

The Power and Influence of American Newspapers.

At the Social Science Association, J. M. Gregory, President of the Illinois State University, read a paper on American newspapers and American education. He said that the American newspaper is the best index of American life, and the fairest representation of our people. Whoever would form a correct estimate of the spirit, genius and life of Americans must study the newspapers. Our virtues, our vices, our thoughts and opinions, our politics, our trade, our push and pride, our weakness, strength, creeds, customs and civilization, are all imaged in our memorable periodical publications. The American newspaper has no rival on earth in volume and variety of its issues. More than eight thousand papers each week appear from our newspaper press; more than a thousand million copies are circulated annually. They cover every thought and interest. Every department of business, manufacture and trade has its advertiser. Social, scientific, moral, educational, religious, political and charitable societies and organizations publish newspapers devoted to their interests, and filled with their ideas; but stating the number of newspapers does not tell the whole story. One must note well the great army of writers who help to fill their columns. Editors, assistants, reporters, correspondents, critics, and contributors of all kinds, which are paid and unpaid, include a large proportion of the talent of the country. The best brain of the nation speaks through the newspapers. The latest and freshest thought of the people is to be sought in the last paper issued. Malice, meanness, fanaticism, and the falsehood and fraud which mix with our daily life, cannot be shut out from papers; but truth, wisdom, practical sense and love of public good, solid learning and courageous criticism, are also in force in the newspapers, so that we may easily forget the bad elements which mingle with them. It is the business of social science to take an account of all the great public forces, to mark their exact character and tendencies, and to learn their amount and direction of power for good or evil. The newspaper is at once the product and exponent of the American mind—no better, no worse. Good probably exceeds the bad in the newspaper in a larger proportion than among the people, for vice seeks seclusion, not publicity. In no other country does the newspaper exercise such a power as in America. Americans live, work and think through the newspapers.

Acting as a public conscience, it places its seal of shame or honor upon each chapter of our history as it transpires. No American forgets it. It watches to reward the good and punish the bad. Good men trust it and bad men fear it. The power of the newspaper is not the mere force of printed thought; it is the embodied power of the public life of the day. Each reader feels that he is surrounded by an unseen multitude, and he grows excited with imagined responses. All the forces of current history prove themselves through the press. That force never remains idle. It is impossible that so gigantic a force as the American newspapers should exist without exerting a corresponding influence upon the character, affairs and destinies of an entire people. All things educate us. Country, climate, scenery and society, and business and pleasures and environments exert their powers on our minds and characters. While few have deeply considered the depth and extent of the influence of the newspaper, few will try it. A free press is a necessary complement of free schools. Without schools the press would lack readers; without the press scholarship would fail of half of its uses. The newspaper is a public agent. It offers to

the people for pay certain sources, and on this work as an advertising agent and public herald it depends for its support. But to reckon it only as a public enterprise would insult public intelligence, as much as it would trifle with public interests and rights. In its public character the paper enters into the ranks of the world as teacher. Education has two chief factors—culture or discipline, and knowledge. The one comes by fit exercise or training, the other by whatever furnishes information, by reflection, and most of all by reading. With all our schools, we could never be an intelligent people without newspapers. They are the people's libraries, the encyclopedia of millions. Scholars and professional men must read books; but woe, woe to them if they read not newspapers! Even the fragmentary and ephemeral character of its articles lends occasional charms, if not additional utility, to them. The freshness and variety of its articles lure the reader on. It talks to men of their business, their political parties, their church and themselves. The men it describes are their contemporaries. It thus adds something of dignity to their daily lives. The newspaper of to-day chronicles movements of thought, as well as those of men and nations. All find peace in these perpetual school and text-books of popular learning. Facts will sustain this estimate of the educational power of the newspaper. Other things being equal, the man or family who takes and reads good newspapers will be more intelligent than their neighbors who do not. Sift from the American people the foreign importations of non-reading masses, and the remainder will be found the best-read and most intelligent population of the globe. The newspaper is not advocated as a substitute for schools, but as a complement to them. The American press, directed by men of educated minds, will find its way into school-rooms. The scholars will be taught their use, and furnish them more interested and intelligent readers. Let the gigantic force of the newspaper be turned upon the work of popular education. Let schools introduce the new text-book, and we have at work an agency never surpassed to make an enlightened and free people.—*Pacific*.

Christianity and Idolatry.

At the time when Christ came, outside of the little territory of Palestine (and we scarcely think, sometimes, how small it is; for in it, a little tract of land not one-fourth as large as one of our moderately sized States, is comprised the whole of what was the ancient Holy Land), all the world was idolatrous; and even in that territory there was much vice. You know that the Israelitish people oftentimes ran into idolatry; but outside of that little strip of country on the eastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea, the whole world was an idolatrous world. There were different forms of idolatry—some low, some beautiful. In Greece idolatry was a beautiful system. The painters had painted beautifully; the sculptors had chiseled a Jupiter, a Juno, a Minerva and a Venus, objects of beauty. The human intellect had taken in the idea of the grandeur and excellence of the human form. Beautiful temples were erected in Ephesus, and on the coast of Asia Minor was the wonderful temple of Diana. The image which, it is said, had fallen down from Jupiter, was at its shrine; and when Christ was preached men became excited, because in the preaching of the Cross they were turned away from their forms of worship, and hence their hatred to christianity; but to-day, after the lapse of eighteen hundred years, where are all the idols? Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, Venus, Apollo, hath not a shrine to-day on earth. There is not a knee among the multiplied millions of men that bows before one of these deities. There is not a form of wor-

ship that was then practiced in civilized lands but has passed away forever, and that has been brought about by the simple preaching of the character of Christ. He claims to be the one God, the one Lord. The deities have passed away, and just as Dagon fell before the ark, so have all those heathen deities passed away from sight, and nowhere, now, in any enlightened country, is an idol worshiped. There is idolatry, but how low! Has it occurred to you that there is not a form of beauty worshiped in idolatry to-day? Go where there are heathen temples, and what strange caricatures of humanity and of the animal creation are put in them—objects that would seem to be hideous in their make and form! The elements of beauty are lacking; beauty has taken its flight from the systems of error, and degradation has drawn them, as error always will drag its votaries downward.

Now what power could have thus changed the whole forms of worship but a divine power? For man in his worship approaches nearer to the spiritual, and Christ in that he joins himself to those spiritualized thoughts of man, comes to us in his divine nature. He becomes the object of our worship, and sweeps all other objects away. How can we account for the fact that the teachings of Christ have become universal—and when I say universal, I mean in enlightened countries—supplanting the teachings of all other system? The world admired Plato, and justly, for his breadth of intellect, for his depth of thought; the world admired Socrates, and justly, for the purity of his precepts and for the clearness of his intellect; the world had listened to orators strong, moving, stirring, and yet the words of no philosopher and no orator ring through the earth to-day as those of Jesus of Nazareth.

Demosthenes stood yonder on the edge of the hill with great multitudes around him, he himself just in sight of the distant ocean, which seemed from its rising billows to be to him the emblem of freedom, and whose sound echoed in his ears, and he uttered those philippics that roused the Grecian people to arms and made himself a name that is to a great extent immortal. Christ sat calmly on the side of the hill overlooking the sea of Gallilee, the little sheet of water sleeping sweetly in the bosom of its surrounding hills, and the multitudes gathered around him. He simply opened his lips and taught them, saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." And the multitudes listened: there was no stormy applause; there was no excitement to arms, the women and the children were listening to his words. And yet, the words of Demosthenes to-day are only read in the schools by the scholars, by the few, by one in a thousand, but the words of Jesus are sweeping through the land. The old man reads them before he closes his eyes in death, and the little child reads them in the family circle and in the Sunday school; they are almost in every family and almost in every hand. They are taking the wings of the morning and flying to the uttermost parts of the earth. How can you account for it?—*Bishop Simpson*.

"A man's life is a tower, with a staircase of many steps. That, as he toils up, crumble successively behind him. No going back, the past is an abyss! No stopping, for the present perisheth; but ever hastening on, precarious on the foothold of To-day." Like the leaves of the Sibley, Life's waning hours rise in value as they lessen in number.

—Men make fortunes by attending to their own business, because there are so few men engaged in that line.

Turkish Domestic Life in the Way of Reform.

Every Turk leads two lives. He may be in the society of Europeans during six hours of every day. He is then well-dressed, vivacious, perhaps intelligent. But this part of his life is not the part which forms his motives. It is not then that the final causes are at work which govern his acts. His life, when he is in the busy whirl of the world, is superficial and unreal. How artificial it is can be seen in the alacrity with which, on his return to his harem, he lays off the broadcloth clothes of his public existence, and dons the white baggy trousers, the open-necked vest, and the long gown dear to his heart. He is only ready to be at ease when he releases his feet from patent leather and from stockings, and thrusts them into unheeled slippers. Then he is himself, for he is at home. The harem is to every Turk his haven of refuge. To it he may flee from every care. About the harem cling all the sweetest associations of his life. All his best feelings find exercise in that sacred place. His mother, perhaps, is there, or his sisters. There only he enjoys the prattle of his children. There alone in all the world can the tired man find the balm of sympathy. There he has his books, and can study in peace if he will. There he enjoys the riches of his splendid flower-garden. In the domain of the women, with hills and vales and moon-touched sea before his eyes, he dreams away his summer evenings under the subtle spell of nature. And here he meets the controlling influences of his life. The women of the harem, mother, sisters, and wives, wait upon the man coming wearily home from his struggle with life. They are to him humble servants or merry companions, as his mood is. They please him with his children, or leave him alone with his books, at his behest. Sooner or later, however, they assert their woman's right of talking on serious topics, and then they have him at their mercy. Now these women who make the home of the Turk are rarely his equals in mental acquirements. No question of blood rules the selection of wives among the Turks. A woman born in a mud hovel often rules in a pasha's palace. At the very best, Turkish women rarely have any education beyond the primer. They believe in signs and wonders; in the active agency of evil spirits; in the existence of a great dragon who periodically attempts to swallow the moon; in charms and incantations. In short, they are as superstitious as they can be after centuries of hereditary ignorance. But they are positive in opinion, and intolerant of opposition. Moreover, they are, above all things else, ardent and bigoted Mohammedans. Such are the intellectual surroundings of the Turk during that part of his life which he loves. And when the women of his house turn the conversation upon public affairs, the poor man is helpless in their hands, because he knows the futility of logic in such discussion. Often a pasha meets at home a petition which he has refused in his office, and yielding to sheer impotency on the part of his women, he rewards the shrewdness of the man who has found means to invoke such aids. Often it has happened that the pasha disappoints an ambassador, and violates his promise to support a new measure, because the women of his household object to the deviation from custom. He must yield to his home circle, or break with them entirely. These women are under no influences by which their opinions may be changed. They live in a world of their own, and are entirely unaware of an existence preferable to their own, and know nothing of that outside world to which they are simply curiosities of antique origin.

This glance at the home life of the Turk and its influence upon him,

leaves little to hope from the Turks in the direction of voluntary abandonment of old systems and practices.—HENRY O. DWIGHT, in *Harper's Magazine* for October.

The *New York Evangelist* has the following word about sermons. "As we sat in a little village Church last Sunday, we were tempted to apply Paul's words about foolishness of preaching in a very different sense from the one intended by the great Apostle.

The congregation was very small—a mere handful, or so it seemed to us familiar with city churches—and fully one-half the number present were children and young people. The other half was composed of the plain, hard-working farmers and their wives, whose faces denoted shrewdness without any particular intellectuality.

Now the good man who occupied the pulpit meant to do his best for his people, beyond a doubt, but unfortunately he had mistaken the best, as was apparent as soon as he began to preach.

He had chosen for his theme the necessity of serving the Lord in early youth, as we looked around at the youthful faces upturned to his, we felt that his opportunity was wide indeed.

But alas! the preacher was involving himself and his hearers in a maze of comparisons and metaphors, as unnecessary as they were unintelligible. Long, intricate sentences fell on uncomprehending ears; cumbrous illustrations bewildered some or passed quite over the heads of others, until restless movements and wandering eyes betrayed their lack of interest, yet still the preacher labored on.

One sentence alone of that discourse still clings to my memory. It was: "At last the silken meshes of sin have hardened into iron bands of habit, in the crucible of the world's cares, and bound the soul to the sordid rock of selfishness."

Oh! we thought as we sat there, what an unspeakable comfort it would be to hear Mr. Moody just now—and how his simple earnestness, his solemn tender appeals, his forgetfulness of everything but the Gospel message, would waken and electrify some of those sleepy or wandering eyes or vacant faces.

Every time we have thought of that sermon since, we have been saddened by the recollection. How little the preacher realized that he was giving to his people not bread but a stone. And if in the days to come he reaps but a scanty harvest where he may have expected full sheaves, will he ever realize that the fault lay in the sowing? We would be glad to believe that this is a solitary case, but we fear it is not. We fear that there may be others who sacrifice to their love of 'fine writing' the power of reaching the simple, of interesting the ignorant, or helping the dull. Not of course that we would call the example we have given 'fine writing,' but our preacher mistook it for that, and his ignorance was no more disastrous than some gifted brother's brilliant essay, falling coldly upon waiting or timid or sorrowing hearts.—*Advocate*.

The autumn months, all grave and brown and serene,
And fading lone with melancholy hours,
Strike sharp, sad notes upon the waiting ear—
The bird's quick call of march; the paler flowers,
Seemless and dying, the south wind sadly grieves;
Her silver hair the thistle casts astray;
Like ghosts stand all the cornfield's blanching sheaves
In hoarded wealth—their reckoning comes to-day.
The russet red, the dun and yellow leaves,
A blazing flame—hang on the sunset trees;
In low-toned notes the insect nightly grieves.
A monotone comes on the wailing breeze
A voice that teaches with a mild, sweet breath,
How beautiful can be the change called death.

—CAROLINE BOYCE.