

" MAKING A NEWSPAPER."

(Psychological View)

By

Edgar McCall Amos.

OUTLINE.

4

Introduction.

First Mode of Printing.

Relation of Printing to the Human Mind.

The Newspaper, a Creation of the Imaginative
Faculty of the Mind.

Newspapers as Educators.

Educational Qualifications of the Editor.

Varieties of Newspapers.

Good and Bad.

The "Make-up".

The Mission of the Newspaper.

In writing on the subject of "Making a Newspaper" from a psychological view, it will not be necessary to dwell upon the mechanical work of the print shop or the kinds of presses and machinery required to run a newspaper. It is apparent that the best available machinery should be used.

Our plan is to consider a paper from a printer's view also the style and arrangements of its contents, especially with its relation to the mind.

We go back to the ancient Assyrian Nations, and we see in the undecayed bricks of the tower of Babylon figures and hieroglyphics stamped upon them, and our minds at once revert to the primeval times when the stamping of these tablets was the only mode of printing. The result of this crude method serves us with a history of the days of old. It is here we begin to see the relation of printing to the human mind.

The ancients found it necessary to provide some method to aid them in keeping a record of their times, and while these tablets served this purpose to a degree, this mode of printing was absolutely useless as a medium through which literature and learning could be widely propagated.. So we see, as time rolled on, the imaginative faculty of the mind was aroused and we reach the period, four centuries ago, when Guttenburg made the simple yet marvelous invention of movable types. By this art every letter or character of the alphabet was separate and

capable of being arranged into words and sentences, thus saving the labor of carving type for each page to be printed. From this time on we find that the art of printing has kept pace with all other improvements and inventions and today it seems to have almost reached perfection.

The modern newspapers are the greatest educators of the people, especially of the common people who are so occupied that they find but little time for reading books, even if they were available. On the other hand the presses are turning out fabulous numbers of newspapers which, on account of their trifling cost, find their way into the humble home as well as to the mansion of the millionaire. The statesman, the business man, the commercial man and the common laborer alike derive knowledge from the heterogeneous list of newspapers. These papers vary in quality as do the minds and intellects of their editors. Now we do not say that a college education is necessary to make a successful newspaper man. But an editor should be a well learned man, as should any one to be equipped properly for his life work.

Pope says "A little learning is a dangerous thing", that we should "quaff deep from the Pierian Spring".

Above all, the editor should have a mind trained to think along right lines that his columns may reflect a good moral sentiment. That his influence may be for honesty, sobriety and patriotism. When these "beatitudes" are infused and imbibed by

the reading public, the world is growing better. Certainly all are not endowed with knowledge alike, but the proper training will obviate this. Tastes also differ, as is shown by the varieties of newspapers of the day. Some are of uncertain sentiment, even trashy and decidedly "weekly". On the other hand, there are those of high moral tone that edify and instruct, and which are an education in themselves. The magazine supplement of some of the larger city dailies, with their colored plates, giving history, travels, romance, and poetry, are a "thing of beauty" and may be a "joy forever". They give reviews of new books and stimulate a taste for the best current literature.

But there are different spheres of places to be filled and the country paper can wield a wide influence, and its editor should give his readers the best his genius can produce of matter that is suited to their mental requirements.

There are many things that should be deprecated in our newspapers. I will mention some of them. There is a tendency to evolve a hatred and contempt for our public officers, of those high in our national government, which impresses the minds of the more ignorant and engenders a spirit of anarchy.

Again, publishing the account of crimes and suicides is debasing and dangerous, working on the minds of the weak and ignorant. Also the gossip affairs and bickerings of the town or

neighborhood should never be given room in its columns. And not only should they be clean in their contents, but their make-up as well should be neat and attractive.. The first page is the most important and should be arranged in a manner that is pleasing to the eye. If "ads" are placed on the first page they should be well displayed (the page should balance). Another feature that will give a good effect is a full page of local news, well made up, with a poem or cut set with a neat border, placed in a not too conspicuous position.

A display line across the top of the reading matter, just under the head and date line, is an attractive feature, and serves as a record of some current event. When no advertisements appear on the first page, it indicates a good newspaper and is a unique feature.

The effects of the appearance of a paper should be studied, for one becomes so accustomed to the arrangement of articles in their own paper as to form an attachment for it.

The make-up depends on the taste and judgement of the printer, and his efforts should be aided by clean type and proper machinery, and all the paraphernalia should be kept in perfect order.

Articles should be **properly** headed, giving the subject, that the reader may at once know whether he is interested enough to spend time reading it or not.. This is often overdone by making the headlines more sensational than the truth justifies.

Then the advertising columns should be made attractive. This is due to patrons who pay for space and expect remuneration from it.

Writing "ads" is an art that demands both genius and talent, and many cunning devices are used to induce the reading of advertisements, that would otherwise be passed by. For instance, a cut representing a man dying in front of a bank building with these head lines, " A run on the bank,"and it was a pathetic story of how a man had fallen dead from heart disease and the first passer by stopped, and one and another, while others who happened to be depositors noticed the excitement and **thought it a run on the bank** and they **rushed pell mell** and demanded their deposits, and broke the bank, **all because this one man had failed to take a certain kind of patent medicine.** Another, a wrecked vessel because of a "dead man **at the helm.**" This was some other nostrum that every body ought to take. But, after all, there are many little gems of thought thus employed and it brings the editor the where-with all to buy his daily bread, and embellishes his paper with attractive pictures, and does not hinder him from giving the legit-

imate news and information that will benefit his subscribers.

The news columns should have the births and weddings. The social functions, in fact the coming and goings, the up risings and down sittings, and every item that pertains to the village or city and thus it will be almost indispensable to the demands of the denizens of the place. And in these busy times take the place of a letter to an absent friend.

We are led to believe that the newspaper is a great blessing in more ways than one. We believe it puts a restriction on evil doers, who fear exposure, for nowadays the news reporter seems omnipresent, and in order to protect the public it becomes a duty to expose the perpetrators of wrong, that they may guard against them. This is a part of the high mission of the newspaper press as well as to acquaint the people with the living issues of the day, with the best thought, the high aspirations, the latest inventions, the great adventures, the bravery of our soldiers, and their victories.

The editor should also take heed to publish the progress of our schools and colleges. The triumphs to be won by higher education. The beauty and fertility of the country. Above all the editor should have opinions of his own and express them, never failing to discountenance evil and emulate the right.

In short- he should be a "bureau of information", ready to reply to inquiries in an intelligent manner, that he may be relied upon and command the respect and confidence of his readers. For, do as they may, the editors of today are moulding the thought of this great country. They cannot escape the responsibility and, be it said to their credit, the fruits of their labors are evidenced by the intelligence of the people of this Commonwealth.

For where to be found so well informed a people, so enlightened and cultured, even among the yeomanry of the United States?