

I watched him make a nest for the lamb out of an old sea-cloak at Esther's feet, and then he wrapped her own shawl round her shoulders, and finding a pin in the lapel of his Sunday coat he pinned it for her. She looked at him fondly while he did this, and then glanced up at us, a pretty, girlish color brightening her cheeks.

We stood there together and watched them go far out into the bay. The sun-

shine of the May day was low now, but there was a steady breeze, and the boat moved well.

'Mother'll be watching for them,' said Mrs. Todd. 'Yes, mother'll be watching all day, and waiting. She'll be so happy to have Esther come.'

We went home together up the hill, and Mrs. Todd said nothing more; but we held each other's hand all the way.

THE PERSONAL EQUATION IN JOURNALISM

BY HENRY WATTERSON

I

THE daily newspaper, under modern conditions, embraces two parts very nearly separate and distinct in their requirements, — the journalistic and the commercial.

The aptitude for producing a commodity is one thing, and the aptitude for putting this commodity on the market is quite another thing. The difference is not less marked in newspaper-making than in other pursuits. The framing and execution of contracts for advertising, for printing-paper and ink, linotyping and press-work; the handling of money and credits; the organization of the telegraphic service and postal service; the supervision of machinery — in short, the providing of the vehicle and the power that turns its wheels — is the work of a single mind, and usually it is engrossing work. It demands special talent and ceaseless activity and attention all day long, and every day in the year. Except it be sufficient, considerable success is

out of the question. Sometimes its sufficiency is able to float an indifferent product. Without it the best product is likely to languish.

The making of the newspaper, that is, the collating of the news and its consistent and uniform distribution and arrangement, the representation of the mood and tense of the time, a certain continuity, more or less, of thought and purpose, — the popularization of the commodity, — call for energies and capacities of another sort. The editor of the morning newspaper turns night into day. When others sleep he must be awake and astir. His is the only vocation where versatility is not a hindrance or a diversion; where the conventional is not imposed upon his personality. He should be many-sided, and he is often most engaging when he seems least heedful of rule. Yet nowhere is ready and sound discretion in greater or more constant need. The editor must never lose his head. Sure, no less than prompt, judgment is required at every turning. It is his busi-

ness to think for everybody. Each subordinate must be so drilled and fitted to his place as to become in a sense the replica of his chief. And, even then, when at noon-time he goes carefully over the work of the night before, he will be fortunate if he finds that all has gone as he planned it, or could wish it.

I am assuming that the make-up of the newspaper is an autocracy: the product of one man, the offspring of a policy; the man indefatigable and conscientious, the policy fixed, sober, and alert. In the famous sea-fight the ruff-raff of sailors from all nations, whom Paul Jones had picked up wherever he could find them, responded like the parts of a machine to the will of their commander. They seemed inspired, the British Captain Pearson testified before the Court of Inquiry. So in a well-ordered newspaper office, when at midnight wires are flashing and feet are hurrying, and to the onlooking stranger chaos seems to reign, the directing mind and hand have their firm grip upon the tiller-ropes, which extend from the editorial room to the composing-room, from the composing-room to the press-room, and from the press-room to the breakfast-table.

II

Personal journalism had its origin in the crude requirements of the primitive newspaper. An editor, a printer, and a printer's devil, were all-sufficient. For half a century after the birth of the daily newspaper in America, one man did everything which fell under the head of editorial work. The army of reporters, telegraphers, and writers, duly officered and classified, which has come to occupy the larger field, was undreamed of by the pioneers of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore.

Individual ownership was the rule.

Little money was embarked. Commonly it was 'So-and-So's paper.' Whilst the stories of private war, of pistols and coffee, have been exaggerated, the early editors were much beset; were held to strict accountability for what appeared in their columns; sometimes had to take their lives in their hands. In certain regions the duello flourished — one might say became the fashion. Up to the War of Secession, the instance of an editor who had not had a personal encounter, indeed, many encounters, was a rare one. Not a few editors acquired celebrity as 'crack shots,' gaining more reputation by their guns than by their pens.

The familiar 'Stop my paper' was personally addressed, an ebullition of individual resentment.

'Mr. Swain,' said an irate subscriber to the founder of the *Philadelphia Ledger*, whom he met one morning on his way to his place of business, 'I have stopped your paper, sir — I have stopped your paper.'

Mr. Swain was a gentleman of dignity and composure. 'Indeed,' said he, with a kindly intonation; 'come with me and let us see about it.'

When the two had reached the spot where the office of the *Ledger* stood, nothing unusual appeared to have happened: the building was still there, the force within apparently engaged in its customary activities. Mr. Swain looked leisurely about him, and turning upon his now expectant but thoroughly puzzled fellow townsman, he said, —

'Everything seems to be as I left it last night. Stop my paper, sir! How could you utter such a falsehood!'

Mr. James Gordon Bennett, the elder, was frequently and brutally assailed. So was Mr. Greeley. Mr. Prentice, though an expert in the use of weapons, did not escape many attacks of murderous intent. Editors fought among themselves, anon with fatal

result, especially about Richmond in Virginia, and Nashville in Tennessee, and New Orleans. So self-respecting a gentleman, and withal so peaceful a citizen, as Mr. William Cullen Bryant, fell upon a rival journalist with a horse-whip on Broadway, in New York. The prosy libel suit has come to take the place of the tragic street duel — the courts of law to settle what was formerly submitted to the code of honor — the star-part of 'fighting editor' having come to be a relic of by-gone squalor and glory. The call to arms in 1861 found few of the editorial bullies ready for the fray, and no one of them made his mark as a soldier in battle. They were good only on parade. Even the South had its fill of combat, valor grew too common to be distinguished, and, out of a very excess of broil and blood, along with multiplied opportunities for the display of courage, gun-play got its quietus. The good old times, when it was thought that a man who had failed at all else could still keep a hotel and edit a newspaper, have passed away. They are gone forever. If a gentleman kills his man nowadays, even in honest and fair fight, they call it murder. Editors have actually to be educated to their work, and to work for their living. The soul of Bombastes has departed, and journalism is no longer irradiated and advertised by the flash of arms.

We are wont to hear of the superior integrity of those days. There will always be in direct accountability a certain sense of obligation lacking to the anonymous and impersonal. Most men will think twice before they commit their thoughts to print where their names are affixed. Ambition and vanity, as well as discretion, play a restraining part here; they play it even though there be no provocation to danger. Yet, seeing that somebody must be somewhere back of the pen, the re-

sult would appear still to be referable to private character.

Most of the personal journalists were in alliance with the contemporary politicians; all of them were the slaves of party. Many of them were without convictions, holding to the measures of the time the relation held by the play-actors to the parts that come to them on the stage. Before the advent of the elder Bennett, independent journalism was unknown. In the 'partnership' of Seward, Weed, and Greeley, — Mr. Greeley himself described it, he being 'the junior member,' — office, no less than public printing, was the object of two at least of the firm. Lesser figures were squires instead of partners, their chiefs as knights of old. Callender first served, then maligned, Jefferson. Crosswell was the man-at-arms of the Albany Regency, valet to Mr. Van Buren. Forney played major-domo to Mr. Buchanan until Buchanan, becoming President, left his poor follower to hustle for himself; a signal, but not anomalous, piece of ingratitude. Prentice held himself to the orders of Clay. Even Raymond, set up in business by the money of Seward's friends, could only call his soul his own toward the end of his life, and then by a single but fatal misstep brought ruin upon the property his genius had created.

Not, indeed, until the latter third of the last century did independent journalism acquire considerable vogue, with Samuel Bowles and Charles A. Dana to lead it in the East, and Murat Halstead and Horace White, followed by Joseph Medill, Victor F. Lawson, Melville E. Stone, and William R. Nelson, in the West.

III

The new school of journalism, sometimes called impersonal and taking its lead from the counting-room, which generally prevails, promises to become

universal in spite of an individualist here and there uniting salient characteristics to controlling ownership, — a union which in the first place created the personal journalism of other days.

Here, however, the absence of personality is more apparent than real. Control must be lodged somewhere. Whether it be upstairs, or downstairs, it is bound to be — if successful — both single-minded and arbitrary, the embodiment of the inspiration and the will of one man; the expression made to fit the changed conditions which have impressed themselves upon the writing and the speaking of our time.

Eloquence and fancy, oratory and rhetoric, have for the most part given place in our public life to the language of business. More and more do budgets usurp the field of affairs. As fiction has exhausted the situations possible to imaginative writing, so has popular declamation exhausted the resources of figurative speech; and just as the novel seeks other expedients for arousing and holding the interest of its readers, do speakers and publicists, abandoning the florid and artificial, aim at the simple and the lucid, the terse and incisive, the argument the main point, attained, as a rule, in the statement. To this end the counting-room, with its close kinship to the actualities of the world about it, has a definite advantage over the editorial room, as a school of instruction. Nor is there any reason why the head of the counting-room should not be as highly qualified to direct the editorial policies as the financial policies of the newspaper of which, as the agent of a corporation or an estate, he has become the executive; the newspaper thus conducted assuming something of the character of the banking institution and the railway company, being indeed in a sense a common carrier. At least a greater show of stability and respectability, if not a greater

sense of responsibility, would be likely to follow such an arrangement, since it would establish a more immediate relation with the community than that embraced by the system which seems to have passed away, a system which was not nearly so accessible, and was, moreover, hedged about by a certain mystery that attaches itself to midnight, to the flare of the footlights and the smell of printers' ink.

I had written thus far and was about to pursue this line of thought with some practical suggestion emanating from a wealth of observation and reminiscence when, reading the *Atlantic Monthly* for March, I encountered the following passage from the very thoughtful paper of Mr. Edward Alsworth Ross, entitled 'The Suppression of Important News':

'More and more the owner of the big daily is a business man who finds it hard to see why he should run his property on different lines from the hotel proprietor, the vaudeville manager, or the owner of an amusement park. The editors are hired men, and they may put into the paper no more of their conscience and ideals than comports with getting the biggest return from the investment. Of course, the old-time editor who owned his paper tried to make money — no sin, that! — but just as to-day the author, the lecturer, or the scholar, tries to make money, namely, within the limitations imposed by his principles and his professional standards. But, now that the provider of the newspaper capital hires the editor instead of the editor hiring the newspaper capital, the paper is likelier to be run as a money-maker pure and simple — a factory where ink and brains are so applied to white paper as to turn out the largest possible marketable product. The capitalist-owner means no harm, but he is not bothered by the standards that hamper the editor-owner. He follows a few

simple maxims that work out well enough in selling shoes or cigars or sheet-music.'

There follow many examples of the 'suppression' of 'news.' Some of these might be called 'important.' Others are less so. Here enters a question of what is 'news,' and what is not; a question which gives rise to frequent and sometimes considerable differences of opinion.

If the newspaper manager is to make no distinction between vaudeville and journalism, between the selling of white paper disfigured by printer's ink and the selling of shoes, or sheet-music, comment would seem superfluous. I venture to believe that such a manager would nowhere be able long to hold his own against one of an ambition and intelligence better suited to supplying the requirement of the public demand for a vehicle of communication between itself and the world at large. Now and then we see a very well-composed newspaper fail of success because of its editorial character and tone. Now and then we see one succeed, having no editorial character and tone. But the rule is otherwise. The leading dailies everywhere stand for something. They are rarely without aspiration. Because of the unequal capabilities of those who conduct them, they have had their ups and downs: great journals, like the *Chicago Times*, passing out of existence through the lack of an adequate head; failing journals, like the *New York World*, saved from shipwreck by the timely arrival of an adequate head.

My own observation leads me to believe that more is to be charged against the levity and indifference of the average newspaper — perhaps I should say its ignorance and indolence — than against the suppression of important news. As a matter of fact, suppression does not suppress. Conflicting interests attend to that. Mr. Ross relates that

on the desk of every editor and sub-editor of a newspaper run by a certain capitalist, who was also a promoter, lay a list of sixteen corporations in which the owner was interested. This was to remind them not to print anything damaging to those particular concerns. In the office the exempted subjects were jocularly referred to as 'sacred cows.'

This case, familiar to all newspaper men, was an extreme one. The newspaper proved a costly and ignominious failure. Its owner, who ran it on the lines of an 'amusement park,' landed first in a bankruptcy and then in a criminal court, finally to round up in the penitentiary. Before him, and in the same city, a fellow 'journalist' had been given a state-prison sentence. In another and adjacent city the editor and owner of a famous and influential newspaper who had prostituted himself and his calling escaped the stripes of a convict only through executive clemency.

The disposition to publish everything without regard to private feeling or good neighborhood, may be carried to an excess quite as hurtful to the community as the suppressions of which Mr. Ross tells us in his interesting résumé. The newspaper which constitutes itself judge and jury, which condemns in advance of conviction, which, reversing the English rule of law, assumes the accused guilty instead of innocent, — the newspaper, in short, which sets itself up as a public prosecutor, — is likely to become a common scold and to arouse its readers out of all proportion to any good achieved by publicity. As in other affairs of life, the sense of decency imposes certain reserves, and also the sense of charity.

The justest complaint which may be laid at the door of the modern newspaper seems to me its invasion of the home, and the conversion of its report-

ers into detectives. Pretending to be the defender of liberty, it too often is the assailant of private right. Each daily issue should indeed aim to be the history of yesterday, but it should be clean as well as truthful; and as we seek in our usual walks and ways to avoid that which is nasty and ghastly, so should we, in the narration of scandal and crime, guard equally against exaggeration and pruriency, nor be ashamed to suppress that which may be too vile to tell.

In a recent article Mr. Victor Rosewater, the accomplished editor of the *Omaha Bee*, takes issue with Mr. Ross upon the whole line of his argument, which he subjects to the critical analysis of a practical journalist. The muck-raking magazines, so extolled by Mr. Ross, are shown by Mr. Rosewater to be the merest collection of already printed newspaper material, the periodical writer having time to put them together in more connected form. He also shows that the Chautauqua Circuits are but the emanations of newspaper advertising; and that if newspapers of one party make suppressions in the interest of their party, the newspapers of the other are ready with the antidote. Obviously, Mr. Ross is either a newspaper subaltern, or a college professor. In either case he is, as Mr. Rosewater shows, a visionary.

In nothing does this betray itself so clearly as in the suggestion of 'an endowed newspaper,' which is Mr. Ross's remedy for the evils he enumerates.

'Because newspapers, as a rule, prefer construction to destruction,' says Mr. Rosewater, 'they are accused by Mr. Ross of malfeasance for selfish purposes. True, a newspaper depends for its own prosperity upon the prosperity of the community in which it is published. The newspaper selfishly prefers business prosperity to business adversity. A panic is largely psycholog-

ical, and the newspapers can do much to aggravate or to mitigate its severity. There is no question that to the willful efforts of the newspapers as a body to allay public fear and to restore business confidence is to be credited the short duration and comparative mildness of the last financial cataclysm. Would an endowed newspaper have acted differently? Most people would freely commend the newspapers for what they did to start the wheels of industry again revolving, and this is the first time I have seen them condemned for suppressing "important news" of business calamity and industrial distress in subservience to a worship of advertising revenue.'

The truth of this can hardly be denied. Most fair-minded observers will agree with Mr. Rosewater that 'a few black sheep in the newspaper fold do not make the whole flock black, nor do the combined imperfections of all newspapers condemn them to failure,' and I cannot resist quoting entire the admirable conclusion with which a recognized newspaper authority disposes of a thoroughly theoretic newspaper critic.

'Personally,' says Mr. Rosewater, 'I would like to see the experiment of an endowed newspaper tried, because I am convinced comparison would only redound to the advantage of the newspaper privately conducted as a commercial undertaking. The newspaper most akin to the endowed newspaper in this country is published in the interest of the Christian Science Church. With it, "important news" is news calculated to promote the propaganda of the faith, and close inspection of its columns would disclose news-suppression in every issue. On the other hand, a daily newspaper standing on its own bottom, must have readers to make its advertising space valuable, and without a reasonable effort to cover

all the news and command public confidence, the standing and clientage of the paper cannot be successfully maintained. The endowed paper pictured to us as the ideal paper, run by a board of governors filled in turn by representatives of the various uplift societies enumerated by Professor Ross, would blow hot and would blow cold, would have no consistent policy or principles, would be unable to alter the prevailing notion of what constitutes important news, and would be from the outset busily engaged in a work of news-suppression to suit the whims of the particular hobby-riders who happened for the moment to be in dominating control.'

In journalism, as in statesmanship, the doctrinaire is more confident than the man of affairs. So, in war, the lieutenant is bolder in the thought than the captain in the action. Often the newspaper subaltern, distrusting his chief, calls that 'mercenary' which is in reality 'discrimination.' It is a pity that there is not more of this latter in our editorial practice.

IV

Disinterestedness, unselfish devotion to the public interest, is the soul of true journalism as of true statesmanship; and this is as likely to proceed from the counting-room as from the editorial room; only, the business-manager must be a journalist.

The journalism of Paris is personal, the journalism of London is impersonal,—that is to say, the one illustrates the self-exploiting, individualized star-system, the other the more sedate and orderly, yet not less responsible commercial system; and it must be allowed that, in both dignity and usefulness, the English is to be preferred to the French journalism. It is true that English publishers are sometimes

elevated to the peerage. But this is no worse than French and American editors becoming candidates for office. In either case, the public and the press are losers in the matter of the service rendered, because journalism and office are so antipathetic that their union must be destructive to both.

The upright man of business, circumspect in his everyday behavior and jealous of his commercial honor, needs only to be educated in the newspaper business to bring to it the characteristic virtues which shine and prosper in the more ambitious professional and business pursuits. The successful man in the centres of activity is usually a worldly-wise and prepossessing person. Other things being equal, success of the higher order inclines to those qualities of head and heart, of breeding and education and association, which go to the making of what we call a gentleman. The element of charm, scarcely less than the elements of energy, integrity, and penetration, is a prime ingredient. Add breadth and foresight, and we have the greater result of fortune and fame.

All these essentials to preëminent manhood must be fulfilled by the newspaper which aspires to preëminence. And there is no reason why this may not spring from the business end, why they may not exist and flourish there, exhaling their perfume into every department; in short, why they may not tempt ambition. The newspapers, as Hamlet observes of the players, are the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time. It were indeed better to have a bad epitaph when you die than their ill-report while you live, even from those of the baser sort; how much more from a press having the confidence and respect — and yet more than these, the affection — of the community? Hence it is that special college training is beginning to be thought

of, and occasionally tried; and, while this is subject to very serious disadvantage on the experimental side, its ethical value may in the long run find some way to give it practical application and to make it permanent as an arm of the newspaper service. Assuredly, character is an asset, and nowhere does it pay surer and larger dividends than in the newspaper business.

v

We are passing through a period of transition. The old system of personal journalism having gone out, and the new system of counting-room journalism having not quite reached a full realization of itself, the editorial function seems to have fallen into a lean and slippered state, the matters of tone and style honored rather in the breach than in the observance. Too many ill-trained, uneducated lads have graduated out of the city editor's room by sheer force of audacity and enterprise into the more important posts. Too often the counting-room takes no supervision of the editorial room beyond the immediate selling value of the paper the latter turns out. Things upstairs are left at loose ends. There are examples of opportunities lost through absentee landlordism.

These conditions, however, are ephemeral. They will yield before the progressive requirements of a process of popular evolution which is steadily lifting the masses out of the slough of degeneracy and ignorance. The dime novel has not the vogue it once

had. Neither has the party organ. Readers will not rest forever content under the impositions of fake or colored news; of misleading headlines; of false alarms and slovenly writing. Already they begin to discriminate, and more and clearly they will learn to discriminate, between the meretricious and the true.

The competition in sensationalism, to which we owe the yellow press, as it is called, will become a competition in cleanliness and accuracy. The counting-room, which is next to the people and carries the purse, will see that decency pays, that good sense and good faith are good investments, and it will look closer to the personal character and the moral product of the editorial room, requiring better equipment and more elevated standards. There will never again be a Greeley, or a Raymond, or a Dana, playing the rôle of 'star' and personally exploited by everything appearing in journals which seemed to exist mainly to glorify them. Each was in his way a man of superior attainments. Each thought himself an unselfish servant of the public. Yet each had his limitations, — his ambitions and prejudices, his likes and dislikes, intensified and amplified by the habit of personalism, often unconscious. And, this personal element eliminated, why may not the impersonal head of the coming newspaper — proud of his profession, and satisfied with the results of its ministrations — render a yet better account to God and the people in unselfish devotion to the common interest?

THE COLORS AT CAMBRIDGE

BY LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY

[William E. Russell, ex-Governor of Massachusetts, died suddenly while camping in the woods of New Brunswick, and was brought home to be buried at Mount Auburn. It was a week of unusually high wind. These lines were written at the time.]

FLAGS at half-staff that through the leafy city
Cloud street and hall in tragic mustering;
Flags in the offing, that for noble pity
Make for sea-spaces on a broken wing;

Eagles low-flying, angels of our sorrow,
Boding and bright, on their full passion hurled,
Trail down the wind in stormy wake and furrow,
Poignantly marked across the summer world.

Ah, how they mourn with not-to-be-impeded
Gesture and cry of queens unreconciled,
One sunny strength illimitably needed,
Felled by the Hewer in the northern wild!

Yet if they knew, would these not triumph duly?
Glory, not grief, for him who willed to keep
Pure as the sword some warden angel newly
Draws by the cradle of baptismal sleep.

Green on the summits of the State hereafter,
See what a garland, beautiful, aflame!
Till Time abase them, there on wall and rafter,
Sweeter than jasmine climbs that absent name.

Happy the land that late a field unfavored
Whitens to harvest where the martyrs are,
Knowing (from ways in which she nearly wavered),
This starry dust shall lead her like a star;