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The approach of the New Year would be an appropriate season for American newspaper men, from lowest to highest; to make a few good resolutions; not to be broken along with other New Year's resolutions, but to be rigidly kept. In all modern American life there is nothing that needs reforming quite as much as does the American newspaper.

We are not alluding especially to "yellow" journalism. It is very common for respectable newspapers to denounce the "yellow" ones, and with great display of virtuous disgust; but in doing so they are in reality only "compounding for sins they are inclined to by damning those they have no mind to." The "yellow" papers are not the worst ones. The worst of all newspapers are those of the respectable order which disregard the golden rule of good journalism—to be intelligible, truthful and candid. "Yellow" journals are at the worst only sewers; and sewers are useful. But liars, whether they lie from indolence or malice, are of no use whatever—not as liars.

The resolutions that newspaper men of the respectable class ought to make and keep, relate to their responsibility to their readers. Their occupation is in character not a mechanical trade; it is a profession. They cannot therefore escape personal responsibility for their acts on the plea that they are under the coercion of superiors (or advertisers if they are proprietors), any more than a lawyer can

escape personal responsibility by pleading the coercion of clients. While a compositor may put into type sentiments against which his manhood revolts, pleading that he is only performing a mechanical act, the newspaper man must be responsible to his own character, and to the readers of his paper, for what he writes and how he writes it. No one is bound to go into journalism; but if he does go into it he assumes certain professional obligations which he ought to perform at all costs—even at the cost of possible bankruptcy.

That these are not the ethics of American journalism, though they ought to be, is evident to all newspaper readers. News reports seldom aim to state facts truly and intelligibly; they aim to catch and magnify the sensational. Editorials seldom expound with knowledge, candor and thoughtfulness; their chief characteristics are indifference, flippancy, pretentious ignorance and cynicism, not to say malevolence when definite purpose does actuate the man behind the pen or the man behind him. Then the paper as a whole. Is it not made with reference less to the needs of its readers than to the demands of a few large advertisers or the commands of some capitalist of the piratical type who owns the establishment "on the side"?

Perhaps we shall be better understood if we refer to an instance or two. Though related to particular persons and to a particular place, as concrete instances must of necessity be, they are distinctly typical the country over. One of these has to do with the report in a Chicago paper of the highest standing, of the socialism-single tax debate of the 20th. Another is connected with the hearings before a committee of the city coun-

cil on the Chicago traction question. A third relates to the editorial treatment accorded a serious effort on the part of the Chicago Federation of Labor to ascertain the effect of trade unionism upon recurring business depressions.

At the socialism-single tax debate, one of the single tax speakers made the point that the single tax would begin to yield beneficent results from the very beginning of its adoption in even a timid and preliminary way, and that these results would increase in degree as the reform advanced; whereas no beneficent results are claimed for socialism until it shall have accomplished a complete revolution. The term "revolution" was not used to imply that physical force is in the programme of socialism, nor was it so understood by the audience. Nothing offensive to socialists was implied or inferred. The socialists in the audience did seem to understand, however, that the speaker was not only asserting that a complete revolution was necessary before any of the benefits claimed for socialism could be enjoyed in any degree, but also that he was conceding that the working classes could not be benefited by any changes short of that revolution. This was in harmony with their own views, and they greeted it with two or three rounds of applause as a concession from an adversary. Inasmuch as most of the demonstrative part of the audience were socialists, the applause was emphatic. But it was entirely good natured, and there were no violent outcries. Yet note the report of the incident from one of the principal papers—not "yellow"—of Chicago:

"The purpose of you socialists is to abolish existing things, root and branch!" An uproar of wild cheers and