

A STUDY IN INDEPENDENT JOURNALISM.

THE present year and its predecessor have witnessed a striking development of political independence in the newspaper press. There have been other periods when independence was in fashion, which have been followed by a return to strong partisanship; but on the whole, it can scarcely be doubted, the movement of the better portion of the press is toward independence.

The time may come when such an attitude will be taken as a matter of course, and the term "independent journalism" will be like "an impartial judiciary"—the partisan journal being considered as abnormal as a partial judge. The advance of morals is marked by the ceasing to regard certain virtues as exceptionally meritorious. It was counted a fine eulogy two or three centuries ago to say of a certain English family that "all the sons were brave and all the daughters virtuous." In our day, to say that the women of an English or American family are virtuous is not reckoned as high praise; it is only what is expected.

The phrase "independent journalism" came into fashion during the Greeley campaign, but an independent newspaper in the highest sense was no new thing under the sun in 1872. It had been the ideal of the London "Times" for the better part of a century. Political independence, with some limitations, had characterized the best representatives of the new school of American journalism, which had begun to flourish before 1850. But the successive phases of the great conflict between slavery and its opponents kept politics at a high tension,—men and newspapers were driven to take definitely one side or the other in the controversy; and the breaking of party ties by great journals in 1872 was a sign that the old quarrel was almost over, and the peaceful virtues of moderation, fairness and love of truth were more demanded than passionate devotion to a struggling cause.

It is designed here to set forth a little of the early history of one newspaper; to show something of how its maker's ideal shaped itself, and how that ideal became embodied in reality. "Sam Bowles," as everybody called the editor of the Springfield "Republican," came of New England stock. His father established the "Republican" as a weekly paper in 1824, two years before the birth of the son who was to make it famous. The boy showed no special promise; he was faithful to his tasks, fond of reading, but as a student

rather slow, with not much physical vigor, and with little to point at his future career, unless a strong liking for his own way was a presage of the masterful will that was to carry him through toils and combats. He went to school until he was sixteen and then entered his father's office, and two years later persuaded him to make the "Republican" a daily paper. From that time the son carried the chief burden of it.

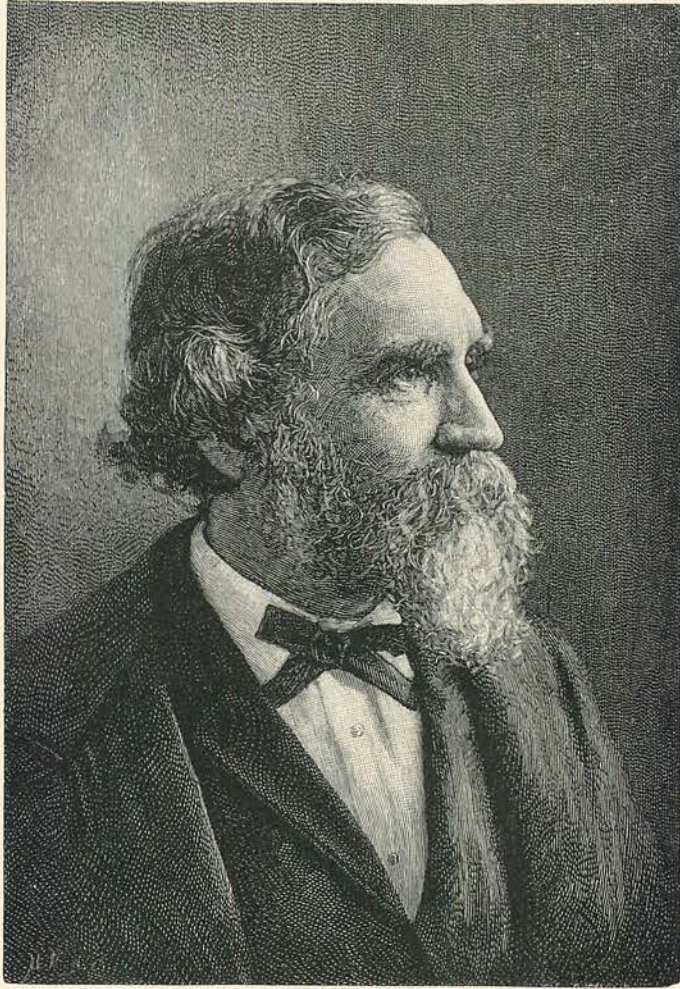
Of the period in which his work began Mr. Bowles wrote in the "Independent" thirty years later:

"American journalism was undergoing the greatest transformation and experiencing the deepest inspiration of its whole history. The telegraph and the Mexican war came in together; and the years '46-51 were the years of most marked growth known to America. It was something more than progress, it was revolution. Then the old 'Sun' was in its best estate; then Mr. Bennett was in the prime of his vigorous intellect, and his enterprise and independence were at the height of their audacity. He had as first lieutenant Mr. Frederic Hudson, the best organizer of a mere newspaper America has ever seen. Then Mr. Greeley and Mr. Dana were harmoniously and vigorously giving the 'Tribune' that scope of treatment and that intellectual depth and breadth which have never departed wholly from it, and which are perhaps the greatest gifts that any single journal has made to the journalism of the country. Then Mr. Raymond commenced the 'Times' and won for it at once a prominent place among its rivals. And then began that horde of provincial daily journals, springing up like mushrooms all over the land. Hardly a town of ten thousand inhabitants but that essayed its diurnal issue in those fertile years."

It was in this field of provincial journalism that Mr. Bowles's work was done. Of the old-fashioned country newspaper he once wrote:

"News had grown old when it was published. The paper did the work of the chronicler or annalist merely, and was the historian of the past rather than a spectator and actor in the present. It was not upon the printed column that the events of the day struck the heart of the living age, and drew from it its sparks of fire. In those times that place of contact was found in the personal intercourse of men. News ran then along the street, from mouth to mouth; the gossiping neighbor carried it; the post-rider brought it into the groups gathered at the village store. By and by came the heavy gazette, not to make its impression but to record the fact. . . . The journalism was yet to be created that should stand firmly in the possession of powers of its own; that should be concerned with the passing and not with the past; that should perfectly reflect its age, and yet should be itself no mere reflection; that should control what it seemed only to transcribe and narrate; that should teach without assuming the manners of an instructor, and should command the coming times with a voice that had still no sound but its echo of the present."

The editorial work on the daily was done by the younger Bowles, at first jointly with



Sam J. Bowles

his father, then with one temporary assistant after another, until Dr. J. G. Holland became his colleague in 1849. He remained in the office of the paper until 1857, and was a constant contributor to its columns until 1864. At the start Bowles's qualifications for his work were unflagging industry, an observant eye, and a stout will. He had at first little facility or power as a writer, and he did not aspire to special success in that direction. He expected to devote himself to the general conduct of the paper, while other men should wield the editorial thunder. But he was a good reporter. He could see what was before him and tell it in a plain story. He began by assiduously picking up the crumbs of village news. The townspeople began to look in his paper for a little daily history of their community. He took always a keen interest in politics; and when he was twenty-two years old he was writing editorials in advocacy of General Taylor for the presidency as against his rivals, Cass and Van Buren. The "Republican" in its early politics was stanchly Whig, and was largely influenced by George Ashmun, one of the most brilliant of Webster's followers in Massachusetts, who sacrificed his half-completed career when his great chief fell.

The accession of Dr. Holland to the "Republican" was an important event in its history. He and Mr. Bowles supplemented each other. Mr. Bowles was a born journalist, and showed early an instinct for news, an aptitude for politics, and a skill in administration. Dr. Holland, who was seven years his senior, came to the paper equipped with more of literary culture and taste, and was always a writer rather than an editor. He was strong in his convictions, warm in his feelings, sensitive to the moral element in any question, and the master of a forcible, lucid, and popular style. His interest lay not so much in politics as in the personal conduct of life, and social usages and institutions. His editorials in the "Republican" were one of the earliest signs that the newspaper press was beginning to exercise, along with its other functions, that of direct moral instruction, which had hitherto been almost a monopoly of the church. Many of his articles were short and pithy lay sermons. They dealt directly with morals and religion, in their practical rather than theological applications. They discussed such topics as the mutual duties of husbands and wives, of laborers and employers; the principles of conduct for young men and young women, and the like. This was an innovation in journalism. It found favor among a community which takes life seriously and earnestly. It signified in truth an expansion of the newspaper's possibilities, which has as yet only

begun to be worked out. Dr. Holland was admirably qualified for a pioneer in this kind of work. He was so far in sympathy with the established churches and the accepted theology that he reached and held a wide constituency; while he was little trammelled by theological or ecclesiastical technicalities. He was quite as impatient as Mr. Bowles of any assumption of authority by a party or a church, and the "Republican" early showed an independence of the clergy, and a willingness to criticise them on occasion, which often drew wrath upon its head. But its attitude toward the churches and the religion they represented, though an independent was also a friendly one. In general, Dr. Holland added to the paper a higher literary tone and a broader recognition of human interests. The paper's growth was won by unsparing labor, by close economy, by making the utmost of each day, yet looking always toward the future. Dr. Holland, just after Mr. Bowles's death, wrote as follows:

"As I think of my old associate and the earnest exhausting work he was doing when I was with him, he seems to me like a great golden vessel, rich in color and roughly embossed, filled with the elixir of life, which he poured out without the slightest stint for the consumption of this people. This vessel was only full at the first and it was never replenished. It was filled for an expenditure of fifty or sixty years, but he kept the stream so large that the precious contents were all decanted at thirty. The sparkle, the vivacity, the drive, the power of the 'Republican,' as I knew it in the early days, the fresh and ever eager interest with which it was every morning received by the people of Springfield and the Connecticut Valley, the superiority of the paper to other papers of its class, its ever widening influence—all these cost life. We did not know when we tasted it and found it so charged with zest that we were tasting heart's blood, but that was the priceless element that commended it to our appetites. A pale man, weary and nervous, crept home at midnight, or at one, two, or three o'clock in the morning, and while all nature was fresh and the birds were singing, and thousands of eyes were bending eagerly over the results of his night's labor, he was tossing and trying to sleep. Yet this work, so terrible in its exactions and its consequences, was the joy of this man's life—it *was* this man's life; and as the best exponent of this kind of devotion to an idea and a life-work I have ever known, I give its memory most affectionate reverence."

He was spending his life-blood, but he got a great price for it. He knew what he was doing; at least he thought he did. When a friend once remonstrated with him about his over-work, he answered: "I know it just as well as you do. When my friends point out that I am working toward a break-down, they seem to think that is to influence my action. Not at all! I have got the lines drawn, the current flowing, and by throwing my weight here now, I can count for something. If I make a long break or parenthesis to get strong, I shall lose my chance. No man is living a

life that is worth living, unless he is willing if need be to die for somebody or something,— at least to *die a little!*”

The faculty in which he first showed eminence was skill in gathering news. Said Mr. Bryan, who was added to the paper's force in 1852: “He and I would go into a little restaurant on Sanford street, and one and another would drop in and exchange a few words, and while we were eating our lunch he would pick up half a column of news.” Said a friend in a neighboring town: “I would meet him on the street, we would chat a few minutes about the events of the day, and next morning I would find in the paper everything I had told him.” In the political conventions which he attended and reported, he was in his native element. He button-holed everybody, and offended nobody; found out the designs of every clique, the doings of every secret caucus, got at the plans of the leaders, the temper of the crowd, *sensed* the whole situation; and the next morning's “Republican” gave a better idea of the convention to those who had staid at home than many of its participants had gained. These reporting expeditions were full of education to him. His mode of growth was by absorption. Other people were to him sponges out of which he deftly squeezed whatever knowledge they could yield.

It was during these years that he established the system of requiring advance payments from subscribers. A few of the great city papers had led the way in this innovation, which was introduced by the New York “Herald” in 1835, but it was so contrary to the tradition of provincial journalism that many predicted utter discomfiture for the rash experiment. But it succeeded. It was a great step to a firmer business footing; and it was also a sign of the new attitude which newspapers were taking in the community. The old-time journal was very deferential to its subscribers and advertisers. It spoke of them as its “patrons.” It was ready to praise the wares which they advertised, and to give all manner of friendly notices and puffs. It was patient, though sometimes plaintive, toward their delay in making payment. The possible message, “Stop my paper,” hung over the editor's head, keeping him docile and respectful. All this was swiftly changing. The newspaper, strengthened by railroad and telegraph, was becoming so strong that it needed not to ask favors or depend on them. The “Republican” took the lead among provincial papers in this independent attitude, of which the advance-payment system was the commercial sign. It had never a master, either among the political chiefs or in the classes with whom its business interests lay.

It depended on their support for its existence; but the editor won that support by making it for their interest to subscribe for his paper and to advertise in it.

The great achievement of Samuel Bowles was that he built up under the limitations of a country town a paying newspaper of national reputation and influence, which expressed the editor's personal opinions, bound by no party, by no school, by no clique. From its early years the paper avowed its opinions and made its criticisms with a freedom that provoked frequent and often emphatic dissent among its readers. The nature of its field made this independence hard to maintain. A great city offers an immense and various constituency, and a paper which can make itself readable to some one large class can afford to ignore even a wide and weighty disapprobation from other classes. But the “Republican” was in a small community; it could reach, at most, only a circle of country towns; the utmost number who would take a daily paper was limited; and the paper could ill afford to drive off subscribers, or incline them toward the local rivals which from time to time disputed the ground with it. Besides, a provincial neighborhood is full of strong prejudices. It has its heroes who must not be lightly spoken of; its traditional code of manners and morals which must be deferred to. There is still a deal of very stiff stuff in the descendants of the Puritans, but the community thirty years ago was far more provincial, more conservative, more set in its preferences and prejudices than it is to-day. The environment was by no means favorable to the outspoken independence which was a growing trait of the “Republican.” The editor conquered his environment. He did it by making so good a newspaper that the people had to buy it. By industry and skill he won the opportunity for independence.

There grew up in Mr. Bowles's mind an ideal of “journalism,” — a combination of principles, methods, and instincts, based partly on ethics, partly on expediency. With him, to say a thing was or was not “good journalism” was to put the final seal upon its character. It belonged to good journalism, in his idea, to tell all the news, and as a part of this to give every side a fair hearing. His opponents and critics could always find place for their articles, under reasonable conditions, in his paper. But it also belonged to his ideal of journalism that a paper should as seldom as possible own itself in the wrong. Accordingly, if a man wrote to him in correction of a statement, or in defense against criticism, he generally found his letter printed, but with some editorial comment that gave

the last word tellingly against him. It was commonly said that to seek redress from the "Republican" did more harm than good. This trait was partly due to deliberate unwillingness to weaken the paper's authority by admission of error. But it was probably more due to a personal idiosyncrasy. In many ways a most generous man, Mr. Bowles always hated to admit that he had been in the wrong. Sometimes he did it — not often — in private life; but in his paper never, when he could help it. "We sometimes discussed this," said Dr. Holland, "and he once said: 'I sympathize with the Boston editor, to whom a man came with the complaint, 'Your paper says that I hanged myself, and I want you to take it back.' 'No,' said the editor, 'we're not in the habit of doing that, but we will say that the rope broke and you escaped!'"

But it must be said that this fault lies at the door of a good many papers besides the "Republican." It is a characteristic sin of journalism — one of the vices of irresponsible power. The English press is assumed to be far more fair and decorous than the American; but Trollope, that faithful photographer of English manners, characterizes the "Times" in this same respect. "Write to the 'Jupiter,'" counsels Bishop Grantley to the aggrieved Mr. Harding who has been misrepresented by that paper. "Yes," says the more worldly-wise Archdeacon, "yes, and be smothered with ridicule; tossed over and over again with scorn; shaken this way and that, as a rat in the grip of a practiced terrier. A man may have the best of causes, the best of talents, and the best of tempers; he may write as well as Addison or as strongly as Junius; but even with all this he cannot successfully answer when attacked by the 'Jupiter.' Answer such an article! No, Warden; whatever you do, don't do that."

The vital principle of independent journalism, as Mr. Bowles understood it, was illustrated by an incident which occurred in 1856. While Mr. Bowles was out of town a prize-fight was attempted in Springfield, and among those who gathered to witness it were some young men of good social standing, belonging to families with whom he was in friendly relations. Dr. Holland treated the incident in a very sharp article, as an instance of the coarse immoralities in which the rapidly growing town was beginning to imitate the worst features of the great cities. The article stated that the matter would come up in the police court, and those who had been concerned in it might expect full publicity to be given to their conduct. Before the trial Mr. Bowles returned to town. In the evening, sitting on the door-step, his wife said to him, "Can't

you let this thing drop? If you publish these young men's names it will wound and alienate a great many of our friends." He answered, "Mary, I have considered it all, most thoughtfully and conscientiously. The blame must be given where it is deserved. This is the time to put an end to prize-fighting in Springfield." The trial was fully reported in the "Republican," including the names of those who as attendants at the prize-fight were called as witnesses; and the paper commented in a few vigorous words on their presence at such a scene. Personal alienations did follow, painful and not soon healed. But there never was another prize-fight in Springfield. In this and similar cases the morals of the town were vastly the gainer by the unsparing publicity given to the misdeeds of men who had reputations to suffer. Just as the introduction of street-lights into cities did more to stop nocturnal crime than constables and courts could do, so by its reports of wrong-doing has the modern newspaper added a new safeguard to social morality. To exercise that great function as free from fear or favor as the judge on the bench was the aim of the "Republican." Its editor liked to make his power felt,— he liked to use it for the public good,— but the personal alienations which it brought were none the less painful to him.

The limitation on the moral power of politician or journalist is that in order to lead he must in a degree conform. In a democracy no kind of leadership is free from that necessity, save that of the pure idealist—the poet or the prophet. Over all but him conformity lays its heavy hand. But under the sharpest rein of all does it hold the man who makes it his business to take active part in government. Agreement with the majority is the inexorable price of his personal success. As often as election-day comes round he must have the approval of a majority of his constituency or be thrown out of his work. The journalist's necessity, on the other hand, is to make a paper that men will buy. One way to that end is to express sentiments agreeable to its readers,—to soothe them with assent and approval. Another way is to make a newspaper so attractive by its general merits that men will buy it even though they dissent from its doctrines. That was the path which Mr. Bowles chose for the "Republican."

Not till near the end of his life was the paper confronted with the severe test of directly opposing, in a presidential campaign, the party to which the mass of its readers belonged. But at a much earlier stage it committed itself to the then novel position of criticising with entire freedom the special measures and the individual leaders of the

party to which it gave a general support; its theory of independent journalism was as clearly avowed, as sincerely followed, in 1856 as in 1872. The difference was that until the later date the editor's political convictions differed from the mass of his constituents only as to occasional and subordinate issues. But the old theory of party allegiance — a theory still substantially practiced in this year of grace 1885 by a large majority of American journals — is that the individual or the newspaper shall support the party, as the patriot stands by his country or the believer by his church. Interior discussion, guarded criticism, are allowable, but are always to be subordinated to the prime object of victory over the foreign foe, the heretic or the opposing faction. The approved temper toward the party is to

"Be to its faults a little blind,
Be to its virtues very kind."

The "Republican," after it began its existence as a daily, was never extreme in its partisanship; but for its first decade it virtually owed allegiance to the Whig party.

Its declaration of independence was made in February, 1855. In the previous year, when the repeal of the Missouri Compromise roused the North for the first time to a general resistance to the extension of slavery, the "Republican" had vainly pleaded with the Whig leaders in the State to merge that organization in a new party devoted to freedom. It had given a lukewarm support to the Whig nominees, the Republican organization being at that time abortive, and the proscriptive Know-nothing movement sweeping to a sudden and brief success. After the election the paper devoted itself with fresh energy to building up a genuine Republican party, but at the same time it asserted its freedom thenceforth from all partisan trammels. It took occasion on the enlargement of its sheet to review its own history; and after mentioning the general improvement in journalism dating from the era of the telegraph, it continued:

"With the dawn of a new national growth upon the press of America, at the period of which we speak, came also a more perfect intellectual freedom from the shackles of party. The independent press of the country is fast supplanting the merely partisan press. Parties are taking their form and substance from the press and pulpit, rather than the press and pulpit echoing merely the voice of the party. A merely party organ is now a thing despised and contemned, and can never take rank as a first-class public journal. The London 'Times,' the great journal of the world, is the creator, not the creature of parties. There is not in New York, where journalism in this country has reached its highest material and intellectual perfection, a single party organ in existence. All are emancipated. None conceal facts lest they injure their party. None fear to speak the truth lest they utter treason against merely partisan power. The true purpose of the press is understood and practiced upon.

They are the mirrors of the world of fact and of thought. Upon that fact do they comment with freedom, and to that thought do they add its freshest and most earnest cumulations.

"Such in its sphere does the 'Republican' aim to be. Whatever it has been in the past, no more shall its distinction be that of a partisan organ, blindly following the will of party, and stupidly obeying its behests. It has its principles and purposes. But these are above mere party success. To these it will devote itself. Whenever and wherever the success of men or of parties can advance those principles and purposes, the 'Republican' will boldly advocate such success; whenever men and parties are stumbling blocks to the triumph of those principles, they will be as boldly opposed and denounced."

To one who knows the character of the New York press, and the American press in general, during most of the thirty years since this was written, this description of its impartial character reads like a sarcasm. The era of journalistic independence was as brief as that of the disintegration of parties. When the new lines had been drawn the newspapers fell into place on one side or the other, — not upon the whole with the old subservience, yet with a degree of partisan fidelity which grew with the growth of party discipline as the Republican party matured and the Democratic party recovered from its successive disruptions; so that in 1872 "independent journalism" was greeted by the general public as a new phenomenon. There were, of course, exceptions among the press, to trace which would belong to a general history of journalism. But through the intervening period, whether heartily favoring or criticising or opposing the general course of the Republican party, Mr. Bowles's paper never hesitated to pronounce a frank, independent judgment on the measures and men of that party and of all parties. Its political news was honest. Its readers could always find the views of its opponents fairly quoted and ungarbled. Its regular correspondents at Washington and elsewhere were always under instructions to give the facts as they were, whether they suited the editorial views or not. In the correspondents' galleries in the Capitol one may sometimes hear such remarks as this: "The situation looks to me so and so — but the old man at home will not let me say so in my dispatches." The "Republican" correspondents had no occasion to say that. They were chosen with due regard to their general agreement with the paper's views, but the instructions given them were to tell the truth. They were allowed, too, to tell it largely from the stand-point of their personal convictions. It was often the case that the paper's own Washington dispatches were considerably more radical in their tone than the editorial columns; while the biting criticisms of "Warrington," the

Boston correspondent, fell often on the measures and men that the "Republican" editorially approved.

To trace even in outline the relation of the "Republican" to the political events of the period in which its chief's life fell, is foreign to the scope of this article. It is designed here only to show the broad ideas out of which were developed the principle and the practice of independent journalism. An instance has been given of the application of that principle to politics, but it has a far wider application than to questions of civil government. Something further may be added on the spirit in which Mr. Bowles dealt with a subject as to which a courageous and wise independence is quite as essential as in politics, and even more difficult for the American journalist.

Nothing was more characteristic of the "Republican" than its attitude toward the churches and the questions connected with them. The half-century of Mr. Bowles's life witnessed immense changes in the social life of the Connecticut Valley. The multiplying of interests, the new forms of industry, the quickening of pace, the widened range of thought, the change in the whole aspect of the community were such as volumes could not describe. The church organizations necessarily partook of the general changes; but, as is generally the case with religious institutions, they showed a tenacity and conservatism beyond most other departments of social life. They continued to include in their membership a preponderance of the social respectability, the intelligence, and the virtue of the community. In their formal creeds there was little change; but their preaching showed a growing indisposition to emphasize the harsher elements of the old creed, and a growing insistence on ethical rather than dogmatic themes. The thought and research which within that period had unsettled the foundations of the ancient creed of Christendom were, of course, felt throughout the intelligent part of the community — or rather through the whole community; no social stratum has any longer a belief or a doubt peculiar to itself. But whatever of radical doubt or dissent existed lay largely beneath the surface. The ministry were as a body very conservative of the substance and most of the form of the ancient faith. Of the earnest and sober-minded laity, a larger proportion held more or less closely to the same faith, which offered an assurance of human salvation, of God, of immortality, while no equally clear and authoritative utterance seemed to come from any other quarter. The churches fostered an atmosphere throughout the community which made open dissent unpleasant for most men who

wished to live on good terms with their neighbors. They assumed to offer the only way to a right life in this world, and to something better beyond this world. Those who did not in their hearts admit the assumption, seldom cared to openly deny, still less to defy it.

The "Republican" acquiesced neither openly nor tacitly in the churches' assumption of an infallible way of salvation; but it neither made war upon the churches nor ignored them. It always assumed that they were a great and useful instrumentality in improving the community. It recognized them as associations for helping men in right living. It discussed their practical methods as freely as it discussed questions of politics. It did not discuss the dogmas of theology, just as it did not discuss the fundamental principles of philosophy or of science. Not even the broad realm of the daily newspaper includes the settlement of the ultimate principles of special departments of thought. But, just as the "Republican" reported as a matter of news the progress of opinion among scientists concerning Darwinism or among philosophers concerning evolution, so it took note of the theological movements and controversies. Whenever questions of church administration had a direct bearing on the practical interests of the community, the paper not only reported them as news, but took part in the debate as an advocate. A contributor once offered an editorial in regard to the ostracism of the Liberal sects by the Orthodox; the form of expression being, "The world, looking on at the conduct of the church which seeks to convert it, is inclined in a friendly way to suggest, etc." Mr. Bowles sent back the article with the answer: "There is a fault of construction in your article for the 'Republican.' We have always discussed these questions as insiders, and not as outsiders. I have no idea of giving up the churches to the ministers and deacons." As to all questions of dogma, the "Republican's" habitual ground was not that some particular doctrine was true or false, but that all doctrine should be held and used with reference to the moral advancement of men; that no question of intellectual belief should stand in the way of anything which could make men stronger, sweeter, more useful to the community. Its independence of creeds was distasteful to the professional guardians of orthodoxy; its free criticism of churches and ministers often drew on it the wrath, not only of the immediate object of criticism, but of the ecclesiastical body in general, sensitive at seeing its dignitaries so summarily dealt with. Yet the paper had nowhere warmer friends than among the most intelligent and earnest of the clergy, orthodox as well as

liberal. It was in strong sympathy with the most vital elements in church life. It appealed to the clergy as the natural leaders of moral reforms. It was unfriendly to destructive methods in theology and religion. Its principles were just those on which the American churches have found their best growth depends,—the exaltation of spiritual life above dogma and ritual; the widening of fellowship beyond the limits of sect, to “the blessed company of all faithful people”; the conception of religion not as a particular set of opinions but as the spirit of duty, love, and faith. The church as an institution is saved by the men who reform it.

As to Mr. Bowles's ideas of the church and of the newspaper, a few sentences may be borrowed from a private letter in 1861 to Dr. Frederick D. Huntington, with whom the “Republican” had had some controversy, and who was a personal friend of the editor.

“The ‘Republican’ has assumed a ground to which you hardly do justice. It is greater than the practice or position of its Editors — higher than denominations or sects, as life is greater than thought, practice than profession, Christianity than theology, piety than prayer. It seems to me to stand above the strife of sects, above the ‘bandying of phrases,’ and to reach to the truest and purest ideas of the Divine purpose. . . . We are content to say [of the various Christian denominations], they are all alike — to put them in one great plan, or scheme, each having excellences, each defects, each having its field, its work, its mission, and all seeking the glory of God and the purification and elevation of men.

“Individually, each of us may have our choice and preference; but is not the idea of the journal worthy of respect? . . . It would be presumption in me to pretend to discuss theology as thoroughly as politics, but I have made no such pretense. The ‘Republican’ has, and has the right to, because it can command and does command talent and learning equally in both sciences. It has on its regular editorial staff one man* as learned in all the dry and disgusting lore of the theological schools as ninety-nine out of one hundred clergymen, and another† whose fervor and unction as a lay preacher are hardly less than the rector of Emanuel’s himself‡ in the pulpit. Pray make the distinction. . . .

“The ‘Republican’s’ sympathies and its hopes are in the right direction. In the quick judgments and rough, direct diction of daily journalism, it must assuredly often mistake, often wound; and wanton doubtless is it in its freedom of utterance; but I know that its heart is right and that you and such as you ought never long or seriously have reason to complain of it. I shall send you the ‘Republican,’ for I wish you to see that its pretensions to being a religious, as well as a political paper — ‘to discuss religious questions’ (not theology purely or mainly) ‘and distribute religious intelligence’ — these being our words, — are not mere pretensions. Our idea of a public journal covers all life — life in its deepest and highest significance, as well as the superficialities of food and raiment, business and government.”

One quotation may here be given from the “Republican’s” later utterances as illustrating the spirit in which it treated religious

subjects. It is from an editorial of December 3, 1874, on “John Stuart Mill as a theologian”; the occasion being the publication of his posthumous essays. The article does not bear the mark of Mr. Bowles’s hand, but is in full harmony with the larger personality of the “Republican” itself.

“The misconception which runs through the two essays of Mill on ‘The Utility of Religion’ and on ‘Theism’ is indeed that which lies at the bottom of the whole utilitarian philosophy; namely, that the human soul acts only or chiefly upon selfish motives, and that human life in this world and the next is an affair of logic and comprehensible by the understanding. However high the point of cultivation reached, however noble the morality which rests upon reasoning, there is always a beyond where the divine powers, the supernatural attitudes of the soul, range free and direct our activity. In that realm the hope of pleasure and the fear of pain are equally indifferent to the enlightened spirit, and all the ordinary sanctions and promoting causes of religion shrink out of sight. The oriental legend of the believer who was met on the road with a torch in one hand and a pitcher of water in the other, conveys a meaning which seems almost beyond the apprehension of Mr. Mill. ‘With this fire,’ said the mystic, ‘I go to burn up the palaces of Heaven, and with this water to quench the flames of Hell, so that man hereafter may worship God truly, and no longer serve Him for hope or for fear.’

“The sadness of the book is neither depressing nor likely to infect others; its warnings and encouragements are all of a high mood, and its errors are such as throw no blame upon its author. To this great man, lingering upon the confines of the two worlds and sharpening his vision with love and regret toward the world unseen and almost despaired of, the life of mankind assumed a serious and tender aspect, not devoid of a melancholy hope, and rich in virtuous manly endeavors and accomplished deeds. The truly devout alone have the right to censure him, for he stands, like the Stoics and the highest of the followers of Epicurus, far above the plane of the ordinary religions of the world. Such souls need the teachings of Christ himself, not the discourses of Paul or of the ecclesiastics.”

The church and its ministry have high functions which the press cannot share. The personal cure of souls; the spoken word of inspiration, sent home with the impact which only figure and face and voice can impart; the organization for direct mutual help in the conduct of life; the supplying of a visible basis and stronghold for the moral forces of the community, — these are still the church’s province. But men no longer look to the church’s pulpit as they used to look for guidance in thought and opinion. That scepter has passed to the journalist. He, in a broader sense than any other, is the teacher of the community, or rather the official teacher; for the highest leadership is not an office, but a personal endowment. The transfer of authority has been going on for centuries, but it was consummated in that same third of a century in which Mr. Bowles built up the “Republican.” In the beginning of that period it might have been fair to take Mr. Peabody, pastor of the Uni-

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tarian church in Springfield, as the type of the public teacher in New England,— a dignified personage, speaking his weekly word from the pulpit, clad in gown of solemn black; dwelling much on the transitoriness and woe of this present life, urging an ideal of character which was pure and lofty, but had few points of contact with the matter-of-fact world in which his hearers must needs live. Against this figure thirty years later we may set the journalist at his desk, alert, high-strung, the telegraph pouring upon him the news of the whole planet, with now and then an item from the solar system beyond, his swift pen touching every interest of politics, trade,

society, conduct, faith, every phase of the great world's teeming activity. He is now the King,— well for him if he be also the Saint and Prophet! "You see in me only a fraction of the king," Mr. Bowles would have said; "here is the sovereign, the paper itself— with world-wide agencies at its command; fed by the life-juices of many workers; governed by an ideal which is a birth of the age-spirit, and which unstinted labor and love have built up. The life I have planted in the paper is as distinct from my own as the life which a father transmits to his son, and it shall live when I and my sons have passed away."

George S. Merriam.

A POET'S SOLILOQUY.

On a time, not of old,
When a poet had sent out his soul, and no welcome had found
Where the heart of the nation in prose stood fettered and bound
In fold upon fold —
He called back his soul who had pined for some answer afloat;
And thus in the silence of night and the pride of his spirit he wrote:

Come back, poet-thought!
For they honor thee not in thy vesture of verse and of song.
Come back — thou hast hovered about in the markets too long.
In vain thou hast sought
To stem the strong current that swells from the Philistine lands;
Thou hast failed to deliver the message the practical public demands.

Come back to the heights
Of thy vision, thy love, thy Parnassus of beauty and truth —
From the valleys below where the labor of age and of youth
Has no need of thy lights;—
For Science has marshaled the way with a lamp of its own.
Till they woo thee with wakening love, thou must follow thy pathway alone.

We have striven, have toiled —
Have pressed with the foremost to sing to the men of our time
The thought that was deepest, the lay that was lightest in rhyme.
We are baffled and foiled.
The crowd hurries on, intent upon traffic and pay.
They have ears, but they hear not. What chance to be heard has the poet to-day?

So we turn from the crowd,
And we sing as we please — like the thrush far away in the woods;
They may listen or not, as they choose, to our fancies and moods
Chanted low, chanted loud
In the sunshine or storm—'mid the hearts that are tender or hard.
What need of applause from the world when art is its own reward?

Christopher P. Cranch.