

the article; and the ordinary reader scans the headline and leaves the article itself unread. If the heading simply indicated the subject, and perhaps the general line taken, as the typical English caption does, pressure would be brought to bear on the general reader to read what the reporter has so carefully written. As it is, the heading-writer has done his best to induce the reader to be content with his incomplete, and often inaccurate, summary. To the newspaper reader it may be explained that headings are exceedingly mechanical things; the first line must not exceed a certain number of letters, and must not fall below another number; the second line must have approximately so many letters; and so on. Extraordinary expressions appear in them, and for the most part these are due, not to perversity or ignorance, but to mechanical conditions. I select one at random: "No pavements where not asked by ratepayers." The word "for" should follow "asked", but it would not fit into the line, and so an ungrammatical caption appears. We continually see references to "Austros" instead of "Austrians" because the incorrect word is two letters shorter. When the heading-writer is thus condemned to dance in chains, how can he give an accurate summary of the article? He quotes some of the facts—not all. He outlines the argument—but he omits the qualifications. He achieves a sketch of the article which is almost sure to be unfair; and often the bigger the heading the less likely is the general reader to read what the reporter has written. Yet most newspaper men rejoice in having their writings surmounted by these distortions. It is the conventional measure of value.

It is a convention of the newspaperman's own making. Journalists are open to the charge of making up their newspapers first of all for each other, and only secondarily for the customers. The ordinary, reasonably intelligent man, we may take it, is sensitive to the general appearance of a newspaper page; he likes to see it neat and well-balanced; and undoubtedly minute care in technical details is needed to produce this general effect of precision. Granting this, it may