the purpose of attraction."

In speaking of the "comic supplements" the writer on the *Herald* maintains that "the comic supplements have ceased to be comic! They have become as vulgar in design as they are tawdry in color. There is no longer any semblance of art in them,

and if there are any ideals they are low and descending lower."

Summed up, then, the injurious effects of the newspaper habit are: first, waste of much time and energy in reading unimportant news, premature, untrue, and imperfect accounts of important matters and prejudiced editorials of uninteresting subjects. Secondly, class prejudices are kindled because of the partisan bias or commercial greed of newspaper managers. In the third place, the mind is loaded with cheap literature and prone to an aversion for good books and sustained thought. The daily newspaper reduces the intellectual life of its readers to a continuous round of petty excitements. In the fourth place, by flouting the law and its officers it breeds a certain feeling of lawlessness. These are the various forms of its influence upon the general reader, upon the uneducated, moreover, and upon the young we have found that the influence of the press is full of danger.

Still another aspect of the question may be mentioned, namely the influence which papers have upon their own employees. Journalism involves enormous mental and physical strain. It uses up men in its frenzied search for news. Many have become complete physical wrecks, their best energies having been dissipated after a few years of service. The profession of journalism, if one may so call it, is not only injurious to the public but reacts unfavorably upon those who create it. Mr. Julian Ralph says, "But it [journalism] tends to form the habits of stealing, to make men careless of the future; and it demands high-pressure service to the bitter end, even when one's energies have to be worked up with a forced draught." In no field of effort do men labor under higher pressure and under greater sacrifices than do most of the newspaper men of this country. The making of a metropolitan daily is fierce, bitter, and exhausting work. This rush and tear is characteristic of the times. It

is the very nature of the "beast" American. Park Row, like its prototype in finance, Wall Street, is always seething and bubbling. This habit of rush is to be condemned. It engenders a similar tendency in the readers. The modern metropolitan paper is not only produced at a great cost in money but also at a great sacrifice in life and nerve. Such things cannot be reckoned in dollars and cents, but its marks are nevertheless registered upon the body-politic. The word *Rush* is written all over the average paper.

Lest it be thought that too much stress has been laid upon harmful influences of the newspaper, it seems well to summarize in a brief paragraph those among its influences which seem beneficial. It has already been suggested that even though the material offered for reading is questionable, the newspaper at least cultivates the habit of reading, and that along with much that is superficial and uncertain it disseminates some useful knowledge. Add to this, that

it does enthusiastically aid in many a campaign for the realization of the best principles of social service and civic decency. One other point may be enlarged upon here. In spite of much jingoism and petty provincialism, the newspaper acts as a medium for developing broader notions of international relations. What travel and art has done for the few, the newspapers do for the many. To be interested in politics and the affairs of the world, to follow the intellectual and moral advancement of one's country and of others is to enlarge one's nature, and our newspapers, in so far as they describe faithfully the happenings and the character of the nations of the world, tend to encourage the broader cosmopolitan spirit. He who becomes tolerant and humane in his ideas of older nations becomes more intelligently interested in the welfare of his own people, country, and home. In so far as the newspaper tends to focus attention daily on the doings of the whole world, it tends to do away with the preju-

dice and the international and intercine hatreds which are for the most part the result of ignorance and narrowness. The world is made smaller, safer, and more habitable by the press, which through its great international association tends to unite the different countries and to make them one. It is a great human agency with the power to do away with international conflicts, and while too often it fails to use this power or exercises it in a contrary direction, yet on the whole by turning a light upon the thrones, the cabinets, or parliaments of all nations, it tends by that act to impose moral restraint on rulers and to cultivate in the individual a decent regard for the opinions of all mankind. When it plays this rôle, it is a great moral influence, consciously or unconsciously developing a spirit of internationalism and universal peace.

In brief, the influence of contemporary American journalism of today is one that neither wholly degrades nor entirely ele-

vates. It would seem that the newspaper of our own time mirrors public opinion, rather than shapes it for good or ill. The editor seeking to make his paper popular plays upon the prejudices of the crowd and is himself in turn played upon by them.

There is always present this steady interchange of influence and suggestion between the reading public and the news-giving daily. There is always a permanent interrelation and interaction between these two factors. Neither one can exist without the other and both interplay with similar results. Any rise in the standards of newspapers means a relative rise in public morality and vice versa. In short, the welfare of each depends upon the other; what benefits or degrades one, benefits or degrades the other. And if this be true, the great and final question, a question which this study does not pretend to solve, is whence comes the influence that finally determines the character of both press and public.

THE CAUSES OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE AMERICAN NEWSPAPER

CHAPTER V

THE CAUSES OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE AMERICAN NEWSPAPER

Having considered at some length the nature and influence of the American press, it is now in order to consider what has made the press of this country the vigorous, commercial, self-interested, and sensational press that it is. Since the American press seeks to echo and cater to taste rather than to shape it, it will be plain at the outset, that there is some difficulty in distinguishing between cause and effect. What follows represents an attempt to analyze that public taste which at once sways the newspaper and is in turn swayed by it.

A PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS

The fundamental cause of the nature and influence of the American press is to be found in the nature of the American people.

No wiser or more prophetic sentences could have been uttered than those delivered by Whitelaw Reid in the year 1879. He said in part:

> The thing always forgotten by the closest critic of the newspaper is that they must be *measurably* what their audiences make them—what their constituencies call for and sustain. The newspaper cannot uniformly resist the popular sentiment any more than the stream can flow above its fountain. To say that the newspapers are getting worse is to say that the people are getting worse. . . . . It even works more evil now than it ever wrought before, because its influence is more widespread; but it also works more good and its habitual attitude is one of effort toward the best its audiences will tolerate. There is not a newspaper today in New York, faulty as they are, that is not better than its audience.

In other words, American journalism is measurably no worse nor any better than the American people. "Qu'est ce la presse? C'est la voix de la nation." The newspaper is the mirror of the community —this is my thesis.

Professor Hadley in his latest book, *Standards of Public Morality*, has a chapter on the formation of public opinion which will serve in its admirable phrasing as a point of departure for our examination of the causes of the influence of American journalism. In discussing the nature of public opinion, Professor Hadley says on pp. 13 and 16:

> We have no universal public opinion. . . . . We have sections of public opinion, working separately and often pulling apart. The *Tribune* appeals with confidence to the public opinion of one set of people; the *Post* to the public opinion of a somewhat different set; the *Journal* to the public opinion of a set far different from either. The facts, views, and motives which are familiar to the readers of one of these papers are unfamiliar to the others. Each group believes that its opinions represent a real understanding of the needs of the people, and that the views of the other groups represent the arguments of selfish hypocrites, doubly detestable because they take the form of an appeal to public interest. In the face of difficulties and schisms of this kind, it sometimes seems as if there were no common ground on

which to stand; no set of facts sufficiently known to all men to serve as a starting point in the discussion of public affairs; no opportunity for getting on a universal basis of sympathy in the domain of public morals corresponding to that on which we stand in our private morality.

One of the great difficulties which beset the newspaper editor when he tries to discuss public questions is the fact that most of his readers have a strong pecuniary or personal interest in having them decided in some particular way. The man who owes money likes all the argument in favor of a depreciating currency, and is suspicious of those on the other side. With the man who has money due him the case is reversed. The man who employs labor feels the need of giving the largest amount of control to him who risks his capital. The arguments in favor of the rights of the capitalist employers seem to him strong; all efforts to limit those rights savor of immorality. The laborer, on the contrary, who works for another man, feels that he in giving his effort and in perhaps risking his life has far more to do with the product than the man who has simply invested his money. He looks with favor at every argument concerning the rights of labor and with disfavor at any argument or precedent which seems to support the claims of property. If an editor wishes

to make his paper popular with a certain class, he lays stress on the arguments which that class likes and feeds them with facts which they want to believe. His readers gradually get into a position where their prepossessions have been strengthened until they become prejudices, and where misinformation has been added to prejudice until it becomes almost irremovable.

This citation substantiates the belief, that if we desire to gain an insight into the nature and causes of the influence of American journalism, we must recognize that both nature and cause lie in public opinion, that is, in the mind of the people. A complete investigation of the subject should of course treat also the economic influences which are behind this American newspaper as they are behind the people and their opinions. It is certain that the present-day spirit of commercialism and consolidation in the field of production has gone a long way to determine the nature of the American press, but it was the American people first upon whom these economic changes played. The key to the

question, What are the causes of the influence of the most typical of the American newspapers? is found in an interpretation of the psychology of the typical American and in the analysis of the newspaper as a purely business undertaking.

These two interpretations are well presented by William Marion Reedy, the editor of the *St. Louis Mirror*, and by President Hadley of Yale University. In an address delivered before the Missouri Press Association in which he declares flatly that there is no such thing as a "free press" in America, Mr. Reedy says in part:

> In every city the papers may appear to fight one another upon the surface, but in every case they have a business combination to shut out the newcomer. The established daily papers in any city are as much a trust as the steel trust or the Standard Oil—while the Associated Press is another national trust—and it is exceptionally rare that anyone can break in upon the combination and fight it; and if one does, it must be solely through the possession of financial support, great enough to fight to a finish the established news-

paper wealth of the community, controlling and owning carriers, newsboys, and newsdealers absolutely. Of course, when a newspaper so backed succeeds in establishing itself, it is not to be expected that the paper will take up the cause of the people against the interest of the men of great wealth who have put their money into the new journalistic enterprise. The newspapers of any city will always be found a unit when there comes up any matter in which the public-service interests and the interests of the advertisers are a unit.

This is the economic aspect of the subject.

President Hadley in a widely debated article in the *Youth's Companion*, gives us a psychological explanation of the real cause of American journalism. He says about the present journalistic conditions in America:

Most of the men who edit newspapers will give the people the kind of newspapers they want. There will, of course, be exceptionally good editors, who will make their papers better than their readers demand, and try to educate the people up to a higher level; just as there will be exceptionally bad editors, who will make papers worse than the readers want, and be the instruments, whether

they try to or not, of educating the public down to a lower level.

But the average editor will work for the average reader. He cannot be any more independent of the man who buys his goods than the manufacturer or merchant can be. A manufacturer who refuses to produce things that the people want, because he thinks they ought to want something better, will be driven out of business, and so will a newspaper editor. People sometimes talk of "yellow journalism" as if the editors of the yellow journals were solely responsible for their existence. They are responsible to some degree; but to a still larger degree the responsibility lies with the public that will buy and read their news. . . . .

If the public cares more for sensations than it does for facts, more for excitement than it does for evidence, it is obvious that its opinions will be based on wrong data and often on dangerous ones, and that its conclusions will be unwise and irresponsible. And as long as public opinion is unwise or irresponsible, the government of the country will be bad.

C. F. Lydston in his volume on *The Diseases of Society* says,

America has for many years furnished conditions peculiarly favorable to degeneracy. The

strenuous life of the average American, certainly of every ambitious citizen, has many aspects bearing upon degeneracy in general, and vice and crime in particular. Lust for wealth, desire for social supremacy, ambition for fame, love of display, late hours, lack of rest, excitement, the consumption of alcohol, especially by women—all these factors combine to cause what Beard termed a distinctly American disease. The body social is growing more and more neuropathic. In the train of this widespread neuropathy comes degeneracy, with all its evil brood of social disorders.

It would be impossible in the compass of this brief study to make a thorough psychological examination of American life and opinion. It will suffice here to enumerate and analyze somewhat categorically those characteristics of the American public which seem fundamental for our purpose, that is, which seem to be the source of the nature and influence of the American press. Distinctly American characteristics may tentatively be classified under six general headings: (1) audacity; (2) independence; (3) cupidity; (4) curi-

osity; (5) strenuousness, and (6) love of change. From audacity there arises a spirit of enterprise, from independence a spirit of competition, and from cupidity a spirit of commercialism. From curiosity is derived a desire to learn, from strenuousness a desire to do something new. As seen in the first part of this study, all these traits are reflected in the enterprising, competing, commercial journal with its hunt for information, its desire to do things, and its tendency toward sensationalism.

First, let us examine the trait of audacity, which is expressed through the pluck, boldness, and daring of the adventurous and courageous American. The history of this country has aided to bring out clearly this trait of our national temperament. The "winning of the West" is nothing more nor less than the story of the heroic exploration of the wild frontier by men of pluck and courage. This young nation has impetuously plunged into many new and vast fields of endeavor. It has assumed great

burdens lightly and even carelessly. It has accepted its position as a world power and has shouldered large economic problems with noticeable nonchalance. The whole story of this country is one of boldly seeking and finding; one of energetic and lighthearted exploration and discovery, of lusty pioneering and settling. Our people have entered new lands, new fields of effort, and new problems. Out of all this naturally evolved the national trait of enterprise. We have become a pushing, industrious, and enterprising race. Our whole life is one round of energy. Our newspapers with other national institutions have become permeated with this spirit and the editor, catching the spirit of enterprise in the air, is forever trying new "stunts," making new "literary" adventures, or daily attempting something novel to startle or to amuse. In his opinion his chief problem is to strike some new vein; to be the first to discover some larger opportunities. Every new "make-up," every new arrangement of

form, every new advertisement is but a sign of this enterprising desire to push ahead and to outdo one's rivals.

Closely allied with this characteristic of audacity and enterprise is the national trait of independence that gives birth to the spirit of competition. This instinct for independence was planted on these shores by our Puritan forefathers, was incorporated in the American commonwealth, and nursed into full growth during the subsequent development of the country. It gave scope to the doctrine of individualism. Here was a new land to be developed, here was a wilderness to be conquered, here mines were to be worked, and here industries were to be established. This was a new country in which the principles of equality were proclaimed and where every man was to have an equal chance to win his spurs in whatever way he saw fit. All this gave impetus to the competitive spirit innate in man and made the United States the place where this competitive

spirit expresses itself in its most acute form.

Cupidity is another national characteristic that the building of the nation has nurtured. Through the spirit of enterprise and competition men were urged to succeed, to win at all costs. They believed in that false doctrine that "the means justified the ends" and thus in the course of history it has often happened that we have acted with recklessness and cruelty. An eager desire to possess something, a mad craving for money, gain, an inordinate wish for wealth and power and comfort is common to all people, but it is especially typical of the American. In a magazine article, Professor Taussig, of Havard University, has well stated the four impulses that urge most men in their struggle after wealth. These are: (1) love of ease and comfort; (2) desire for distinction; (3) impulse of native energy; (4) passion for power and mastery. Out of this desire for something there sprang into being the

modern spirit of commercialism that has so vitally affected our democratic institutions. That the United States constitutes a young nation, that it is an energetic, wealthy industrial nation, that it is an enterprising, combative, and progressive nation is obvious. The American paper is an admirable example of an institution whose development has been vitally affected by these three instincts.

We come now to the consideration of the last three characteristics which play just as important a part as those mentioned in defining the influence of American journalism. First, there is the national trait of curiosity, for the American usually desires to know things as well as to do things. He is an investigator, he is an inventor, he is an explorer, and an adventurer by nature. He is inquisitive as well as acquisitive. He yearns to unravel the mysterious, to probe the unknown, to learn the hidden secrets of life. He wants to see new faces, to visit new places, to hear new talk, and to

learn new things. He wants information, and it is this desire which the newspaper by its great mass of news tries to satisfy and which it does satisfy. The American wants to know what the rest of the world is doing, and especially what it thinks about him. He wants to know the world as it is; not what happened in the past, but what is going on *now*. As a result, American newspapers exceed foreign journals in the size and quantity of news and err rather in quality than in any other particular. If they give more for the money it is chiefly in the form of a greater quantity of superficial facts which the reader himself demands.

This country has rightly been called the land of the "strenuous," and the popular idol, President Roosevelt, typifies this national characteristic. The American is a busy, pushing, hustling individual and so is the American newspaper. He must always be doing something; anything to keep busy. The man who retires from

business early is put down as a "dead one." Behind the national desire for power and distinction is this innate restlessness and energy that is inborn in the average American. If, as a people, we are doing many things that are on a large scale, it is because of this great store of energy. Embedded in this life of *Rush* is the desire to see things done quickly and to this demand the newspaper caters. The newspaper knows that it must furnish prompt news, even at the sacrifice of the truth. It must get out the first "extra" at any cost. It must give the readers something for their money and at once. Hence the scramble after news, the ambition to outdo one's rivals, the insatiable desire to furnish "beats" and "extras." Strenuousness makes a demand for news and plenty of it, and so the editor, himself a strenuous American, invents ever new methods to get the news in the quickest way and to "dish it up for breakfast in the most attractive style." This naturally gives rise to sen-

sational and "yellow" methods in journalism.

The last trait of the American citizen is his *fickleness*. This potent desire for change and variety gives birth to love for sensation, for novel things, and to weariness of the old. Americans are bored if they must always read the same books, meet the same people, see the same plays or pictures, and they are forever seeking "the latest and queerest." As yet we are not citizens of a nation bound by tradition and custom; we live not in the past but in a present that is constantly losing itself in the future. The average American citizen gets tired of his public officials; he believes every man should have a chance. The American loves sensation in all that he says and does; he is constantly startling himself and the rest of the world by new achievements and new antics. He is building the largest locomotives, the highest skyscrapers, winning the Olympic contests, or making the aviator record. He is

spectacular and is fond of the glare and flash of the limelight. He enjoys the shouts and bonfires of election time; he craves excitement. He has the habit of playing practical jokes on his friends, of surprising his enemies, and of amusing himself. He also enjoys the grotesque and the foolish. All this is reflected in the American newspaper, both because the American newspaper wants the greatest number of readers and because it is written by Americans. Because of this love of sensation we have the yellow and sensational newspapers. Mr. Stringer, of Canada, in his recent arraignment of the "Canada-fakirs" has this to say:

> The gravest charge against the yellow journalist is that his end is not truth, but sensation. He may even give us truth, as he claims, but his very menace lies in the fact that the truth he gives us is truth marshaled and colored by a febrile and unstable personality.

And so the somewhat dubious influence wielded by the American press seems to me

to be caused by marked characteristics of the American people. The American is sensational and so is his paper; the American is democratic and so is his paper. The successful, up-to-date editor does little more than adapt his newspaper to the demands and temperament of the public. He strives to print that class of matter which especially appeals to the marked traits which have been indicated.

Throughout this discussion, we have been examining in particular the sensational newspaper and the aim has been to show that this, the typical journal, is a reflection of the American people. A similar analysis of "yellow" journalism ought to show the same facts in exaggeration, and the writer has ventured to quote at length from a recent article in the *American Magazine* for March, 1908, by Professor W. I. Thomas, of the University of Chicago, who has made therein an admirable study of the interesting question, Why does yellow journalism prosper? When ap-

plied to American life, Professor Thomas' conclusions lead in the same direction as that in which I have been trying to turn attention. Professor Thomas speaks from the standpoint of the psychologist who aims to analyze the current journalistic antics. He says in part that yellow journalism owes its existence to the persistence in men of primitive emotions of an essentially anti-social character, and to the fact that emotions are pleasurable, no matter what their origin, and that people will pay to experience shock. There is, he continues, the emotional interest of the reflex type represented by the whole gamut of competitive games. Then there is a "second form of shock associated with horrors, misfortunes, detractions, and slanders. . . . . Artistic presentations of which tragedy is an example are conflict situations of a generalized and reflective type, while scientific and business pursuits are really of the hunting pattern of interest, involving the same emotional strain as the chase."

The yellow feature of journalism we are told falls largely into the second class above, depending on the interest attaching to the disastrous. To quote again:

> If a yellow sheet be analyzed, it will be found that it handles events and persons from the pain or disaster standpoint. The event itself is of no significance. The loss of life, the loss of happiness, the loss of property, the loss of reputation, death and detraction, is the whole story. In a word, it is an appeal to the hate reflex.
>
> But the yellow press does not stop with the singling out and the overemphasis of situations of the fear-and-hate reflex. It distorts incidents and situations so they will correspond to the most crude and brutal conditions of consciousness and desire. It perverts facts and manufactures stories purporting to be true, for the sake of producing an emotional shock greater than would follow on the presentation of the exact truth.

Professor Thomas proceeds further to assert, that the yellow journal does not differ from certain legitimate forms of art in the material employed, but only in the manner of handling the materials. Thus:

Love, hate, fear, despair, intrigue, sentiment, adventure, and the marvelous are the subjects of art as well as of the yellow journal; but art in the proper sense, as I have pointed out, handles its materials from a generalized, or ideal, standpoint, and with some conscious reference to the significance of the type of action. On the other hand, to reflect or mimic the elemental emotions and secure a shock unmodified by any conscious oversight, is a characteristic both of yellow and of that which we, for lack of a more definite terminology, are accustomed to call low forms of art. In this sense, there is, of course, yellow art as well as yellow journalism and the yellow journalism is worse than the yellow art only in regard to those numerous cases where fictions are presented as realities. The yellow journal . . . . is a positive agent for vice and crime. The condition of morality, as well as of mental life, in a community depends on the prevailing copies of this newspaper. A people is profoundly influenced by whatever is persistently brought to its attention. A good illustration of this is the fact that an article in commerce—a food, a luxury, a medicine, or a stimulant—can always be sold in immense quantities if it be persistently and largely advertised. In the same way, advertising crime, vice, and vulgarity on a scale unheard of before in the annals

of history has the same effect—it increases crime, vice, and vulgarity enormously.

Professor Thomas elsewhere asks the question, If truth and the knowledge of truth are so valued and the machinery for securing them in advanced societies is so elaborate, how are we to explain the existence and popularity of the most highly elaborated organ of untruth ever developed in the history of society? The explanation, he states, seems to lie along two lines as follows:

(1) In the existence of an invincible appetite for sensation in human nature, and the failure of society up to the present point to substitute social for anti-social feeling in the popular mind; and (2) in the fact that the art of printing is so ennobled by its historical association with the pursuit of truth and with the interests of humanity, that we have been slow to perceive and credit the essential viciousness of the operations of the yellow press. The traditions of the press are so fine and printing is so deliberate an act that we have a persistent faith on the printed page; and even after we have been repeatedly deceived we still find it difficult to believe that anything printed can be untrue.

But our faith is departing. At present we believe nothing that we see in the dailies, or at any rate we do not believe it absolutely. . . . .

So much for the psychological causes of the influence of the press, derived on the one hand, from the psychological make-up of the American people, and on the other, as Professor Thomas points out, in certain universal traits of human nature.

AN ECONOMIC INTERPRETATION OF THE CAUSES OF AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS

In the previous subdivision of this chapter we discussed the psychological aspect of the causes of American journalism. It was a study of the external causes from without the paper, namely, the characteristics of the American people. Here we are to examine the internal causes as found in the newspaper itself. As in our previous study, there are certain preliminary premises which must be established before proceeding directly to the main thought. One

cannot properly understand the nature or problem of journalism in this country unless he is familiar with the economic history of the United States. Every economic change in the country, every invention and discovery has in some way affected the newspapers. The invention of telephone and telegraph, of electricity, the increase in the facilities of transportation, the lowering of the stamp rate, have all been vital factors that have played important parts toward increasing the size and circulation of the daily paper. Without these inventions modern journalism would not be what it is today. It has been through these changes that it has come to its present type and only through these means has it been able to assume its present character. Moreover, along with our general economic history there has been a marked tendency toward the concentration of large capital. Trusts have sprung up all over the land. Everything possible was made into a trust. Naturally newspapers followed, so that

today the average metropolitan daily means an investment of a million dollars or more.

American journalism is in a sense a product of our American democratic institutions which connote a high degree of freedom. It is likewise to some degree a result of American economic conditions. Its characteristics plainly show the effects of this age of modern industrialism. There is a profound truth in the opening paragraph of the Introduction to Professor Veblen's book, *The Theory of Business Enterprise.* He says,

> The material framework of modern civilization is the industrial system, and the directing force which animates this framework is business enterprise. To a greater extent than any other known phase of culture modern Christendom takes its complexion from its economic organization. This modern economic organization is the "Capitalistic System" or "Modern Industrial System" so called.

These few lines contain a world of meaning, and are especially applicable to American journalism.

A newspaper like all social institutions reflects the different epochs through which it passes. When the size of a sheet of paper and of a press plate was limited by conditions of manufacture to the sweep of a man's forearm in paper-making or in working a hand-press, the newspaper consisted of only one large folio sheet doubled. When changes took place in paper manufactured at the close of the eighteenth century and in the bed-plate of a press at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and when power was applied to printing, then the newspaper began to be folded and enlarged, so that instead of only four sheets there were sixteen. The introduction of the cylinder press after the middle of the nineteenth century and the manufacture of paper of any size from wood pulp, fed to a press from a spool, changed the daily paper to its present form, containing a variable number of pages from four to a hundred. The various stages through which the newspaper has passed reflect

the social conditions of the different periods. The small local conservative newspaper before 1880 was the product of an agricultural society. It dealt little with the great outside world. It was sectional not cosmopolitan, it was local not national, it was conservative not sensational, it was slow not progressive. It expressed and typified the habits and temperament of the American people at that period of development. Then came a period of transition in 1880 when this country began to forge ahead as an industrial nation. As a result, American journalism became liberal, progressive, and national. Between the years 1880–98, the newspaper underwent a radical change; it was the embryonic stage from which sprang the modern or "up-to-date" newspaper. Later it changed its standards with the change in the standards and traditions of the nation. Since 1898 we have become an industrial nation with colonies. The Spanish-American War plunged this country into the game of

world politics. So today we have a sensational, commercial, and international newspaper whose character was shaped with the industrial awakening, when the trusts began to form and the protective tariff was enforced, and when cities began to increase rapidly. The "machine" has long since been so perfected that it is the primary agent in every process in the production of the paper. It is, however, so expensive that the carrying on of a newspaper necessitates the investment of a large capital.

Speaking along the same line of thought, Mr. Reedy of the *St. Louis Mirror* says:

> The prizes of journalism are not for those who can think soundly or write well. The man who writes has no chance to reach the real topmost power in journalism. He can only become an employee of some rich concern, *writing not what he believes*, but what his employers order him to think. What editor today controls his paper? I can think of but one—dear old Henry Watterson, a relic from the Golden Age. Where is there an editor today like Dana, Greeley, Halstead, McCullagh, Hyde, Joseph Medill, Raymond—a man who

makes his paper's policy the expression of himself alone? . . . . The owners of newspapers are business men. They want dividends. They want the business, the commercia ideal, upheld at all hazards. They must get the money from the men who have it, they must cater to please the men who run the community, and such men are out for their own pockets first, last, and all the time. All the rest is "leather and prunella!" The great intellectual personality no longer dominates the great paper. The supreme headship of a great newspaper is not the man who may be turned out in a school of journalism but a money-maker. The journalist proper can never be more than a hired man on a great paper. So a school of journalism does not promise the sort of success that means the exercise of the real power of journalism. . . . . Everything in this country has been regulated, more or less, except the daily press. The daily press has participated, more or less, in the regulation, but there are reasons for believing that one of the greatest evils in the United States is this same daily press itself.

Thus the newspaper business is essentially a money-making scheme, dependent on the one hand upon its popularity with the public, on the other, upon the money market. It takes money to run it and it is

run to make money. À propos of this statement, the following conversation between an eminent speaker and a reporter contains a world of meaning.

Eminent speaker—No, sir; nothing from me. I have nothing to say to a publication as persistently unfair and vicious as yours. The *Whirl* can go to Hades with my compliments.

Reporter (cheerfully)—Can go, my dear sir; our circulation manager is prepared to prove that it does go there already—has the largest circulation.

The world recognizes and applauds success. So every paper like any other business concern desires success and in order to gain this distinction it must satisfy the demand of the people. The sensational journal succeeds because it is sensational and because the people want sensationalism and because those who advertise in the paper see that it means business for them. If the people wanted something else the editor could not sell a hundred copies of his paper. It is purely a question of supply and demand. The successful editor is

he who finds out what the people want, not what they need, and gives it to them, in such form, of course, as best suits his own wishes. A story is told of a conversation between a big cigar dealer and the owner of a series of yellow journals stretching across the continent. The cigar dealer is said to have remarked, "Well Mr. ———, I like you personally all right, but I don't like the way your papers are managed." The newspaper magnate turned around and pointed across the street where a huge advertisement of the cigar dealer could be seen on the side of a building five or six stories high. "Do you see your unsightly sign over there?" he asked. "Well, Mr. ———, I am doing exactly what you are doing there, no more and no less. I am giving the people what they want for their money. You furnish them a cigar for five cents and it suits their fancy! Well, I am doing the same thing. You advertise your cigar in this hideous fashion with your advertisements spread over buildings and in

highly colored paints. Well, I print headlines in red ink all over my paper so that it will advertise the paper and get me new subscribers and advertisers. It is merely a business proposition."

Since newspaper business demands a large investment, we naturally find that most of our newspapers have become huge corporations owned by a few individuals. Some persons own several newspapers. The trust tendency among our newspapers is marked. A good many of these owners of our large newspapers possess them not only for the material gain but also for the prestige and power they give. Backed by a newspaper, politically and socially, a man wields immense power in his community. Lately too, just as the rulers of Europe long ago realized the power of the press to control the opinions and emotions of the people, the trust magnates of the country have made an effort to get control of the newspapers. It is rumored that the yellow newspaper trust owned by a single

millionaire who has indulged his ambition in politics much to the depletion of his pocket-book has been forced to mortgage its papers. Strange to relate, the man who now practically controls this syndicate is the greatest railroad magnate in this country. It was this same man whom these papers were constantly abusing a few months ago. But today things have changed; no word is said against him or his railroads. Besides this change of policy toward this individual and his business there has been a decided change of politics. It is another proof of the old adage "that politics makes strange bedfellows." When the owner of these yellow papers was forced to mortgage them, he changed his attitude toward the two great parties. He has apparently switched his allegiance from the one that he lauded in times past over to the other which formerly he most shamelessly attacked. These facts are significant. It means that there really is no such thing as the freedom of the press.

It means corporation control. The corporations have been attacked by the newspapers, which have used their columns to form public opinion against them. So successfully have newspapers been able to bring pressure against the big business interests of the country, that the capitalists for self-preservation have gone into the newspaper business themselves. They have purchased old papers or established new ones. It is but a repetition of that policy by which at all times the dominant interests have shown their realization of the usefulness of the press as a means of control. Napoleon not only depended upon the press to prepare France for his plans and to execute many of them, but he directed and worked the newspapers in a way which showed him to be a modern journalist who clearly appreciated the power of the press. Bismarck was a manipulator of the newspapers. He realized fully the immense force they exerted in the country and so he sought their aid to push his policies.

Roosevelt knows the value of the press and has used it wisely. A hurried glance at the list of the proprietors of the big city papers will show that they are owned and controlled by a few millionaires who have outside interests; men who own railroads, mines, steamship lines, and the like. The full significance of this fact is left to the reader to meditate upon.

There is another aspect of this same economic problem of the newspaper and that is the enormous influence of the advertiser. The newspaper editor seeks advertisers as much if not more than he does subscribers. The business manager has more power in newspaperdom than has the circulation editor. The colossal investment of the modern daily is not risked on the fluctuations of an uncertain circulation; it is made to a large extent on the profit derived from advertisements. It is the advertisements which after all make the paper pay. Many of our large newspapers have become, first and foremost, advertis-

ing agencies. A great part of their time and energy is devoted to the pages of advertising, which to a considerable extent determine the "make-up" of the rest of the paper. Advertisements are always given the preference, and so if there is too much news, it is thrown in the waste basket while the advertisements are printed. This is not journalism in the higher sense of that term. It shocks the decent American to see many of our large papers become the agency for a huge mass of cheap and sensational advertisements. That should be left to a special sheet or to a supplement. It should not be mixed with the news but the practical newspaper man will tell you that such a plan would be a flat failure. Advertisements are spread over the pages containing the news in order to catch the eye of the reader. A prominent writer on educational matters relates that he wrote an article on the "Growing Popularity of Horse-Back Riding as an Exercise," but it was rejected because it gave offense to

advertisers of bicycles and automobiles. In a similar way the book reviewer must not condemn too strongly the books of that publishing house that advertises liberally, nor must the dramatic critic abuse the plays of the theatrical trust. It is a well-known fact among newspaper men that when advertisements are small the circulation is small, when advertisements are large the number of subscribers increases. Advertisers only advertise in those papers which have big subscription lists, and those papers which have big subscription lists can afford to publish more news than their competitors and to sell their copies at a lower price. The average man wants that paper which can give him the most news and the greatest number of advertisements for the lowest price. Thus it is seen that the business manager controls the policy of the newspaper. The public gets what it demands only in the way that the business manager dictates. News is published or suppressed according to when it suits the

interest of the proprietors. The editor gets his orders from the business manager, who gets his orders from the owner of the paper.

To illustrate, a story of a conversation between a business manager and city editor of a morning daily, may be told here.

City editor—What!! Not print anything about the fire!! Why, the whole city is threatened—biggest blaze in years!

Business manager—Yes, I know, but you see, the fire started in McBingam's department store, one of our largest advertisers, and I have just got word from them that they would prefer that we say nothing about the fire.

An anonymous "New York editor," who writes in a current number of the *Atlantic Monthly* says there is no such thing in this country as a "free and independent press."

A newspaper is a business enterprise. In view of the cost of paper and the size of each issue, tending to grow larger, every copy is printed at a loss. A one cent newspaper costs six mills for paper alone. In other words, the newspaper cannot live without its advertisers. It would be unfair to say that there are no independent journals in the

United States; there are many; but it must always be remembered that the advertisers exercise an enormous power which only the very strongest can refuse to recognize.

If a newspaper has such a circulation that complete publicity can be secured only by advertising in its columns, whatever its editorial policy may be, the question is solved. Nevertheless, within the past three years the department stores have combined to modify the policy of at least three New York daily newspapers. One of the most extreme and professedly independent of these newspapers, always taking the noisiest and most popular line, with the utmost expressed deference to labor unions, withdrew its attack upon the traction companies during the time of the subway strike, on the threatened loss of its department-store advertising. It has never dared to criticize such a store for dismissing employees who attempted to form a union. In other words, this paper is not independent and in the last analysis is governed by its advertisers.

There is then too much evidence that the bondage of the press to privilege is still a real menace to our national life. The main points of this question have been so ably discussed by Henry George, Jr., in his

recent book on the *Menace of Privilege* that I feel I cannot do better than to quote him. Mr. George holds that the press is the natural mouthpiece of public opinion and that knowing this, "Privilege moves stealthily to get control of that mouthpiece." As has just been shown this is most emphatically true at the present time. To continue to quote Mr. George:

> So long and so many are the arms of privilege, and so slow are the masses of men to overcome the inertia of habit, especially the habit of thinking, that, save in particular and superficial aspects, privilege is for the present, at least, safe against periodical discussion. However searching the examination and cogent the arguments of any of these monthlies and weeklies as to this or that phase of privilege, not one of the flourishing ones will dare to arraign the larger and wider aspects for fear of hurting its business credit, which privilege closely or remotely controls; or of offending a considerable body of readers, some of whom, belonging to the privileged class, might set it down for a "socialist" or "anarchist" organ, and others of whom by only slow degrees in thought, might dub it a "crank" publication.

It is patent that privilege thus puts distinct limitations on the press by attacking it at the very outposts. A newspaper costs infinitely more to publish than it ever did before because it requires a larger staff of reporters and artists, already alluded to, to make a standard newspaper. Such a paper cannot live without the support of the propertied classes, and since the propertied classes have fixed policies which are chiefly self-interested policies, the newspaper tends to become the voice of this class. Thus the actual fact is that the power of shaping public judgments and educating the masses is within the control of the people who can afford to pay for what they wish to see in print. There is no cause, however, for serious pessimism in all this, as Mr. George wisely concludes,

> The public is not altogether deceived. It sees the livery. It reads this or that paper and makes allowance for bias. This is the habit of the people. It began with the free utterance of the press. Every citizen exercised the same freedom to judge

as the editor did to write. And thus it was that De Tocqueville wrote half a century ago that "the personal opinions of the editors have no weights in the eyes of the public; what they seek in a newspaper is knowledge of facts, and it is only by altering or distorting those facts, that a journalist can contribute to the support of his own views.

Thus is the power of the press limited and modified as experience develops the public mind. How often do we hear, as a result of this loss of faith in the newspaper, the remark, "Oh, well, it's only newspaper talk." The hope of the nation seems to be in the education of the people. Provide free universal education and assimilate foreign immigration and we need fear little from this menace of the newspaper.

When it comes to suggesting a remedy for acknowledged journalistic shortcomings newspaper men differ. Mr. Reedy inclines to the view that

we shall have to return to the use of the pamphlet, if we are to have any such thing as free utterance of heretical opinion. . . . . Heretical opinion in

this country is always and everywhere nothing but the idea that this government has departed from its original principles, in that it has built up through privilege an oligarchy of wealth, and in doing so has necessarily done most outrageous violence to the principle of equal rights for all. There can be no privileges if there be not an expropriation of others, to the holder of the privilege. Every privilege is built upon an arrogation of the rights of some individual, or of the community at large. With the great newspapers closed to the man with the new ideas, there is no place for him to turn, except to the pamphlet.

On the other hand, Mr. Sleicher hopes to reform the existing dailies. He is an optimist. He pleads for

a daily newspaper that shall print less and better news; that shall exercise such censorship over its columns that no one's character shall be assailed, no institution's standing be discredited, no vested right be jeopardized, and no man or woman's motives impugned until the editor has justified his statements.

The "New York" editor writing in the *Atlantic Monthly* is more an opportunist than an idealist. He says:

Here is what the public wants: a newspaper which treats its readers not as a child or a sage, neither as a hero nor as a fool, but as a person of natural good instincts and average intelligence, amenable to reason, and one to be taught tactfully to stand upon his own feet rather than to take his principles ready made from his teacher. What an idea! A paper which gives the senator and the shop girl what they both want to read and are the better for the reading. A comic cut, if its moral lesson is true, is an editorial with the blessing of God.

President Hadley feels that the real remedy lies in the awakening of a more enlightened public sentiment on the part of the newspaper readers.

Each one of us [he asserts] is given a share in governing the country, because it is supposed that he will take an intelligent interest in facts which affect its management. If he reads his newspaper primarily for the sake of murders and prize fights, and only looks at the columns of public news when they are made as much like reports of murders and prize fights as possible, he fails to do his duty as a citizen.

Farther on, President Hadley in his

article urges, "that the newspaper reader must get into the habit of seeing whether the statements of fact in the paper are supported by evidence or not." Our country can never be well governed, he maintains, unless the people learn the habit of weighing evidence. In answer to the question, Is honest journalism possible? the common opinion seems to be in the affirmative.

In conclusion, the results of this study may thus be summarized: the cause of the influence of the American newspaper is inherent in the nation itself and the newspaper is what it is because American society is what it is. Given a certain type of society, we have a certain kind of newspaper; an agricultural country gives us the local conservative journal; the industrial community a national sensational journal. It is not within the province of this book to discuss remedies. Yet this much may be said, that if this analysis of American journalism is sound, if the character of the press is chiefly sensational and commercial,

with only a secondary place given to the cultural aspects of human thought, and if, as has been claimed, the cause of this influence lies in the present character of the American people, it is obvious that the only hope for improvement lies in the elevation of the standards of this people, in emancipation from commercialism and its matter-of-fact and leveling tendencies.