

of men and women prominent in the case) in connection with crime has the effect of encouraging crime or lowering moral standards?

That crime "news" development has had a depreciating influence on the public mind cannot be disputed for there are too many evident circumstances of a lowered moral standard of life as a direct result of overcolored news of crime and moral perversities.

When the Hearst newspapers, some years ago, led the pace in picturing crime details, many high class dailies refused to follow suit. Gradually these dailies have copied this plan and are today as specific respecting details of every kind of crime, as we recall the Hearst's San Francisco paper, for instance, used to be some fifteen years ago when sensational newswriting was young. If there was an added sales value to the newspaper featuring crime, certainly those who at first were bold enough to inaugurate this "style" can claim no monopoly on the idea for it has become very general, in fact the products of the originators are paling into insignificance in comparison with the products of those who at first displayed timidity in introducing sordid crime news in their journals.

Every little misdemeanor, brought to the attention of the police, is elaborated upon, shaded and colored and motives and suppositions galore are injected into it at every angle, even before the case has been looked into sufficiently to warrant positive connection of an individual detained in connection with the crime in question. Atrocities and monstrosities are apparently fashioned and manufactured by some news-writers in order to stimulate the daily sale. But such "news" has a tendency to develop a canny crime consciousness in the minds of the young and untrained.

A crime reporting newspaper, delivering sordid details of murder, theft, immorality and delinquency, has no place in the American home where children are being sheltered against contaminating influences.

What has been overlooked in the news features in the daily press or, perhaps, what has been impossible to give a naked expression in word-pictures, is now being amply colored through motion pictures.

The screen-play producers are going the crime news compilers one better. They detail crime in visualized form. Every known form of depravity is pictured, planning and execution, in all their sordid details. Immorality, as an ally to crime, in undermining society, is screened with so many "leads" that the point of entertainment is adroitly overdone to the extent that the "show" becomes a school of mental training for crime and immorality understanding. Whether it produces a deterrent or an incentive is a subject of much discussion. But few can really be thought naive enough to be seriously in doubt.

In the advertising columns of the daily newspapers appear today, with regularity, enlarged "scenes" of compromising positions, between men and women, positions pictured for no other purpose than to create the supposition that unusually bold scenes are a part of the "coming" photo-play, positions with an alluring sex-appeal, positions that invariably are not permitted screened.

If a small dealer should advertise a bargain price on "woolens" that were found to contain cotton, the Better

Business Bureau would have him prosecuted for swindle. But the page-size photo-play advertisement with as sordid a sex-scene as can possibly be printed, leaving nothing further to tell, is not objected to, though the pictured scene, aside from being a gross misrepresentation, fashioned for the purpose of attracting attention, contains a mental suggestion favoring loose morals.

If many of the advance agent's "scenes" of a coming photo-play, displayed in the advertisements appearing on the pages of the daily papers, were clipped out and pasted on a private mailing card and sent through the United States Mails, the sender would promptly be arrested and tried for violation of the federal law against sending obscene matter through the mails. Yet the newspapers printing this kind of illustrated advertisements are never held liable for breaking the same law in the same way.

Headed by the Christian Science Monitor, several American newspapers are now taking a definite stand for the suppression of all news tending to feature crime as something with a lure, something of an enticing sport with plenty of thrills for those who crave excitement and unrestrained freedom.

Let us hope that this is the beginning of a definite action in the direction of an American journalistic renaissance.

Much of the business in this age is built upon a wrong basis; that of selfishness and self-gain. When we work with the law of giving, loving, and radiating abundance, man's business will be a glorious success, and there will be no sorrow added thereto.

— Anon.

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