

**SOME NEWSPAPER TENDENCIES:  
AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE  
THE EDITORIAL ASSOCIATIONS  
OF NEW YORK AND OHIO**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649366682

Some Newspaper Tendencies: An Address Delivered Before the Editorial Associations of New York and Ohio by Whitelaw Reid

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Cover @ 2017

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NEW-YORK AND OHIO

BY

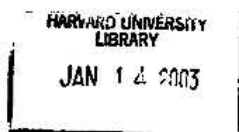
WHITELAW REID



NEW-YORK  
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

1879

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## SOME NEWSPAPER TENDENCIES.

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AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE EDITORIAL ASSOCIATIONS  
OF NEW-YORK AND OHIO.

I am to speak to you of our common work — of its needs, its tendencies, its possibilities.

It may well happen that this may lead to a mention of some faults of which we are all guilty, and of some standards by which we might all profitably try ourselves. No doubt it would be easy for any critic that cared, to show that I do not live up to these standards myself. I do not pretend to. No man's work is so good as his ideal; must he, therefore, have no ideal toward which to work? No man can wholly control his circumstances; must he, therefore, wholly surrender to them? Growth is but a succession of partial failures. You, whose purpose is the highest, you must perforce fail the most conspicuously. Yet, all

the same, your arrow, even though it miss its aim, carries further if aimed at the stars.

Every now and then some Magnus Apollo of an earlier day returns to our profession. We all give him most respectful salutation; felicitate ourselves on the great gain we shall have from his experience, judgment, skill; and wait. Regularly, decisively, and at the outset, he fails.

The reason of this monotonous disappointment has come to be recognized. The business of making a newspaper is in a state of constant growth and change. You might almost say that it is revolutionized once every ten years. The veteran returns to find the old methods useless, the old weapons out of date, the old plans of action out of relation to the present arrangement of the forces. Nor is this to be thought in the least unnatural. Abolish the old forms of procedure; adopt an entirely new code, as our Albany pests are perpetually proposing; and Charles O'Connor, returning to the profession of which he was so long an ornament and glory, and attempt-



ing his own office business, might break down in a police court, under the onset of a Tombs shyster.

No doubt there is progress in the other professions, too; at least we helpless victims of the lawyer and the doctor hope so. But these absolute revolutions have, in this century, been the distinctive mark of our own.

...The cylinder press made one. Before that the circulation of a daily newspaper was imperatively limited by the number of pulls one pair of arms could give a Washington press within the hour or two which shut in the life, for publication purposes, of any day's news. Four hundred was large, a thousand enormous, beyond fifteen hundred an impossibility.

The railroads made another revolution. They doubled, trebled, quadrupled the area of circulation.

The fast printing press made another. It is not too much to say that one man, still going about the streets of New-York, modest, genial, busy on new notions, gave a new birth to the journalism not merely of his own coun-

try but of the world. When Richard M. Hoe showed how types could be placed on a revolving cylinder instead of a flat bed he did as much for the profession that now rules the world as the inventor of gun-powder did for the one that ruled it last. From that moment came the possibility of addressing millions, at the instant of their readiest attention, from a single desk, within a single hour, on the events of the hour.

And now came another revolution as startling as any. The conduct of newspapers ceased to be the work of journeymen printers, of propagandists, needy politicians, starveling lawyers, or adventurers. Its new developments compelled the use of large capital, and thus the modern metropolitan daily journal became a great business enterprise, as legitimate as a railroad or a line of steamships, and as rigidly demanding the best business management.

Thus stimulated, its growth again outran its facilities. No printing-press ever devised could print in the required time as many

newspapers as there were eager buyers. The discovery of a way to stereotype the whole paper in half an hour, and thus put as many presses as you needed at work on the same paper at the same time, solved that difficulty, and the business underwent another change, amounting to revolution. Then came the enormous extension of telegraph lines and ocean cables. The old-fashioned letter-writer was almost abolished. The Washington correspondence came by telegraph. The account of a great battle fought yesterday east of Paris was read in detail this morning in New-York. The journalist, at one leap, took the whole world for his province every morning.

With each of these revolutions the sphere of the daily newspaper has broadened. It has commanded wider and more varied ability. It has been able to draft talent from any quarter, to command the best business sagacity, unlimited capital, the widest enterprise. As the result of all this we see to-day—

Daily papers that sell you every morning, for three or four pennies, matter equalling the