

most convincing of all demonstrations—"money talks"—that the great numerical majority of the newspaper-buying public cares very little for literal accuracy of fact except in matters which touch its pocket or its personal relations; that while it wants truth about the price at which its neighbour round the corner sold his lot, it prefers lurid romance about the reasons why Haldane went to Germany; that it has no interest in international politics until they become bloody, no interest in art until it becomes scandalous, and no interest in philosophy under any circumstances whatever. We have learnt how to flavour the journalistic cheese. Shall we not do it?

Some people will take this argument of mine and push it a great deal too far. There are many newspapers in Canada which give great assistance to religion, to humanitarian movements, to the diffusion of correct information, to the enlargement of political ideals, and even to "culture." But they do not do it in any missionary spirit. They do this much "uplifting" for precisely the same reasons as restrain them from doing any more; the reasons of the flavour. It would be as foolish, commercially speaking, to aim very far below the average taste of one's clientèle as it would be to aim too far above it; as foolish as it would be for my friend the cheese man to go to an extreme of coarseness in his flavouring because he found the public did not want too much delicacy. And here there arises a very peculiar, interesting, and gratifying consideration. It is quite possible, it is sometimes even necessary, for a newspaper to raise—very gradually, delicately, and carefully—its standard of taste and intelligence, retaining all the while its own particular clientèle, and raising the taste of that clientèle at the same time. On the other hand, no newspaper can effectively lower its standard of taste and carry with it the same public it had in its better days. A clientèle which has once learnt to attach itself to a particular newspaper seems invariably to have a slightly upward tendency; it is as if the mere fact of reading.