

THE SCOPE OF JOURNALISM

MODERN journalism is peculiar in its moulding effects on human thought and passions; and is responsible, to a greater extent than it often realizes, for the moral tone of the community. The large newspapers in America, more than in England, are drifting into sensational journalism. If a paper is a reflex of the world it lives in, then that part of human nature which is pleased by such sensational reading must be predominating over the higher moral and intellectual part. Tales of murders, liasons, adulteries, divorce cases, are degrading, to say the least. But the modern newspaper seems to be drifting into a dime novel stage, and presents such events in the minutest way and most startling manner. No detail that can add to the horribleness or repulsiveness of any crime is omitted. Even illustrations tend to add to the display of the depravity of mankind. Crimes of all kinds are laid bare to public gaze and all the possible motives are set forth with a startling clearness. If crimes, such as murder, suicide or moral depravity, are on the increase, surely the newspapers of to day are responsible for it to a large extent. Editors of such papers would do well to read some of the thoughts of the poet and philosopher Pope. For example:—

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
That to be hated needs but to be seen;
But seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

A very lamentable instance of sensational journalism, appeared in a Toronto newspaper not long ago, when several columns of the paper were filled with the details of what seemed to be a most revolting crime. It was enough to corrupt the purest mind, unfortunate enough to read it. The editor seems to have felt its repulsiveness, and tried to justify the publication by saying: "Our enquiry, however, made us better acquainted with the whole case and awakened the interest that every public journal should feel in the discovery of wrongdoing and in the punishment of a villain. The highest function of the modern newspaper is its power to reach wrong-doers whom even the law fails to reach, and to expose them to a punishment greater than any that can be inflicted by a judge, namely, the scorn and detestation of their fellow-men."

The highest function of the modern newspaper is not to reach wrong-doers. The Law and its officers are created and appointed for that purpose, and the duty of the modern newspaper may be to point out when the law fails, but to make its editors sleuth-hounds instead of men is surely not necessary. To lay bare the sins and failings of a man, does not always bring on him the scorn and detestation of his fellow-men. If it does not make him a hero, it at

least creates for him the sympathy of men, who feel the kindred weaknesses of human nature. Such a recital of crime often creates in men of weak moral nature, a desire to participate in similar licentiousness. The scope of modern journalism is to furnish news that will educate and ennoble the race, not that will corrupt the good which they are striving to preserve.

ARE PRINTING HOUSES MANUFACTORIES?

CONSIDERABLE discussion has arisen in this city as to whether newspaper publishing is manufacturing. A by-law has been passed exempting all manufacturing establishments in the city from taxation. The city solicitor decided that the by-law could not exempt from school taxes, and these alone can be collected. Then when the assessments began, the point arose, whether newspaper printing offices were manufactories or not. The matter was brought under the notice of the city solicitor, and he has decided that newspaper offices such as *Empire*, *Mail* and *Globe*, are not exempt within the meaning of the by-law. It is hard to see how this is justifiable, seeing that manufacturing means "made by the work of hands." When paper comes into a newspaper office, is cut, printed, and folded, it is certainly as much a manufactured article as to cut the paper up and fold and paste it into the shape of a paper bag; and no one would doubt for a moment that a paper bag factory would be exempt under such a by-law. True, the elements of brains, enters into the make-up of a newspaper, but the hand work is essential; and brain work is an essential in all manufacturing, more or less. If newspapers are not manufactured articles within the meaning of the by-law, then the unfairness of the law should be remedied, and that at once. Newspaper publishers have a plant consisting of machinery and other fixtures, just as much for the purpose of manufacturing as any foundry, paper-box factory, soap factory, etc.

But the question arises: "are job printing offices to be exempt?" These smaller offices are manufacturing by hand and by machinery, and they make their profit entirely from the work of the plant they possess. No extraneous means of enhancing the value of what is produced, enters into the manufacture of what they turn out. The question, as far as can be seen at present, has not yet been brought to the notice of the city solicitor, and no definite judgment has been passed as to whether these shall be exempt or not. There is a distinction between the two classes of printing offices, but both should have their plant exempted. Both are employing men and using machinery, and no mere quibble should deprive this class of manufacturers from the privileges enjoyed by other manufacturers.