periment suggests that the mission of the art is not likely to be exhausted while there remain beautiful pictures to be represented and skillful artists to represent them. Looking ahead to the development of American painting and sculpture and the esthetic education of the people, there would seem to be a larger field for the engraver in the popular record which will need to be made of the achievements of art. For the present the magazines and weekly periodicals must remain the engraver's mainstay and stimulus. At first glance the illustrated newspaper appears to be militating against him; along with some admirably successful illustrative work it seems to be dulling the edge of popular taste with a deluge of pictures inferior in execution; but the reaction will be to his advantage in emphasizing by contrast the excellence of the art as he pursues it. Meantime, it must be remarked, there has been of late years not only no falling off in the character of work done by wood-engravers, but a steady increase in freedom, in variety, and in all the other qualities that go to make an artistic whole.

Nine Thousand Manuscripts.

DURING the past two years from eight thousand five hundred to nine thousand manuscripts were annually submitted to THE CENTURY MAGAZINE for publication. This is an increase over previous years, and does not include the hundreds, perhaps thousands, of propositions submitted with regard to articles. As there has been an increase in the number of periodicals published in America of late years, and as the newspapers are publishing more contributions than ever by writers not on the regular staff, it is evident that there has been an increase in literary activity at least in proportion to the increase in population.

Now out of nine thousand manuscripts a year THE CENTURY can only possibly print four hundred or less. It follows that editing a magazine is not unlike walking into a garden of flowers and gathering a single bouquet. In other words, not to accept an article, a story, a poem, is not necessarily to "reject" it. There may be weeds in the garden,— there must be weeds in the garden,— but the fact that a particular blossom is not gathered into the monthly bouquet does not prove that the editor regarded the blossom as a weed, and therefore passed it by. It would be impossible to sweep all the flowers into a single handful. The "rejected" or "declined" are naturally prone to gibe at sympathetic or apologetic words from editorial sources; so we present the above simile with considerable diffidence. There is truth in it, nevertheless! And it would probably be much easier for editors to make up a number of bouquets from the flowers at their disposal than to gather the single one for which alone they have room.

The general impression of a lifelong reader of manuscripts is that the quality does not deteriorate— that, in fact, it improves. Such a reader, moreover, is greatly impressed by the wide diffusion of literary ability. There are certainly very many more people who can write a good story, a good descriptive paper, a good essay, a good poem, than there were, say, twenty years ago. An old manuscript reader is inclined, in fact, to be very optimistic. Even Mr. Howells's recent extraordinary praise of current literature may not seem to such a reader as so very far out of the way. But after the old manuscript reader has expressed himself thus optimistically he is entitled to his "buts." He may even permit himself to ask whether the literary artist of our day has not caught somewhat of the hurry, the immediateness, of the time; whether, indeed, the present age is not too present with us; whether there is the slow, determined, sure, artistic work which made the successful careers of the earlier generation of American poets, romancists, and essayists. There surely is such work, but is it as general as it should be? and, if not, is this one reason that there are not more literary reputations in the new generation commensurate with those of the old?

At least the old manuscript reader may, by reason of his age, if nothing else, be pardoned should he at times look over his spectacles at the young manuscript writer and say: "Young man, young woman, you have talent, you have industry, you have knowledge, you have a fine, large audience eagerly waiting for you; all you need is to respect still more highly your own unusual parts. Ponder over, perfect your work; be not in too great haste to bring it to the eye of the editor, to the eye of the public. Regard each poem, each story, as a step in your literary career; let it not leave your hand till you have done your very best with it. If you intend it to be a genuine work of art, make it so — if you can. This may seem a slow process, but it may prove the speediest in results; and after you have followed this advice, remember that even an editor is mortal, and, like every other mortal, entitled to his proportion of mistakes."

It is to be hoped that the word "career" incidentally dropped in the foregoing will not have a tendency towards making ingenuous youths selfish and self-conscious. Given a certain amount of skill and taste, literary art is only another name for literary conscience. Conscientious work is not necessarily artistic work, as many a poor devil has found out too late. But it may be. The heart comes first — a warm heart and a cool head, says Joseph Jefferson — the heart comes first, but heart without art is of no avail. The literary artist need not think sordidly on his or her "career," and yet may cherish that decent regard for repute, that love of artistic perfection, which will bring the rewards of conscience and of honorable fame. At the least the literary artist should be ashamed to do less well than in him lies. He should not niggle and polish for the love of niggling and polishing; but he should be remorseless in self-correction for the love of truth, and art, and beauty. And also, as already said, he should allow the editor that privilege of humanity, the right to blunder; remembering that the "declined" writer's revenge is the editor's own too vivid memory of mistakes — the ever-lengthening black list of errors in literary judgment which every old reader of manuscripts turns to in the secret place of his own mind for melancholy penance and warning.

Journalists and Newsmongers.

IN the days when Horace Greeley was looked upon as the dean of the faculty of journalists, the soul of a newspaper was its editorial page; a variety of information worthy of the attention of good citizens was not scorned; and the license of wit, the lash of criti-

cism, and the retort of the libel suit, testified to the officiousness, as well as the usefulness, of the men who were, with somewhat appropriate metaphor, called "knights of the quill." Their efforts, for the most part, had a public motive. The profits of their industry were in large measure public respect. What they received in money was derived from the industrial uses of the printing press. And they were measurably content.

We are far from saying that this race of journalists has died out. In many newspapers the old traditions are maintained with great ability, but frequently in association with the idea that "news" is mere merchandise. True, it is bought and sold; and in another place we offer an explanation of "What 's the News," which reveals the importance of its commercial aspect; but the point we wish to urge is that news, like electricity or steam, is force. Readers pay toll for the use of news, but they acquire no title in it as of merchandise; in fact, the purveyor of it has no such title to transmit. He has brought together experiences and opinions that belong to some men, for the purpose of enlarging the knowledge and directing the actions of other men. The reader is acted upon by the news as by a force; he uses it as a force. Like every other force, news is a power for good or evil, according to the way it is given out and handled. It makes and wrecks private fortunes, destroys the peace of mind of individuals, directs the thoughts of the multitude, and incites to suicide and murder. If a force that has the potency of great good to society is thus capable of doing so much injury to individuals, it would seem as though the shapers and purveyors of it ought to be conspicuous among men for their sense of moral responsibility. Those who exhibit that quality in their work answer to the stature and breadth of the men who, in the past, have won respect and fame as journalists.

Those who make mere merchandise of news, and even win wealth and notoriety thereby, are, of course, newsmongers. In the days before the cylinder-press, and the telegraph, and the steam-cars, the newsmonger was only a peddler of small-beer and scandal. Now he is often a dealer at wholesale in everything anybody is suspected of wanting to read, and in many things that a person of ordinary common sense would say nobody ought to read. He measures the value of news of the affairs of public or of obscure persons by the surprise it will cause to the many, regardless of the injury it may do to the many or the few. There is no barrier of right or decency that the more conscienceless man of his type will not use degrading means to pass if the news to be gained promises a sensation capable of enhancing his reputation for audacity and enterprise. Public men stand in awe of him, because, in one issue of his newspaper, he can give a hundred thousand blows to their one. Legislators shrink from stepping between him and the public, because, with all his disregard of the feelings of others, he is the most sensitive being on earth, and the most ruthless and vindictive in his revenges. When other men fall out, he makes sport of their folly; but the welkin is made to ring with his own private quarrels and petty jealousies. When he has set a libel traveling with seven-league boots, the best amend he can make is to follow it with silence; his apologies are more remarkable for brevity and magnanimity than for retraction. He evades or defies the power of the law, because the sentences and punishments that he inflicts are more swift and more annoying than the processes of public justice. Side by side with the sermon of the eloquent or the sensational preacher he prints the details of the Simon Pure or disguised prize-fight of the day. The law that punishes the bruiser who affords the illegal spectacle has no power over the newsmonger who fosters public interest in pugilism, and extends the brutalizing excitement of the ring to the family circle. Pugilists would not fight by stealth in obscure places if the newspapers were not allowed to flood cities with their bear-pit heroics of the battle. Side by side with the quotations of the markets, the newsmonger prints the illegal "odds" of the race-tracks and the bar-rooms at election time. Not satisfied with leaving every neighborhood to the contemplation of its own social cesspool, he makes each separate locality the dumping-ground of the moral filth of a whole continent. By a strange perversion of justice, where law-breakers sow tares the newsmonger reaps circulation and profits.

When these things are said of him, the newsmonger laughs and ascribes such criticism to lack of humor. He believes, in common with a forerunner of his class in the West, that "the mission of a journalist is to raise hell and sell newspapers." If any one affects to call that a low standard of professional taste, his apology is that it is the public which demands such a coarse interpretation of his duty. This is not strictly true, because, in competing with his fellow-newsmongers for the public patronage, he takes advantage of the weakness for sensation and scandal, common enough to human nature, and abnormally developed among our own people by the license adopted by prominent newspapers. Undoubtedly a lower standard than at present exists would be established as the average taste of the public if the laws against printed indecency, that are now so inadequate a protection, could be still further ignored without arousing a public mutiny. A new code of laws to meet the new conditions of journalism cannot be postponed indefinitely; but the legal protection that the individual citizen, rather more than society as a whole, is at present in need of will hardly be obtained until journalists of authority and conscience surrender, for the public good, something of the omniscience, infallibility, and privilege of meting out sentence and punishment which they have usurped as being essential to the power and authority of their class.

The worst present feature of American journalism is the apparent belief of our ablest journalists that in order to sustain themselves against the competition of the newsmonger they must, no matter in how small degree, imitate his methods. Some of the journals that have always led the moral and intellectual currents of the country, and are now, in those respects, perhaps the equals of any newspapers in the world, have little by little opened their columns to the very "news" that attracts the rabble of the prize and the betting rings. It is true that they offer fewer details, and clothe them in the language of good society; and some of them even bitter-coat the forbidden "news" with a moral groan. The newsmonger's theory that the first object of a newspaper is to entertain or amuse has been gaining ground in high quarters; one often looks in vain nowa-

days in the most serious journals for an adequate abstract of what is said in Congress, or in deliberative meetings bearing on public questions. The reporting of such debates may be as faithfully done now as it used to be, but after "copy" has passed through the hands of the sub-editor whose duty it is to eliminate everything that is not quarrelsome, impertinent, or funny, the part that gets into print is often a sorry record of what was actually said and done to influence public affairs.

On the other hand,— and the effect is more corrupting,— newsmongers realize that in order to reap the money benefit of pandering to trivial and vicious tastes they must at the same time play the *rôle* of the responsible journalist. Some of the more incorrigible of them do this with great success; they teach humility to the humble at the same time that they instruct brutes in brutality, or flog judges and law-givers for being remiss in their duty to the state. They are the product of new conditions and forces in life; even the more unscrupulous of them make themselves, by a certain intermingling of real service, of positive value to our modern civilization.

No doubt the present tendency towards trivialities and personalities will continue until private rights and public morals are better protected by the laws, and until the acme of size and profit in newspapers has been reached. In the race for expansion and power, the leader who has adopted the readiest means has often imposed his methods upon men who would choose the best means. The fault of a lower tone, here and there, is not properly chargeable to the great body of workers, for in the profession will be found to-day a high average of ability, and conscientious performance of duty; and never before our time have newspapers been able to command the trained intelligence and taste to enable them to do all they are now doing for the development of art and literature; all that the newspapers of to-day are doing for every good cause, and notably at this moment for that of good government. Capital and financial success are of course essential for the production of a great modern newspaper; but the public has a right to demand that those who bear the highest responsibilities of the profession should issue newspapers which they, as private individuals, would be willing to indorse, in every part, as men of character, refinement, and self-respect.

The Influence of Athletics.

MR. CAMP'S article on track athletics brings to mind the remarks not long since made by a moralist who complained that the craze for athletics, having overthrown the only valid reason for giving up to college men four years of life already too short for solid attainment in the modern struggle for existence, seemed to be spreading its malign influence over the rest of mankind. One needed only to glance at one's paper, he argued, to see that athletics had become matters of great public interest. No newspaper is complete without its detailed account of contests and its rumors of the condition and relative skill of antagonists in contests yet to come. He could see, he added, a vast amount of feverish excitement, the loss of the scholastic peace so necessary to the student, the neglect of duty, and the sapping of strength. He thought that something ought to be done about it.

Now it is probably true that there is often excessive indulgence, but that is not the logical result of the present widespread interest in outdoor sports. Over-indulgence in athletics produces reaction and eventually remedies itself; but he who is quick to see the strong hold that athletics have upon the young men in our colleges is very far afield if he fails to look beyond the shouts, the upborne victors, the depression of the vanquished. Though physical strength and endurance and skill receive their praise,— in the enthusiastic hour of victory perhaps more than is their due,— one should not forget that at least they do not walk side by side with dalliance and indulgence. Along with endurance and skill the student has begun to appreciate the advantage of self-control, steadiness, and temperance. There is no royal road to right living while the blood of youth runs warm in the veins, but he who has learned the value of restraint, the quick eye, the steady brain, the sure hand and foot, has gone far on the way. With the quickening of the athletic spirit has come a gain in studious qualities. The number of hard students have in no wise decreased, while the average scholarship has advanced rapidly within the past five or ten years. A manlier, healthier tone has everywhere prevailed, and the periodical outbreaks against college discipline which used to be altogether too frequent are now almost unheard of in the larger and better colleges. The policy of the wiser college faculties has been to leave mainly to the students the regulations of athletic affairs, while abating in no degree their demands upon the time and attention of the students under their control. The result has been a gain in confidence and respect on both sides. The evils are not beyond remedy, and will ultimately right themselves; the gains are great.

Careful statistics wholly disprove the oft-repeated assertion that the athlete must necessarily be a poor student, so much of his time is given to the preparation for contests. On the contrary, he has learned method and the advantages of regularity, and knows how best to husband his resources. For systematic training and discipline are never wasteful; and a capacity for self-restraint and obedience has never been found to be an unfitting quality for one duty and not for another. And when does one reach the point where sunlight and pure air, expanded lungs and clear brains, become drags upon intellectual life and activity? Elsewhere in this magazine Mr. Albert Shaw speaks of the marvelous tenacity and vitality of the English race in England, and one is tempted to ask how much England's national vigor may be due to the persistence for ages of her people in outdoor sports. How far may the spring in the step of the well-trained athlete project itself into the constructive energy of a people? What force, what dogged determination, may not generations of contestants in athletic sports impart to the intellectual achievements of a nation? At the close of the recent inauguration ceremonies of the new president of Columbia, a well-known professor in another famous college, himself a Columbia man, was expressing his high satisfaction with the impression the new president had made. "But then," he added with conviction, "he was a great foot-ball player in his day."

inhabitants in 1870, there are now twenty-eight; and that while the total city population has increased nearly sixty per cent. since 1880, the total population of the country has increased only twenty-five per cent. This increase in city population has been accompanied by a steady increase in municipal misrule, if the amount of attention and anxiety devoted by all thoughtful minds to that subject affords satisfactory evidence, and we believe it does. Surely, therefore, this tendency to make not only New York but all our cities larger ought to give all patriotic Americans a fresh and powerful incentive to grapple with the problem of municipal government and to solve it in the only way in which it can be solved; that is, by separating municipal affairs completely from State and national politics, and conducting them, as the citizens of Berlin, Glasgow, Birmingham, and Manchester conduct theirs, upon a thoroughgoing, non-partisan, business basis.

"Journalists and Newsmongers" Again.

A YEAR ago we printed a suggestive array of facts under the title "What 's the News?" which revealed the vast importance in a commercial sense of the expenses and revenues of a great modern newspaper. As the author, keeping within his purpose, had no call to discuss the moral side of the business of gathering and selling news, we thought his paper made a fit occasion for commenting editorially on the distinction which ought to be drawn between "Journalists and Newsmongers."

In effect we described a Journalist to be a responsible editor or publisher who seeks public support for a medium of important news, of trained judgment on public questions, and of unselfish criticism of persons and things that are prejudicial to the public welfare. Whatever he offers under those heads is an appeal to healthy intelligence and not to depraved taste; he measures these things by his own judgment and not alone by what he imagines to be a public craving. He recognizes that news is a force and not a commodity; a force that brings happiness and injury or punishment to thousands of fellow beings every time he sends it broadcast over his community; and that his license to lend this force is his moral acceptance of the duty of seeing that it is true and that it does not wantonly invade the rights of private persons. In so far as he is a purveyor of useful information and a wise and helpful censor of public affairs, his newspaper gains in influence, circulation, and business prosperity. He is a self-constituted public servant who is herald, soldier, statesman, and judge; his work, even with honest purpose, is colored by human qualities; but the evils of his faults are trifling compared with his enormous services to society. The Journalist of this pattern is numerous and honorable among us.

On the other hand the Newsmonger was described as an editor, or publisher, who looks upon the public functions of a journalist as the opportunity and cover of making merchandise of other people's affairs to satisfy the curiosity of those who will buy. He recognizes in the public a depraved taste as well as a healthy intelligence, and caters to both; he measures the influence of his journal by the number of copies he can sell and not by the effect of his teachings; his public, so far as "news" should satisfy it, is any class, vile or innocent, whose interests may be cultivated. He lashes law-breakers on one page, and on another (maybe in his advertising pages) supplies them with the information that is a part of the tools of their lawlessness. While a doctor of divinity, perhaps, is assisting him with moral views in one department of his newspaper, a companion of ruffians is entertaining dog-fighters, pugilists, pool-sellers, and other law-breakers in the column alongside. And why? Because his self-constituted mission is to print whatever will sell, and because the news of vice is interesting, not alone to its professors, but also to thousands who are ashamed to practise it. He excuses his traffic in heartless gossip of weak or unfortunate persons, and in records of immorality and unlawful amusements, by saying that the public wants such news or it would not buy, and therefore if he did not take the profits of the sale himself somebody else, less scrupulous, would do so. He likes to wield the power of the press as much as does the Journalist, and is oftener tempted to abuse his facilities for dealing out private as well as public vengeance. Modern expansion of the means and ends of journalism gives him a power over the reputations of private individuals and public officers and law-makers that is the greatest tyranny of the time, and provides him with a capacity for self-defense which laughs at the few and superannuated restraints of the law. The Newsmonger of this pattern is also known among us, and the worst of his influence is the temptation to shade off into his methods which he offers to Journalists, by dint of his material success.

These views drew from the author of "What 's the News" an explanation on behalf of certain prominent publishers, which is printed in "Open Letters" and is called by the writer "Conscience in Journalism." It is valuable for its candor, for the proof which sensitiveness gives of good intentions, and for the illustration it affords of the ascendancy of the business idea among American conductors of newspapers. For it is clear that by the word "publisher" the author means the man who gets the profits of the newspaper, or who represents those who do, and who is therefore first of all responsible for its business success; it is equally clear that it is this business thinker (who may or may not be, also, the writing thinker) who is the maker of the tone and policy of the newspaper. He is represented as the employer of paid and unpaid scouts whose purpose is not alone to inform him as to the kind of news his public are prepared to buy, but also in part to help him determine how much idle gossip and pruriency must be supplied if he would not alienate some part of his daily patrons.

The men who revolt at this idea of the responsibility of a conductor of a newspaper are referred to as critics who are ignorant of the internal workings of a newspaper office. On the contrary most of the censors of the Newsmonger are men who are familiar with every sort of work on a newspaper, from setting type to writing editorials, except the sharing in the division of the net profits of the counting house. They know how salaries are earned; they realize the value of accuracy even in handling the details of a shop-girl's love affair, that otherwise might involve the owner in damages for libel; when they are sent to ask impertinent questions as to the private affairs of a man or woman, they are aware of the fact that their mission is infamous, and that

their employer, who is interested in having the "news" that he may sell it, would readily forego the profits if he were obliged to be his own inquisitor. We state an extreme case within which all shades of minor and proper inquisition adjust themselves. For it is well known that in general the part played by the reporter in the modern newspaper is alike most honorable to him and most useful to the public. When he is laboring heart and hand with a Journalist his task is elevating; it is only when he answers the behest of the Newsmonger that his work is degrading.

We are frankly told that "newspapers are run as the miller runs his mill, the miner his mine, the farmer his farm." But the Newsmonger counts as grist all that can be brought to his hopper; he dumps on the market the unrefined ore, and he sows tares with the grain; while the Journalist knows that he is working under a sacred trust to grind only what is wholesome, to bring to light only that which has the true ring, and to separate the chaff from the wheat. We are informed that in journalism "sentiment does not pay," which has a family resemblance to the remark of the Western editor, when he named a sum that would secure a reversal of his political policy, that "he was not running a newspaper for his health." But neither does the Journalist try to make Sentiment pay. With him Sentiment is a luxury that for his own manhood he may to some extent afford; while it is Sense that he relies upon to pay. Because "newspapers are rapidly coming under the control of corporations," and "require vast sums of money for their conduct," we are told that "they are worked as other money-making corporations are worked — for all the profit they can be made to yield," and that "there is no other way to work them." This condition of modern journalism, which may be a positive strength and need not be a weakness, is nevertheless the Journalist's temptation and the Newsmonger's necessity. Through a certain rivalry for readers these types have been known to approach each other, and even to become merged in the "money-making corporation." Some of the greatest Journalists of this power-press age have been servants of newspaper corporations, and yet have held their masters to their own high standards, whether the business might have been made to yield larger revenues or not. But as a rule the master-mind in a newspaper corporation is a single person owning a majority of the stock. He it is who determines whether the influence of his journal shall tend upward, or downward. In our view he is *not* carrying "the standard" of "public taste" "forward as fast and as far as the public permits" him. He is pursuing honor or gain, or both, according to his tastes and his lights. His newspaper is as much an expression of his mental and moral personality as the atmosphere of the *mephitis* or the clover-breathing kine is of its distinctive habits and nature.

OPEN LETTERS.

Conscience in Journalism.

THE publication of my article "What 's the News?" in THE CENTURY MAGAZINE for June, 1890, brought me, in substance, the following request from upwards of a score of publishers, no less than seven of whom bear national reputations: "Many say the newspaper press is sensational; some declare journalism to be below the mean of the public taste; a few charge journalists with this, and only this, aim: 'To raise hell and sell newspapers.' Will you, through THE CENTURY MAGAZINE if possible, set forth the true position of the journalist."

The chief points of newspaper management that have been attacked are: The subject selected to be printed as news; the style in which the news is written; the head-lines with which the news is labeled. In what follows I endeavor to define the journalist's position, employing in my language the material furnished me for this purpose by the publishers referred to, who, to begin with, lay down these propositions:

1. We publish the misdeeds of mankind, not as examples, but as warnings; not for imitation, but for correction.

2. We aim at attractiveness in the presentation of news, not at sensationalism, and we give, not as many sensational details as we often might, but as few as the public will be satisfied with.

3. We know the public taste, and, while we cater to it, we likewise undertake, by the only practicable means we know of, to elevate it. Our critics neither know the public taste, nor take any practicable means to improve it.

The usual argument of those who speak for the publisher is the declaration that the newspaper is a business enterprise, dependent upon public support for its existence, and therefore bound to give the public that which the public will pay for. I shall not argue by this declaration, because, while business of most other kinds is conducted upon this level, the newspaper, with all its faults, is not. For example, the manufacturer makes and the merchant sells the machine, the fabric, the pattern, the style that the public will buy. The machine may be poor, the fabric shoddy, the pattern homely, the style old; but if the public, being warned only so much as by a reduction in the price, do but buy, the manufacturer and the merchant count their duty done.

Not so the publisher. His goods must be neither stale nor shoddy, no matter how cheaply he offers to sell them. It is not claimed, however, that newspapers even approach perfection. Some, it is frankly admitted, go farther in forbidden directions than they ought, but with this admission can be pointed out the rapidly diminishing number of journals of this class — not because the public refuses to support them, but because honest journalism has made them disreputable by comparison.

Publishers have to depend upon employees to whom the temptation to exaggerate, to pry into private affairs, to invent sensations, is peculiarly great. This lightning age demands that the news of the world be collected and printed between the hours of eight o'clock in the evening and three o'clock the next morning. Errors creep in; mistakes of judgment are made; but woe to him who errs or misjudges purposely. The re-

porter who begins by bringing in unfounded sensations, gross exaggerations, and false interviews soon ends in disgrace, and were the critic to enter the ranks of the newspaper makers and follow the rules which he appears to think govern there, he would see the back-door before he would reach the second floor of journalism.

Publishers have not failed to recognize the public obligation imposed by the character of their wares. They do not follow the rule unhesitatingly followed by the manufacturer and the merchant — to give the public that which the public will pay for. Whatever the critic may demand, the public demands sensation. Every such demand must be carefully examined. The publisher must consider its legal aspects, its moral bearings; the rights of those involved, as well as the rights of the public to be served.

If he decide upon publication — and he many times decides not to publish, although he knows the public would read the story with zest — the publisher must give the facts, and only the facts. To do so uniformly is not easy, for be it remembered that few men and women, however high their standing, hesitate to make false statements to reporters, if it be strongly to their interest to do so. Publishers invariably go to first hands for news, verify it to every extent that money, training, and limited time admit, and publish it with a freedom from opinion, from personal animus, and from sensational discolor, possible only to experienced chroniclers of events; and with a freedom from exaggeration that not one person in a hundred, having occasion verbally to repeat it, is able to command.

In party journalism it is true that political opponents are often charged with serious, sometimes criminal, frequently absurd, offenses, but these are excusable, in a measure, through the stress of party strife. Besides, these charges never hurt — mark that I say they never hurt — unless they are true. Party and personal journalism, in an offensive sense, will before long be things of the past. The journal of the future, almost of the present, is independent of the party whip.

In the case of crimes, of scandals, of political charges, the corrective principle is never lost sight of. Mere wrong, because it is wrong, is never retailed. Just as nations endure war that they may have peace, so newspapers expose wrongs against the public, that the public may correct them, and right prevail.

The demagogue in politics, the knave in office, the trickster in business, the wreckers of families, the beaters of wives, the charlatans in the professions, the upstarts in orders, the daubers in art — this vast horde are ruined by publicity. In their eyes the sin lies not in the sin itself, but in the public's discovery of it. Hence the newspaper, which discovers the sin to the public, comes in for abuse that is loud and prolonged. Sympathy is aroused, and even good people are often found lending their ears and their influence to this denunciatory harangue. In the midst of the muss a reputation is lost. How? Certainly not through the acts of the newspapers, for they never professed and never possessed such power. It was the truth that killed.

Do not understand me to say that newspapers are conducted solely upon sentiment. They are not. Why should they be? What obligation rests upon the dealer in news that does not likewise rest upon the dealer in flour, in meat, in iron, in real estate, to undertake the elevation of the standard of public morals? Newspapers are run as the miller runs his mill, the miner his mine, the farmer his farm. Sentiment does not pay. Newspapers are rapidly coming under the control of corporations, like railways and financial institutions, and they require vast sums of money for their conduct. Hence, they are worked as other money-making corporations are worked — for all the profit they can be made to yield. There is no other way to work them.

The newspaper critic demands flesh of one business man, fish of another, and fowl of a third. Without any obligation resting upon them above that resting upon other men of equal ability and opportunity, the men who make their money at publishing news are daily, weekly, monthly bringing wrong-doers, both private and public, to justice; serving their political party and their country by making it impossible for bad men to remain long in power; battling for better laws, better schools, better streets, better morals, better government; while the men who make their money at selling dry goods, groceries, clothing, coal — what are they doing in these desirable directions? Speaking for the majority, nothing. If they be wealthy, and therefore able to exert more than the average influence, they generally neglect to attend primaries, go abroad in the heat of the campaign, and steadily refuse to serve on school, reform, and similar committees because of an alleged press of business cares. It is the very excellence of the newspaper that has made the newspaper critic possible.

While newspapers are not conducted upon sentiment, their conductors, following a precedent that is as old as the newspaper itself, give part of their time and much of their energy to the battle for public and private improvements. Did the first American hotel-keeper lament the lack of general intelligence, and set about extending it? Did the importers of Benjamin Franklin's day, any more than the importers of our day, regularly give part of their time and money to the public good? Did the theatrical managers of Hezekiah Niles's time undertake to see that government officials were honest, not dishonest? Did even the lawyers of Thurlow Weed's period, any more than now, go out of their way that we may have better schools, better charities, and fewer Tweeds?

The publisher's time is as precious and his business as exacting as those of the landlord, the importer, the theatrical manager, or the lawyer; and yet, since the days of William Bradford, the publisher has led, and that in two senses: He has worked for the public taste while other men have worked chiefly for themselves, and he has slowly raised that taste, while other men, speaking as a class and barring the clergy, have been dead weights in the scales.

Conductors of great newspapers do not "go it blind." They leave that course to the critics. Men responsible for the conduct of properties worth millions, and compelled to earn dividends upon the sixty-fourth part of a cent profit, are required to have rules of action, and to follow them. They have a reason covering every item they publish. It is not a general reason. It is a particular reason. It dictates, not alone the length, the tone, the form, but every phrase and sentence. Other items are not in their papers — a circumstance for which specific reasons likewise exist.

Upon what basis do publishers act? Upon the same basis that a general directs the movements of his army —his knowledge of the "lay of the land." And he gets this knowledge by the same method that a general does — from "scouts." Every publisher has about him persons whose duty it is to ascertain the drift of public opinion, and report it to him. These persons are not reporters. They are not known as employees. Sometimes they do not themselves know the functions they fulfil. Hardly ever do they number less than a score; oftentimes, if the publisher be a live one, they number several hundreds. Some are paid in money, some get a free copy of the newspaper, and some are not paid at all.

Thousands of persons do not know news when they see it — unless, of course, they see it in the newspaper, properly labeled. Hence, when you seek news experts you must take them where you find them. Thus it happens that newspaper scouts are likely to be either the apple-woman at the street corner or the society belle; either the policeman or the railway president. In short, they are anybody and everybody who can and will undertake the work.

These publishers' outposts ask persons in all walks of life and in all sorts of business, their opinions of this and that newspaper; whether they like political news; are they fond of sports; why, if they express a liking for a certain journal, they hold the opinion they do; what they read first, and what last; do they enjoy details of murders; do they read religious news, society gossip, and editorials?

Publishers try the plan of hiring persons acquainted in the town or neighborhood to ask these questions, that they may get opinions of value. Then they send strangers into the same locality — and compare results. Occasionally persons are found with novel ideas, for originality, like the law, is no respecter of persons. A farmer who had never been beyond the limits of his county, and knew no more about conducting a newspaper than about commanding a ship, gave a bit of advice to a newspaper that saved it from bankruptcy — every one of you would know the journal were I to mention its name — and so completely changed its character that almost every journal in the country observed and commented upon it.

A newsboy furnished the suggestion that the large four-page sheets in general use a few years ago be changed to the eight-page form, on the score of convenience, and the newsboy's suggestion, having been acted upon, altered in the course of about five years the form of nearly every leading daily in America.

Every letter bearing upon the newspaper's contents is sent directly to the publisher's desk. And the critics, by the by, should read these letters. There are hundreds of them. Just such letters as you would expect? Not a bit. The leading lawyer wants more particulars about the church congress; a clergyman complains of the meagreness of the report of the murder trial; the politician criticizes, not the political news, but the account of the lawn fête; the banker wants to know the cause of the error in the report of the number of "put outs" in yesterday's ball game; and the up-town woman asks that a certain stock be quoted in the financial news. There they are, scarcely one containing the query or the criticism you would expect, if you looked first at the signature.

The publisher who constantly receives reports from two or three hundred "scouts," and daily peruses as many letters setting forth, as they set them forth to no one else, the wants, the vanities, the craving for puffs, the thirst for notoriety, the ambitions, the love for scandal, the threats, the idiosyncrasies, of people in all walks of life, including the very highest, has a knowledge of the public taste that is at once certain and positive.

Hundreds of publishers, sitting at the focus of these multifarious public demands, struggle year after year, sacrificing money, time, and peace of mind, with the knowledge that they can at any moment increase their circulation and their profits by lowering the moral and literary standards of their publications. Why do they not lower them? There are many reasons. The publisher finds in his hands a powerful lever. It is a lever of better private and public morals; of better laws; of better public service; of detection for the wrong-doer; of wider education; of purer literature; of better chances for the weak; and the publisher bears all the weight upon this lever that a not-high public taste will let him. He does so because he is conscientious, because he is patriotic, because he is ambitious, because he seeks an honorable name, and because the traditions, the precedents, the contemporaneous newspaper comparisons demand that he shall do so.

The newspaper of to-day — I speak of the ninety and not of the ten — is above the mean of the public taste which it serves. And this is true, whether the journal be published in the new communities of the West or in the old communities of the East, in the mining towns of Colorado and Idaho or in the college towns of Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.

Publishers have acted with singular wisdom, rare public spirit, and remarkable unanimity. They ascertained the public taste, and then placed their standard as near the front of the column as possible. They do not go on ahead of the column, as their critics would have them do. Instead, they remain a part of the public demand, while leading it. In doing so they accomplish two things, impossible of accomplishment in any other way: they educate the public taste to their standard, and they carry that standard forward as fast and as far as the public permits them.

Eugene M. Camp.

The Disputed Boundary between Alaska and British Columbia.

THE boundary line between the United States and the British possessions in North America once more threatens to become the subject of international dispute, conference, and arbitration. A half century ago "Fifty-four Forty or Fight" was a campaign cry, and the coming controversy begins at that line, from which President Polk retreated, the once northern boundary of Oregon Territory being the southern boundary of our territory of Alaska. The discussion of the ownership of Revillagigedo, Pearse, and Wales Islands, and of the line of the Portland Canal, will rival the contest over San Juan Island and San Rosario or De Haro Straits, decided in favor of the United States by the Emperor of Germany as arbitrator, in 1872.

Each year that the boundary line between Alaska and British Columbia remains in question increases the difficulty of determining it. Each year settlements are