THE PRESS OF NEW YORK—ITS FUTURE.

BY FRANKLIN FORD.

THE future of New York journalism is that of journalism itself. The moving realities of the business must first head up at the metropolis of America. It was there that the new machines of the century, the locomotive and the electric wire, were first brought into full use for newsgathering. The enterprise of the elder Bennett was a clear step forward. Then followed the New York Associated Press, organized to divide the cost of news transmission when telegraphing was expensive. The cost of telegraphing has now fallen so low that it is no longer a hindrance to the freest action. Telegraph charges to the great newspaper are to-day no more than the postage stamp to the individual. With the discovery of this fact, a new departure in journalism becomes possible.

The newspaper has now at its service an efficient machine. The long-distance telephone marks the completion of this new machine. The next step was to set about organizing the commodity in which the newspaper deals—intelligence. To do this is to get and publish the truth about all sides of human affairs. The more truth the more news, and the more news the greater the profit. The newspapers want this, but are coming to see that the end can only be reached by raising the quality of their goods.

News thus disclosed as commodity is to follow the law of all other commodities, that is, toward improvement in quality with consequent wider consumption. Back in the 70's the people wanted better kerosene. The Standard Oil Company furnished it. The result was a centralized industry, gradually increased consumption of goods, and lower prices. The publishing business has got to go through the same movement. In effecting this the distinction between news and "editorial" will be lost. There is only news—the new thing. The whole publishing business is to be raised to the NEWS idea. The so-called book business is speedily to become secondary or accessory to the daily newspaper.

In this New York is to take the lead. Were the movement to originate in the heart of the country, which is not unlikely, it could only be done in relation to New York. The historian Freeman, in one of his lectures a few years ago, declared that the world had come to be Romeless, that it was without a center. "No longer," he wrote, "does an undivided world look to a single Rome as its one undoubted head. The great feature of the most modern times . . . is the absence of any such center as the world so long gathered itself around." New York is the future Rome, for, in the fullness of electric transmission, it is to become the clearing house of the world's intelligence. In the newer commerce, now fast gathering force, New York is center. A remarkable thing is the fact that the world's intelligence is to be centered and coördinated by English-speaking men.

The multiplication of daily newspapers at New York came about through the premium placed on opinion. When the whole fact was inaccessible, this

and that paper was able to sell what some one merely thought was the fact. That day has passed away with the incoming of more complete access. The daily newspaper of the future will replace editorial writing with the skillful and full report. New York will do this first. Once done, the need for half a dozen deliveries of the purported fact will have disappeared.

The change will compel a deal of preparation, but numbers of men must already be working at it. On the one hand, the scientific center is to be erected; on the other, the country will be reported. The one central establishment will take account of the three sides, and, therefore, three profits, which all news presents. For two of these sides, or profits, the trade or class papers, and the "mercantile agencies," stand.

To effect all this, the country will be divided into districts, the manager of each district to draw his salary from New York. The one organization will collect all news, selling its goods through the daily newspaper, the class paper, and the bureau of information. Concerns like the Bradstreet Company and Dun & Company mark the beginnings of the last named.

The changes pending in journalism, and, therefore, in the publishing business as a whole, will be as profound as those following upon the iron business in consequence of Sir Henry Bessemer's steel-making formula. The late postmaster of New York, Henry G. Pearson, was a close student as to the direction of the social forces. He used to say that the present post-office is about completed; that the world must have a new one. This new one he called the spiritual post-office, or the great organic, centralized publishing business. "Down at our place," Pearson would say, "we are arrested if we open a letter. In the post-office that is to be, the arrest will be for failing to open them." He believed that the thought of the people was to find registration.

D. G. Croly, one time managing editor of the New York *World*, but now gathered to his fathers, insisted that "journalism has a theory and a practice which it is desirable to reduce to form." He was, of course, right. In thus insisting, Croly thought himself "first in this country." "A correct theory is the first step towards improvement, by showing what we need and what we might accomplish." The theory of journalism can be nothing short of the science of politics, making the central principle in the light of which the facts are to be organized. The newspaper is nothing by itself, being only the existing organization of intelligence, or lack of it. The newspaper, at any given date, simply reflects prevailing notions. To change it means the working out of advanced methods of reading the social life. The advance can be gained only through the unification of the ideas swarming from the new conditions of life. The ordering of these ideas and their application to reporting as indicated, is to compel a change in the newspaper which can only be compared to the advance of the printing press of to-day over the old Washington hand press.

Horace Greeley once said that the time was coming when all matter for the newspapers would proceed from a single institution. What Greeley did not see is that this one institution must itself be the great central publishing business, handling all news, and, working in relation with the leading paper at each news center of the country, constituting the ultimate associated press.

It is to be understood that the newspaper takes to itself the central position in life. The separation between church and life—making the lesion in the state—which has so perplexed the minds of men, is to disappear. In this respect we revert to the Grecian type of citizenship, the religious and civic merging in the one life of action. A new and prolific unity is dawning in the birth of the Organic State here foreshadowed.