

**THE LONDON
DAILY PRESS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649184866

The London daily press by H. W. Massingham

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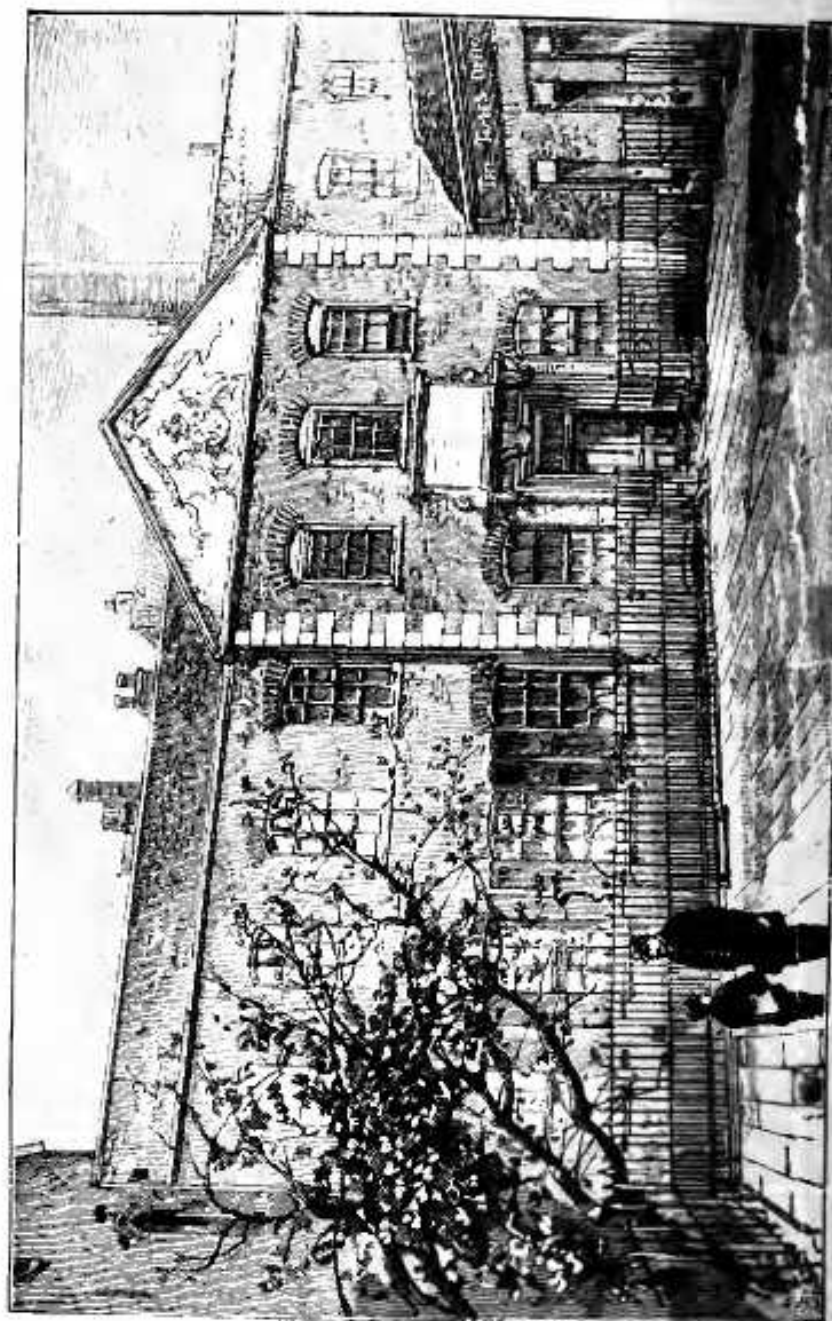
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H. W. MASSINGHAM

**THE LONDON
DAILY PRESS**



(The Leisure Hour Library.—New Series)

THE
LONDON DAILY PRESS

BY

H. W. MASSINGHAM

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND PORTRAITS

414050
21.7.43

FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

NEW YORK:

CHICAGO:

30 UNION SQUARE: EAST.

148-150 MADISON STREET.

The Religious Tract Society, London.

1892

PN
5129
L6M34

Oxford

HORACE HART, PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY

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INTRODUCTION

It is superfluous to enlarge in general terms upon the power of the press to-day. It is not superfluous to ask how far that power is used in sympathy with and support of the Christian faith and Christian morals. We cannot be put off with the easy assurance that a man does not seek his theology in the pages of the morning or evening paper. That may not be, on these topics, his primary source of information; but it is a source to which he often goes, and if its utterances are destructive of faith he will, consciously or unconsciously, be affected by its attitude. Moreover the press is the great informer of the people. The pulpit has some power; the platform is gaining in influence. But, in regard to the minds it teaches and reaches daily, the press surpasses them both. Somebody has computed that in Birmingham alone a body of people equal in number to the population of Dorsetshire, Bedfordshire, or Cambridgeshire never enter church, chapel, or mission-hall. It is fair to assume that of the men, the great

majority look at the newspapers. For the penny, and still more the halfpenny, sheet is to be met with in the common lodging-house and the furnished room of the worst slums, just as it is in the rural labourer's cottage. We dare not be indifferent to the character of the press.

What are we entitled to say of its attitude towards faith and morals? Taking the widest possible survey it is surely competent to hold that in the main the press offers a general support both to the Christian faith and to the moral teaching of Christianity. There are some obvious exceptions in regard to doctrine, and some still more obvious exceptions in the matter of morals. There are journals which seem to preserve an attitude of benevolent neutrality in the matter of faith whilst still accepting at least the conventional standard of morality. There are journals which pose as independent observers and critics both of faith and of the men who profess it ; praising both one and the other upon occasion, but allowing us to discern a sub-acid flavour even in their praises. Yet in the main we have something better than this. Christianity is at least assumed. It is not, as in some of the reviews, a mere ball to be kicked from side to side for the entertainment of the onlookers. Christianity is accepted just as implicitly as the Solar System.