

forests will yearly reduce the available means of irrigation. A detritus of treeless mountain slopes will shoal the estuaries of our eastern seaboard, especially at the mouths of the Savannah and Potomac; and the reckless destruction of the Adirondack woodland may tend to obstruct navigation on the upper Hudson, which even now is, as it were, living rather beyond its means by occupying quarters (very probably a prehistoric outlet of the St. Lawrence) too spacious for its proper resources.

Locusts, too, will sooner or later pay yearly visits to the cereal plains of the Mississippi Valley, but even before that time the necessity of protective forest-laws will be demonstrated by a still more impressive *argumentum ad hominem*. The climatic changes which never fail to follow the disappearance of arboreal vegetation make summer droughts more severe, but at the same time tend to make winter floods more and more destructive; and the experience of the eastern continent has established the fact that the valleys liable to the most ruinous inundations are those of rivers fed by numerous highland streams (bringing down the floods of torrents swollen by the sudden thaw of accumulated snows), like the River Po, the Oder, and the Rhone, or of large rivers following the line of an isotherm, rather than of a meridian, and thus receiving the simultaneous drainage of a large area opening the sluice-gates of its spring flood, not gradually, but at once, like the Yang-tse-Kiang, whose inundations are known to have done China more harm than all her wars and epidemics taken together. But the Ohio happens to combine the two elements of peril, and will yet avenge the fatuous waste of its hill forests by snow floods routing the settlers of its bottom-lands as the inhabitants of a Lancashire mill valley are routed by the bursting of a large reservoir.

Will the converts of Mormonism establish their empire in Spanish America? *Quien sabe?* But it seems clear that their schism has passed the repressible stage—though Spiritualism may eventually prove a more formidable foe to Orthodoxy and the chief rival of that reviving Nature-worship which is already gathering its votaries in our turner-halls and mountain resorts.

The continued influx of foreign elements will make it difficult to repress a reaction of Nativism; though, on the other hand, our open frontier would hopelessly complicate the problem of enforcing restrictive edicts; but the next three decades will partly obviate the dilemma by diverting the stream of European emigration to African and South American Eldorados.

Trans-Atlantic traffic will possibly be modified by quite novel systems of locomotive machinery (but I predict that, in the meantime, the perils of the sea will yet be diminished by means of *companion steamers*—passenger packets starting pairwise and keeping close enough for mutual assistance in case of accident, the probability being about as a million to one against the chance of their simultaneous shipwreck.)

FELIX L. OSWALD.

III.

THE FUTURE OF THE NEWSPAPER.

"ARE the newspapers, especially the Sunday editions, likely to keep on increasing in size, or is there a limit at which the line will be drawn? If the latter, where is the limit to be placed? It is becoming burdensome even to glance through one of the Sunday editions, but if one wishes to keep up with the times he must do so, for the very thing which it is important for him to know may be hidden away at the bottom of the last column, in the most unlikely place; and yet if he should overlook it, the result might be serious. Of course, the pages that are wholly given up to advertising can be disposed of in short order, but all the others must at least be carefully looked at."

"For my part, I wish there were no Sunday papers at all; not because I am a strict Sabbatarian or because I am simple enough to believe that the work of making the Sunday papers is to any large extent done on Sunday. I am unable to see anything wicked in reading a Sunday paper, and, of course, I know that it is Monday's paper, not Sunday's, which is prepared on Sunday. My objection is not a sentimental one; it is purely practical. I like to go to church on Sunday morning.

Now, I find that if I do this, and then undertake to read even two of the New York papers, I have not a moment of time for anything else. There is a good deal in them that I feel I can't afford to miss; yet there is a good deal else in the world that I should like to read, and then I want some time to spend with my family and friends. Really these Sunday papers give me neither peace nor rest, and if they keep on increasing in size, I shall actually not know what to do."

The foregoing are remarks which have been uttered in my hearing within the last week, and I have heard many others like unto them. Even the comic-weekly squib, which represents a small newsboy saying that he can sell newspapers on week-days, but that he is not big enough yet to carry a Sunday edition, is not without a reasonable degree of point and pertinence in connection with this subject.

What is the future of the newspaper in this country to be? Is the present tendency to increased bulk only a temporary thing, and will the reaction bring back the more reasonable size of former days? When a man buys a morning paper, does he want a volume or only a compact and intelligible compendium of the news of the day? Especially are these questions in point as applied to the Sunday editions. Their tendency to enlarged magnitude is unmistakable at the present time. Is this tendency to persist and to increase? Where can the limit be drawn—at thirty pages, or forty, or fifty? One paper that I have in mind, which formerly furnished its readers eight pages on Sunday, is rarely now contented with less than sixteen or twenty. Another, which a few years ago printed twelve pages, now invariably prints sixteen or twenty. And this same tendency has to a certain extent manifested itself in the week-day editions. A New York paper which until lately won wide popularity and numerous readers because of its compactness, and the ability with which its staff "boiled down" the news, has so far changed its policy of long standing as to increase its size regularly from 25 to 50 per cent.; and another, which for more than a generation never comprised more than eight pages, except when some uncommon "feature" demanded a large amount of space, now prints ten pages on every week-day, with a very rare exception now and then on Monday.

These are significant facts, but it is impossible as yet to determine with accuracy the ultimate goal to which they tend. It is true that more space is given to advertising than formerly; but that is a matter easily in the control of the business manager. A limited amount of advertisements at high rates is equally profitable with a large amount at low rates; and the balance-sheet is the main thing to be considered on this head. There would seem to be a physical limit to the number of pages which a daily journal can profitably print from day to day, but where that limit is to be set is a matter of pure conjecture. There is even more certainly a limit to the amount of matter which the average reader will consent to wade through in search of the vital and necessary news of the day.

"*Gratiano* speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice. His reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff: you shall seek all day ere you find them, and when you have them, they are not worth the search." Are not the words which Shakespeare puts into the mouth of *Bassanio* applicable to the greater part of what our newspapers are in the habit of publishing? Is it not, in truth, an "infinite deal of nothing"?

It seems to me most probable that the readers of newspapers have the solution of the question in their own hands. A newspaper must publish what people want, or else they will not buy it. The aim of the newspaper is to meet its readers' wishes. If people complain that the tone of the press is low and that too much space is given to murders, sensational matters, and the proceedings of the divorce court, the answer is that it is their own fault; if readers did not enjoy and demand these things they would not be printed. As in the matter of the quality of the newspaper, so in regard to its dimensions. If readers make their wishes known, editors and publishers must hear and heed.

At the present time most readers are glad to take their opinions from their favorite paper and want the comments on the news furnished along with the news itself. Perhaps the time may come when this will be changed, either by the elimination of the editorial page altogether or by the skillful blending, by specially-trained writers

of opinions with the news articles themselves. The newspaper is here—by a large majority; and it has undoubtedly come to stay. Its precise force and influence as a factor in civilization it is hard to estimate with accuracy. That it is capable of betterment not even the most enthusiastic “journalist” will presume to deny. Let me close by suggesting one or two of the lines along which the needed improvements ought to proceed. There should be less crudity and more care in the style and form in which the news is expressed. Condensation must be studied, and the art of putting much in small space acquired. The expression of editorial opinions may wisely be confined within narrow limits; unless, indeed, the newspaper is to become what it concededly is not now—the leader and moulder of public opinion. The daily newspaper need not seek to be a cyclopædia of all that is going on in the world: leave to the special and technical journals each its own field. The real news of the world is necessarily an expanding quantity, and hence the newspaper of the future must become more and more eclectic, if it is to be kept within reasonable and *readable* limits. Above all, let readers remember that the journal which they subscribe for and make a practice of reading may be to a very large extent—much larger, probably, than most of them imagine—moulded by themselves, and made what they would wish it to be. The inalienable right of fault-finding is every reader’s own, and editors wince under the criticism that is severe, but at the same time friendly. If any reader of this article questions my statement, he need only try the experiment himself to be convinced.

JULIAN PROCTOR.

IV.

ABOLISHING POVERTY—ON PAPER.

IT BEGINS to look very much as though neither Henry George nor Dr. McGlynn will succeed for some years to come in abolishing poverty. I recall the old story of the ardent Irish patriot, who, a few years since, was telling a visiting tourist in the Green Isle how many hundred thousand armed men there were in Ireland ready at a moment’s notice to free their beloved country from the rule of the English oppressor. “Well, why don’t they go ahead and do it?” was the natural question of the tourist. “Begorra,” replied Paddy, in entire good faith, “the police won’t let them.” So, when we ask Mr. George and Dr. McGlynn why they do not go ahead and abolish poverty, they virtually reply that society will not let them; which is only another way of acknowledging that their scheme is impracticable—a fact which every sane man knew from the start.

Undeterred, however, by the signal failure of these earnest but mistaken men, I have decided to come forward with a little scheme of my own for abolishing poverty; not, indeed, at once, as will be seen, but in the course of about two hundred and fifty years. My scheme, in brief, is for those who are most anxious to abolish poverty to raise the sum of ten thousand dollars in cash, or more if possible, and put it out at compound interest, until the principal shall become so immense that the interest annually accruing from it will be large enough to change the whole face of society. In order to bring the matter more nearly home to us to-day, let us suppose that some wise philanthropist, say in the year 1629, had set aside that sum of money, with the proviso that neither principal nor interest should be touched until the year 1889, at which time the whole amount should be safely invested and the interest forever after devoted to the alleviation of poverty and to such other humane objects as should commend themselves to a wisely-selected board of Anti-Poverty trustees, two of whom might, perhaps, be Mr. George and Dr. McGlynn. I venture to say that the actual money result to-day of such a fund would far surpass the wildest dreams of the crankiest Anti-Poverty disciple in the world.

As thus, for instance: Assuming that, when put out at compound interest, the principal doubles itself every fifteen years,—no very extravagant assumption,—the ten thousand dollars invested in 1629 would to-day amount to the inconceivably enormous sum of One Hundred and Eighty-four Billions, Two Hundred and Seven Millions, Three Hundred and Sixty Thousand Dollars! And this sum invested at the rate of 4 per cent. would yield an annual income of Seven Billions, Three Hundred