Decline of the Influence of the Press.

It will not be denied that the influence once exerted by the public press has greatly diminished, and if a reaction does not soon occur, will become a thing of the past. Why this is true, is plain to all who have given the subject a thought. It is an utter disregard for the truth, not only in dealing with advertisers, the real supporters of the press, but with readers as well. Partisan journals let nothing pass that they can turn to account against a rival, no matter how untrue or unjust. Some will say this is to be expected. It ought not to be. But a short time ago we saw published in several newspapers laying claim to high standing in journalistic circles, the statement that the editor of a rival journal was born at a time and place he had said over his own signature he was not, the object being not only to cloud his word but rob him of his birthright, and all this for demagogy.

Many newspapers proceed on the assumption that their readers are fools, while the only reason for such an opinion can be based upon the fact that they are the readers of such characterless newspapers.

We might say American politics had much to do with the sad state of affairs, and perhaps they have but as will be seen by the following extract from a London dispatch, this decline of the press is not confined alone to the American press: "It is not a long time since the *Times* occupied a position of so great authority that a publication by it of such as it printed this morning would have thrown the city of London into a tumult and the financial markets of Europe into a fever. To-day's occurrence marks plainly how far the influence of the *Times* has waned."

As stated, the newspaper that has made this great decline is none other than the London daily *Times*, and the matter it published on this occasion was a sensational dispatch about the operations of the French fleet bombarding Chinese ports. The only object apparent that the *Times* had in view was an increase in the sale of that single edition by a few thousand copies. To accomplish this end, throwing the "markets of Europe into a fever" and unsettling business of all kinds—perhaps bankrupting many persons—was of small account. Such a perfidious course should bankrupt the *Times'* management instead. Its waning power is deserved.

In this country many newspapers try to increase their sales by beastly obscenity. We have more than one that are simply sewers through which all the vile and loathsome side of life as brought out in the police courts are filtered. Even stories of the vilest character—stories that only have an existence in the low and vile minds of the writers, are published. We wish it was possible to trace to the press all the wrong it has wrought. We wish we could hold up to the public gaze all the lies and deceptions it has practised, the homes it has wrecked, the young men and women it has led astray. If we could, it would not be a question of its decline, for the outraged public would not let it appear at all. We believe in the freedom of the press as we do of the man until after he has committed crime, and then we believe that the same law that punishes him should be meted out to the press.—*Agents' Herald.*

The Ham was too Costly.

A well known hard card player of the city fell up against the well-developed faro game in Chicago during the recent races in that city, and during an unusually fierce and sanguinary argument with the tiger quit loser about $1,600, which amount represented every cent he owned in the world. As he rose to leave the gilded arena, speculating the while on the condition of the walking between Chicago and Pittsburg, the dealer remarked, in a very cheerful manner, "Hold on a minute; we're going to have a little lunch of cold ham, etc., in a few minutes. Won't you join us?" "Join you, be ——," roared the victim of the combat, as he turned on his heel with an air of disdain and quit the place; "do you think I can eat $1,600 worth of ham?"—*Pittsburg Dispatch.*

"Do birds think?" asks a writer, in opening an article. If they do, we should like to know what a canary bird thinks of a women who stands up in a chair and talks baby talk through the brass wires of the cage.

The Method of Climbing a Church Steeple.

A man, said a steeple climber to a reporter of the Boston *Globe*, cannot go up a steeple as he climbs a telegraph pole. In the first place he cannot reach around the spire, and, secondly, if the spire is shingled, a man in attempting to climb would undoubtedly meet with an accident, for the shingles, being usually decayed, would not hold the weight of his body. The way to reach the top af a steeple without the aid of a ladder or a staging would be to go inside the spire and climb to the highest point and then make an apeture. Out of this hole a piece of joist could be run, and a tackle rigged for a boatswain's chair. The man could then be hoisted on the outside up to the aperature: and from this point, by standing in the chair, he could place a trap around the spire, into which he could place the tackle, and by degrees reach the top. It is strange that in climbing a steeple there is an uncontrollable desire to look down, and I do not believe that the mere looking down causes one to fall. The awful stillness which prevails, the strangeness of the situation, and the fact that one is so near danger overpowers the brain and the man falls. Danger acts strangely upon a man. I remember in the war when the rebels were approaching and we were retreating, seeing wounded men arise from the ground and run as swiftly as an athlete. Sounds from the street comes very indistinct to a man on a steeple. When I have a steeple job I go into training. I abstain from using any intoxicants and tobacco, and I drink but little tea or coffee. I do this, not so much for myself as for others who maybe at work for me in a dangerous place. I always want to have steady nerves and a strong arm so as to be ready to work quickly.

Caustic Remarks by Divines.

The fame of Stockbridge Mass., rests largely upon three great names, of which the first is that of Jonathan Edwards. Here is the house in which that wonderful preacher and philosopher used to pray and read and write and fight hand to hand with the devil. Here is the very table at which he sat, and on it are ink stains from the very ink-horn into which he so often dipped his pen.

Here is the very chair in which Edwards often sat; perhaps the very one in which he was seated when a young man called upon him to ask his daughter's hand in marriage. "You can't have her," said the preacher. "But I love her." "No matter, you can't have her." "But she loves me, too." "I say you can't have her." "But I am well off and can support her." "You can't have her, I tell you." "Why not, Mr. Edwards? What have you against me?" "Nothing." "Well, then, why can't I have Emily?" "Because I think you are a pretty decent sort of young man; too good for her." "What? Mr. Edwards, what in the world do you mean?" 'She's got a wicked temper, and you wouldn't be happy with her.' "But I thought she was a Christian?" "So she is, young man; so she is. But before you have lived as long as I have you'll find out that there are some people in this world that the grace of God may get along with but you can't."

In a neighboring village in Edwards' time a similar grim divine, to whom, during a revival season, came a notorious scamp and practised backslider, with sanctimonious snivel, saying: "Doctor, I realize that I am indeed the chief of sinners." "Glad to hear it; your neighbors realized it long ago." "I feel that I want salvation." "Guess you need it as much as anyone." "And I feel," continued the hypocritical patient, "that I am willing to do anything God requires of me. I would willingly even be damned for His glory." "Well," said the preacher, "I don't think there is anyone that knows you that would have the slightest objection to that!"

The Cleanest People in the World.

Holland is the cleanest country in the world, as everybody knows, but no one can understand how very clean cleanliness can be until he visits her little villages. Even The Hague is a wonder of neatness, and on every Friday and Saturday undergoes an indescribable drenching and scouring. Water flies about everywhere on these two days from hose and garden-squirt in jets, and from tubs and pails in torrents; there is an immense clattering about of women in wooden shoes, and the whisking and scraping of brooms and scrubbing brushes resound on all sides. Not only the windows, but also the sides of the houses are scoured; not only the sidewalk, but the roadway as well, until one thinks that the dikes all over the country have given way at once, and the sea has again come into possession of its ancient domain. But in the smaller towns the swash and gurgle of water seems to go on all the time, and the people to be absolutely daft on the subject of neatness. But the effects of so much washing and scrubbing is very agreeable, and one immediately feels delight in seeing the peaceable fruits of the virtue which is universally held to be second only to godliness.

An immense dog, a cross between a mastiff and a St. Bernard, savagely attacked a young man at Edmonton, England, and would have killed him had not his sister come to his rescue. The girl fought the beast courageously and desperately, and was terribly bitten, but she conquered him

The frenzied prediction by a woman on a Missouri railroad train that an awful accident was impending might not have scared anybody had she not immediately afterward fallen from her seat dead. Most of the passengers quit the cars at the next station, but nothing happened to those who continued their journey.

There is a stagnant pool in a Florida forest particularly lonesome and secluded. Thirty years ago a lover was shot and thrown into it by the father of his sweetheart, who at once drowned herself in the same water; and the belief is held among the people of that region that no visitor to the spot can avoid an intense depression of spirits, occasioned by the brooding ghosts of the pair.

"Melindy," said Zeke, as he and the old woman were discussing some purchases to be made in the city, "I kan't see whatcher want with so menny little trimmin's and fixin's; you ain't no young gal now, an' I think you orter be satisfied with one nice kalliker dress." "Yes, I s'pose so," was all she said. The next morning Zeke rose at his usual hour, and proceeded to his little brown jug to take his morning nip, when lo! it was empty. 'Melindy," he yelled, "whar's my likker gone to?" "Zeke," she said smiling sweetly, "you ain't so young as you uster be, an' I kan't see whatever you want with so many fixin's; so I jis emptied the jug, an' think ye orter be satisfied with nothing but a purty little jug." Zeke caved.

How to Determine the Distance of an Object on the Sea.

It is amusing to note how ignorant many ordinary seamen and nearly all sea travellers are of such matters as the distance of the sea horizon, the way in which a ship's place at sea is determined, and other such matters—which all seamen might be expected to understand, and most persons of decent education might be expected to have learned something about at school. Ask a sailor how far off a ship may be, which is hull down, and he will give you an opinion based entirely on his knowledge of the ship's probable size, and on the distinctness with which he sees her. This opinion is often pretty near the truth; but it may be preposterously wrong if his idea of the ship's real size is very incorrect, and is sometimes quite wrong even when he knows her size somewhat accurately.

Any notion that the distance may be very precisely inferred from the relative position of the hull and the horizon line seems not to enter the average sailor's head. During my last journey across the Atlantic we had several curious illustrations of this. For instance, on one occasion a steamer was passing at such a distance as to be nearly hull down. From her character it was known that the portion of her hull concealed was about 12 feet in height, while it was equally well known that the eye of an observer standing on the saloon passenger's deck on the City of Rome was about 30 feet above the water level. A sailor, asked (by way of experiment) how far off the steamer was, answered, "Six or seven miles." "But she is nearly hull down," some one said to him. "I didn't say she wasn't, as I knows on," was the quaint but stupid reply. Now, it might be supposed to be a generally known fact, that even as seen from the deck of one of the ordinary Atlantic steamers, the horizon is fully six miles away, the height of the eye being about 18 or 20 feet, and that for the concealed portion of the other ship's hull a distance of four or five miles more must be allowed; so that the man's mistake was a gross one. And several other cases of a similar kind occurred during my seven days' journey from Queenstown to New York.

The rules for determining the distance of objects at sea, when the height of the observer's eye and the height of the concealed part of the remote object above the sea level are both known, are exceedingly simple, and should be well known to all. Geometrically, the dip of the sea surface is eight inches for a mile, four times this for two miles, nine times this for three miles, and so forth; the amount being obtained by squaring the number of miles and taking so many times eight inches. But, in reality, we are concerned only with the optical depression, which is somewhat less, because the line of sight to the horizon is slightly curved (the concavity of the curve being turned downward). Instead of eight inches for a mile, the optical depression is about six inches at sea, where the real horizon can be observed. But, substituting six inches for eight, the rule is as above given.

Six inches being half a foot, we obtain the number of six inch lengths in the height of an observer's eye by doubling the number of feet in that height; the square root of this number of six inch lengths gives the number of miles in the distance of the sea horizon. Thus, suppose the eye of the observer 18 feet above the sea level; then we double 18, getting 36, the square root of which is 6; hence the horizon lies at a distance of six miles as seen from an elevation of 18 feet. For a height of 30 feet, which is about that of the eye of an observer on the best deck of the City of Rome, we double 30, getting 60, the square root of which is 7.7: hence, as seen from that deck the horizon lies at a distance of 7¾ miles. If the depth of the part of a distant ship's hull below the horizon is known, the distance of that ship *beyond the horizon* is obtained in the same way. Thus, suppose the depth of the part concealed to be 12 feet, then we take the square root of twice 12, or 24, giving 4.9, showing that that ship's distance beyond the horizon is 4.9.10 miles. Hence, if a ship is seen so far hull down, from the hull of the City of Rome, we infer that its distance is 4.3.5 miles beyond the distance of the horizon, which we have seen to be 7.9.10 miles—giving for that ship's distance 12.7.10 miles. And with like ease may all such cases be dealt with.