THE SAFE NEWSPAPER.

Ministers Indorse, Almost in Its Entirety, a Republic News Spread.

One Article Here Given Was Condemned, but on the Whole This Issue Was Found Clear.

WRITTEN FOR THE SUNDAY REPUBLIC.

What should a great daily newspaper contain? And what should it not contain?

Since the beginning of newspapers this has been a matter of argument. It has worried all the editors that ever edited and all the readers that ever read. It has been the subject of serious discussion between the business manager and the editor, the editor and the department editors, the department editors and the men under them; and it has been the text of many a letter from "Old Subscriber" and "Constant Reader" to say nothing of "Vox Populi."

It has been said that everybody knows more about how to run a newspaper than an editor does; and it has been related that however true this may be, the editor is the only man in Christendom who concedes that he can not run a newspaper so that it will please all his readers all the time. Like many other things related and accepted as truisms, there are blowholes in these state ments. For, after all, when you pin him down to it, that great and multitious personage, the World, is very ready to admit that it is "every man to his trade."

Moralists, immoralists and, as Mr. Clement Scott calls them, "nonmoralists" have always discussed newspapers, and have found them subjects for very vicious arraignments. The moralist will say that the newspaper devotes entirely too much space to accounts of matters which he considers immoral, the immoralist will say that the paper "goes daffy" over church services and sermons, and the nonmoralist—well, he is liable to say anything. But it is never anything very good. The honest man will say that the newspaper is too easy with thieves; the thief will say that the paper pries into things that it has no business to pry into, spells a man's "graft" and "passes" up the hypocrite. The poor man says the paper toadies to the rich; the rich man says the paper is a demagogue and tries to catch the pennies of the poor.

And still all classes—moralist, immoralist and nonmoralist—honest man and thief, poor man and rich man—all classes read the newspaper, and they keep it going. They read it morning and evening; and if they do not get it exactly when they expect it, they send the office boy or somebody else out to find it.

The world discusses newspapers because it recognizes them as a necessary part of its life. If it did not so regard them, the world would pay no more attention to them than it does to trivial things that happened in the Dark Ages. The newspapers know how the world regards them, and accepts the much-advertised attempt of the Reverend Charles M. Sheldon of Topeka, Kas., to take up the newspaper man's burden and show him how it should be carried as proof positive that the world in general, and the religious part of it in particular, recognizes the fact that the newspaper is such a great institution that it cannot be placed too near the pinnacle of perfection.

Just how not a improvement the world could make in the modern day newspaper or, to be more specific, just how much the clergy of St. Louis believe they could improve The Republic is something that The Republic has been trying to find out during the past week. A copy of the paper—it so happened that it was a copy of a Saturday issue that The Sunday Republic man took with him—was shown to a number of well-known St. Louis clergymen, and they were asked to freely and fully criticise it, not as The Republic, but as a sample of the opulent metropolitan newspaper. The result was that there was only one item in the whole sixteen pages of the paper that did not get a good word from somebody. All of the reverend gentlemen were kind enough to say that The Republic was an exceptionally clean and good newspaper, and not subject to some of the criticisms that are made upon certain other newspapers, but perhaps that is beside the question. Everybody did not agree that there was nothing in the paper to be condemned; but when one would condemn another would approve, and they were all numerous. Perhaps if the search were continued a little further some one might be found to say a good word for that one solitary item that none of the preachers thought was in its proper element.

Examples of News Topics Treated in a Single Issue of The Daily Republic and Submitted to Ministers for Their Indorsement.

THE PEOPLE'S LIBRARY FOR NO ONE CLASS.

When the Reverend James R. Winchester, rector of the Church of the Ascension, Episcopal, was installed Rationalist through the paper, he declared that he had no adverse criticism to make upon it whatever. He implied a doubt as to whether the Reverend Mr. Sheldon could materially improve upon it, whatever the measures he adopted.

"The matters which appeal to me most in reading the paper," he declared, "are the situation in Kentucky and the Boer war—the two things that are given the greatest amount of space upon the morning, noon, and evening. They are matters of vital interest to everybody, with more in Kentucky. I certainly could not answer anything that is more entitled to the attention commanded in a newspaper. That disposes of the first page. Turning to the second page, I find that everything was designed to be of a wonderfully important and exceptionally interest. It is the same with the third page. On the fourth page are two columns devoted to a record of the sporting events of the day. I do not take any interest in horse racing prize fighting and the play, but I realize the fact that a great many other men do, and I would not say that they are not entitled to the fullest discussion of these events. Baseball, football, boxing, and such other things, all of which come under the heading of "sports," are legitimate matters of news, and are worth enough space to tell the news appertaining thereto. Now, to return to Boer politics. While I say that I do not take an interest in that kind of sport, I recognize that there are other points of world-wide importance in connection with it. For instance, I remember that once a Tennessee-called Boer, frequently quoted in England, Dewey, Hobson, of space was given to the subject by our American papers, and I think the discussion was upon a world-wide interest, and, too, of importance.

"In the rear of the paper I find that there is about what I would call the proper space given to each item that is given any prominence, and I do not see any that are given less prominence and space than their interest warrants. I do not think that crime and horror are too lengthily dwelt upon. In fact, I think that such things should be published—not for the gratification of morbid curiosity, but because from the publication of the details of crime and misfortune and horrors grows the sentiment that leads to reform in such things. The newspapers are the tocsinners of the present day. It was to the fact that Dickens dwelt upon the harrowing details of repulsive phases of English life that many of the most important reforms that the world has ever known were brought about. It is because the newspapers tell us who otherwise would not know of the happenings in crime, horror and misfortune of the world that great reforms are now being accomplished. I would not want my young son to dwell in the reading of such things, and I have taught him not to do so. But such matters should be published. If they were never told of they would never be known of, and they would be allowed to continue to the end of time.

"I notice that in this copy of the paper there is nearly a page devoted to news of the churches. No one can object to this as not enough space to devote to this subject. And in this connection I would mention the fact that the newspapers give just as much attention to religious news as they do to any other kind of news. For instance, if there is a meeting of the council or conference of any religious denomination, the meeting is covered as fully—and I must say accurately, too—as if it were a political meeting. And in matters of this importance I have always found that the newspapers are always ready to give plenty of space to records of them; and they do it in a way which is always highly favorable to the cause. They sometimes shade their reports of political conventions; they never shade their reports of religious gatherings. During the past six weeks the newspapers of St. Louis have given columns upon columns of space to accounts of a revival that was held in Centenary Church. It was a matter which interested—and legitimately interested—a large number of people, and the newspapers, realizing the fact, met the demand.

"It would be wrong to make a newspaper for any one class. A newspaper is the people's current library. All classes of people read it. All classes of people are instructed and entertained by it. I do not believe that any one class of people should have a monopoly of the good things of the world. I do not believe that the poor man should be given everything, nor do I believe that the rich man should be allowed to have everything. All the people have a right to share in the benefits and the pleasures of this world. The newspaper should meet the demands of all classes of readers, and it comes very close to doing it."

CRIME NEWS IS NEWS, OMITTING DETAILS.

The Reverend Jeremiah Cromer, pastor of Fountain Park Congregational Church, does not think that newspapers are perfect, and he found a few things to criticise in the copy of The Republic that he was asked to peruse.

"I think everybody will concede," he said, "that the two matters of greatest importance to the reading public of not only St. Louis, but of all the United States are at the present time the situation in Kentucky and the Boer war. I think these two matters are given their due prominence—no more, no less—in this copy of The Republic. Sometimes I find that the writers of the articles in which I am interested do not tell me what I want to know soon enough, and I am compelled to skip about in a search for the facts that I seek, but others, who have more time to devote to newspaper reading than I have, doubtless find much of legitimate interest in the very things that I skip over. I think that the matters that are treated of on the second page are given the proper space and display—Britain's trouble in the Soudan, Bryan at Brooklyn—and on the third page the prominent items are General Lawton's funeral, the trouble on the Pacific coast, the Boer war, etc. Page 4 is well arranged, too, the subjects being all of local interest. The fourth page there is much more prominence, four columns and one column devoted to sports, which I do not care for. I will admit, however, that I am in the minority in this matter. The fifth page contains a good deal of miscellaneous matter, including a column on the question of who shall be nominated for Governor of Missouri in the fall, and then there is a page for Boer news in bulk. Well—that is, theological matters, yes, they are important, respect all books and sermons—everything that is of value. Page 6 contains commercial matters, which need not be discussed, being treated by a competent writer. Page 7 contains commercial matters as well.

"Then, in part 2, page 1 has Mr. Bryan's trial, World's Fair, World's Fair bills right—everything that should be given to Boer, gambling, hanging in New Jersey, Westinghouse, Home Government—the commercial is a matter of considerable importance, Mexia case, Tennessee and Kentucky politics, and then I will ignore the rest, these things must be published. Now and then the papers will go into a matter of some particularity, arraigns criminal men, like they did in Chicago on the Cronin case, and in the Luetgert case, and they will print all the gossiping details, that will make not much of them, crime and the Boer matter, news and it not be too fondling brought out. Page 2, Missouri editors—they are worth to Barton family troubles, well—Tom Reed's trouble, boys, well—Tom Reed's trouble, that was a matter of interest. Page 3, church news—practically an entire page—enough space to give to that, certainly. Page 4, advertising; page 5, another column of church news—the Sunday school lesson. Pages 6 and 7, market reports; that is practically news, it has to be printed, and I suppose it required all that space. Page 8, fashions, matters for the women.

"It's a very good paper, in fact, I do not think that there is really so much in it which I would care to see. I do not care for the sporting news, but that is a matter that I would be able to skip over in the Sunday paper, but if that should be taken from the paper it would be a great loss to me. I do not think any one could be made to pay attention to all the newspapers give to church news, but I believe that the newspapers are about liberal to all classes of men that they can to be, and I think that is an important matter. Every one who has an interest in church news or religious matters will be glad to change by the newspapers. I do not think there is so much wrong with the newspapers—except that I think they should also be the Sunday editions."

JUDGED BY THE HIGHEST STANDARD, IS GOOD.

When the Reverend C. E. Pattillo, pastor in charge of the Lafayette Park M. E. Church, South, was seen, he was in company with C. H. Oliver, chairman of the Church Board of Stewards, and Mr. Oliver was called into the discussion after Mr. Pattillo had rendered his opinion.

"I would say that the two items that are given the most space and the greatest display are justly entitled to be the chief of their importance," said Mr. Pattillo. "These are the Boer war and the trouble in Kentucky. I think that the political questions that are discussed are given the proper space and prominence; but I think that the sporting news—horse racing and pugilistic and that sort of thing—could be told in much less space, and much of it has no place in a good paper at all. I think this account of how the jackies got even should be eliminated altogether; it is of no importance, and I think that the accounts of the Molineux case, the bungling hanging in New Jersey and the Mexia case should be told in much less space and put in less prominent positions. I think that too much space is given to the story of the child that was treated by Christian Science. It would be fair to simply state as the facts of the death and without going into the details of the case. There can be no question on the part of church people to the amount of space that is given to church news; there is hardly a page of it, and it contains all the necessary news of the city. The editorial matter is of considerable interest to the public.

"The only thing, after all, that I would class as being given considerably more prominence than the value to the public demands is the sporting news, and there is as much more space given to the answer papers of the paper in every other class of news that I confess it seems very much like cutting to outside that department."

Then Mr. Pattillo called Mr. Oliver into the discussion. Mr. Oliver agreed with him in most of his criticisms, but when the question of the sporting news was reached Mr. Oliver contended that the space was not wasted.

"I do not take any interest in that department now," he said. "But there was a time when I did, and I know that there are very many men who take an interest in it now, and I think they have a right to have the news that it presents to them. I think that the account of crime should be much shorter and less prominent; and I think that matters of trivial importance should be told in very few words with very small headings, but taking the paper all together, and taking The Republic as a rule, I do not find much to object to. I find what interests me, and I suppose that which does not interest me interests somebody else. Therefore there is a demand for it, and the newspapers have a right to publish it—not in some reports, not of the best class, publish it, with great display and long accounts, but as The Republic publishes it. Here is a World's Fair story. I do not think a single line too much is given to it; and I think it might have been given a heading across two columns, and the Molineux case could have been cut down to make room. Then there are the commercial reports—a column and a half of them; they are worth it; they interest a great many of the best class of people. I think newspapers, as represented by this issue of The Republic, and by The Republic generally, are not subject to a very great deal of improvement."

At conclusion of the interview Mr. Pattillo wrote the following on a slip of paper:

"Very few things objectionable. With few changes this copy of The Republic would prove an approved examination, judged by the highest standard."

DR. NICCOLLS'S SUNDAY NEWSPAPER VIEWS.

Doctor S. J. Niccolls, pastor of Second Presbyterian Church, thus summarizes his opinion of what newspapers should print:

"All that concerns human life should be handled by the newspapers, but in a way which will not offend the moral taste of moral men, and will not gild moral evils."

In regard to the Sunday newspaper, Doctor Niccolls said:

"So far as I have any knowledge of the matter, the Sunday newspaper of the present day, issued as a regular edition of a great daily newspaper, is a vast improvement over the exclusively Sunday newspaper of some years ago—the paper which was published on Sunday alone, and which did not at all compare with the Sunday newspaper as we have it now."

Discussing the subject of newspapers generally, Doctor Niccolls said:

"I think there has been a very manifest increase in the moral character of the great daily newspapers during the last twenty-five years. They give more prominence and more space to matters of interest to the religious world than they used to do, on the whole. I see a great improvement in the newspapers.

"I think that it is a newspaper's duty to publish accounts of crime and vice. Vice thrives best in darkness and secrecy; and when the light of publication reaches it, and the scoundrels are thus detected in their work, much has been done toward retarding it. At times, I think, there is an inclination upon the part of the newspapers to dwell at too great length upon the details of crime, and especially upon the salacious details. As I consider it, the account of vice and crime should be such that they show them forth in the fullness of their evil, and nothing should be done or said which would in any way condone them or lead others to look upon the acts as creditable.

"Newspapers should not fail to uncover the evil deeds of men, but in doing so they should not fail to show that the deeds are evil.

"I think it is in the province of the newspapers to chronicle all matters of legitimate amusement; to that extent I approve of the sporting news page. But I do not consider that sports which encourage and promote gambling and immorality are legitimate. In giving great publicity to such matters without condemning them the newspapers are very liable to give forth the impression that they are things to be approved.

"Horse racing, in itself, is not wrong; but the things incident to it, as it is practised in the present day, are wrong. Pool-selling and other forms of gambling that are now features of every horse race are evil, and should not be approved, even by acquiescence, by the newspapers. There is trickery as well as gambling in horse racing as it is at present practiced, and it is a thing that is condemned by law. Therefore, it should not be upheld; and if long accounts of such events are given, they should be given in such a way as to show that they are evil, without the pale of law, and are to be condemned.

"I think that newspapers should not necessarily confine themselves to serious matters. There is much in the trivial that is intrinsically interesting, and it is proper for the newspapers to print such things to a certain extent. I do not think that a paper should be given over to such matters, and one of the articles of that kind in this issue is given, I think, too much space. It could have been told in fewer words, and still have been interesting. However, I do not think that there is anything wrong in the article. I do not think it would offend the most pious. Nor do I think it would have any evil effect.

"All impurity, all vulgarity, anything that are harmful, all things which preachers teach, should be left out of the newspapers. Public men have often proposed to me an editorial campaign against abuses of many a false theory and practice."

DR. BOYD'S SAGE ANALYSIS—VIEWS OF SUNDAY PAPERS.

After looking at the front page of the Sunday Republic, Doctor Boyd glanced through the rest of the paper for a few minutes in silence, as he expressed himself later.

"I will say at first that this paper contains more space than I think is fair for any item, that its importance and interest warrant. All of the paper does not interest me, but I do not think that a newspaper should be printed to conform to any idea of what the most important news of the day is. A newspaper is published for all the people, not for any one class. That which interests me may not interest a great many other people, and that which does not interest me may interest a majority of readers. Such matters as The Boer war interest all classes, and they should be given the place of prominence in any one. In the case of myself, I would naturally turn to page 3 of the second part of the paper. There I would find my favorite page, giving a list of nearly all the services that are to be held the next day. I, and other clergymen, would study that page, and learn what matters were to be discussed in the various pulpits. The man who was interested in sporting matters would turn to page 4 of the first part, where he would find three columns and a half of the news of horse racing, billiards, bowling, prize-fighting and all those things which do not interest the man of the pulpit—unless he should be engaged in the work of trying to put a stop to the prize-fighting, when he would want to find out what the fellows were doing. The man of the Board of Trade would turn to the market pages, 6 and 7 of the second part, and study them closely. The man interested in business would turn to page 8 of the first part and read the reports of the commercial agencies.

"It is so through all the paper. Every man will find not only the news that appeals to all classes, but that which appeals to him especially. A newspaper is not made to be read from cover to cover by every one who takes it up; he is expected to get what he wants out of it, and then lay it aside.

"I find that in this paper crime is told of in a number of articles. This is a very necessary function of a newspaper and as the matter is handled in this issue, there can be no objection to it. But crime should not be told of in all its horrible details, and with pictures of the revolting scenes of it. Such things suggest similar acts to others. The love of notoriety is strong in the weak-minded person; the criminal dearly loves to see his name and picture in print. And when newspapers send men to see these criminals in their cells, and note every detail of their lives, they influence others to become criminals in order that they, too, may gain notoriety. I think that executions should be told of in the briefest possible manner. I have noticed that nearly always there are a number of murders after a big hanging that is told of fully, and with pictures and much graphic writing in the newspapers; and I believe that the reason therefor is that morbidly-inclined persons are made bloodthirsty through reading of death upon the scaffold.

"I notice that in this newspaper there are illustrations and cartoons. Both of these things are important features of the modern newspaper. An illustration conveys to one the point of a story at a glance; a cartoon is the most graphic sarcasm. Both have their places in the newspaper. There was a time when some newspapers declared that they would never admit illustrations to their columns; but no newspaper has the power to stand out against public opinion; no office holder and no government is strong enough to do that. The demand for pictures in newspapers is due to the love of man for the spectacular, and I would not condemn this sentiment. Newspaper illustrations are becoming better, and I look soon to see them as fine, viewed from the artistic standpoint, as any that are now printed in the best magazines.

"This subject of newspaper illustration brings me to the Sunday newspaper. I do not condemn the Sunday newspaper—I uphold it. It is a modern necessity. The old, medieval idea of Sunday has gone by the board. The Sunday of to-day is not the Sunday of Puritanical days; it is something broader. I consider that there are three parts of man that are entitled to rest. The mental part, which finds rest not in a cessation from, but in a change of, thought—and it is here that the Sunday newspaper plays its most important part; the physical part, which finds rest in recreation, just as much as it does in sleep; and the spiritual part, which finds its rest in worship. Sunday should be for the benefit of all these parts of man.

"I have never yet seen in The Republic Sunday Magazine anything that was not appropriate for Sunday reading. I think the better class of people should recognize the fact that the Sunday paper is a modern necessity, and should seek to accept it as such, and lend it their best influence.

"We hear much in some quarters of the 'yellow journal.' My idea is that 'yellow journal' is a cry that was set up by the least progressive of the newspapers for the purpose of excusing themselves for their failure to keep up with the times as well as some of their rivals were doing. They were slow to recognize the demands of the public, but gradually they are adopting the very things that they most decried when they were first produced by their more progressive rivals.

"And much has been said about the reporter and his inability to get things right. I have seldom known reporters to err quote, but I have frequently known men to have occasion to change their minds after they had been interviewed."