

CHAPTER XI

MIAMI'S CLERGY AND PRESS

No city can attain its fullest development without intensive and unremitting boosting by its citizenship. A town may be invested with most potential natural resources, it may possess the most healthful climate and most charming and inspiring scenery, but if it is lacking in boosters to exploit these attributes and to force them upon the attention of the outside world, they are of little value to such town. This verity applies with equal force to the moral advancement of a community. No city that is lacking in spiritual boosters and in influence of a progressive press can hope to attain a high degree of moral and material development.

Miami, from its very inception as a city, has been blessed with an abundance of community boosters — moral and material. Among its moral uplifters of profound religious training, tempered with secular education, who have taken leading parts in the history of this city are the

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following: Rev. W. W. Faris, the late Rev. W. E. Stanton, Rev. D. L. Lowe, the late Rev. Edward L. Levy, Rev. J. D. Sybert, Rev. J. M. Gross, Rev. C. F. Blackburn, the late Rev. N. B. Fuller, the late Rev. L. S. Rader, the late Rev. John N. McGonnigle, Rev. John A. Wray, Rev. E. V. Blackman, Rev. R. V. Atkisson, Rev. Ira E. Adams, Rev. P. S. Merril, Rev. J. R. Cason, Rev. J. L. White, Rev. H. E. Sala, Rev. Robert T. Phillips, the late Rev. Frederick A. Bisbee, Rev. Jeremia George, Rev. Robert N. Ward, Rev. W. O. Garret, Rev. John Harris, Rev. Richard N. Merrill, Father Peter P. O'Sullivan, S.J., Father Andrew J. Brown, S.J., Father J. M. McLoughlin, S.J., the late Father A. Fountain, S.J., the late Father A. Friend, S.J., Father J. F. O'Boyle, S.J., Father James Moore, S.J., and the late Father Patrick Kennedy, S.J. (There are doubtless many others who should have been included in this group of Christian ministers — omissions, if any, are due to the writer's sole dependence upon personal observation and memory.)

Rev. W. W. Faris, who is one of Miami's early pioneers, has given this community and his church very valuable service. His activities were not confined to the church (Presbyterian) of

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Wray, Rev. E. V.
on, Rev. I. E.
I. R. Cason, Rev.
Rev. Robert I.
A. Hise, Rev.
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which he was the beloved pastor for a long period, and from which he retired at a ripe old age with an enviable record of noble achievements. His broad views of secular matters made him very popular with all classes of his townsmen. His nobility of character and devotion to his faith made him an ideal Christian teacher who reflected the best there is in Christianity. The venerable Dr. Faris, while secluded in the bosom of his family owing to the infirmities of age, is still taking a keen interest in civic affairs as reported by friends who visit him occasionally. (Dr. Faris died after this was written.)

The late Dr. Rader, Dr. Lowe, Dr. Wray, Dr. Merrill, Sr., Dr. Cason and Dr. Gross have left their indelible impress upon this community. Their practical sermons and active leadership, in their respective churches, have contributed to Miami's high moral standard. Their long tenures in their respective pulpits stand as testimonials to their ability as ministers, and to the affection in which they were held by their communicants.

The late Rev. Father Friend was true to the signification of his name. During his pastorate of the local Catholic Church, some years ago, he

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was instrumental in the cultivation and cementing of friendly relations between members of his flock and those of other denominations. He was also prominently identified with various civic movements, particularly in that of the founding of the present city hospital. In this noble undertaking he was intimately associated with the initiators of the movement, namely, Frank B. Stoneman and the late Conrad Schmidt, non-Catholics.

Dr. White has succeeded in making himself indispensable to his church as well as to the general community. He arrived in this city some years ago, in the midst of a Y.M.C.A. drive. His inspirational address at one of the workers' meetings dissipated the avalanche of gloom that had been generated by successive discouraging reports from the weary solicitors. Dr. White's eloquence is drawing multitudes to his church (First Baptist). His tolerant attitude toward adherents of other denominations and toward non-Christians has made him generally beloved and respected.

Dr. Sala, Dr. Richard N. Merrill, Dr. Garrett, Dr. Phillips and Dr. Ward are notable examples of Miami's progressive clergy. Their fearless and

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vigorous utterances in their respective pulpits, their enthusiasm of youth and their forceful criticism of civic situations demanding reformation, stamp them as the personification of active Christianity.

Dr. Blackman, Dr. Atkisson and Dr. Adams, although retired from the ministry, are none the less useful to the community. Dr. Blackman, who is an early pioneer, has a record of long, uninterrupted community service. He is, in a large measure, responsible for the horticultural development of Dade County. He also contributed to the wide publicity enjoyed by Miami through his facile pen which he had put into action in the early days when local writers were scarce. Dr. Blackman has rounded out his career as a scribe by writing a history of Dade County. Dr. Atkisson is doing very effective social work in addition to his valuable service on the directorate of the Chamber of Commerce. Dr. Adams has been an important factor in the progress of the church (First Christian) of which he was pastor. Being endowed with considerable business acumen, he applied this faculty to the benefit of his church—as evidenced by its magnificent edifice—which was erected during his ministry. He has

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also served the community by helping in numerous drives for funds to supply civic needs.

The late Dr. Stanton and the late Dr. Fuller were early pioneers in their respective denominations (the former Baptist, the latter Episcopalian). Although well advanced in age when they took up their ministerial duties in incipient Miami, they proved untiring servants of their flocks until called to their merited rewards.

Dr. Blackburn, who is one of Miami's early pioneer ministers, has been an important factor in the upbuilding of his denomination (Trinity Methodist) in this city, as well as in numerous other localities where his office of presiding elder demanded his presence. Although absent from the city during long intervals, he never became dissociated from the spiritual progress of Miami.

The late Rev. Frederick A. Bisbee, besides an able and liberal minister, was a noted writer. Up to the time of his demise, in 1923, he was editor of the *Universalist Leader*. He also contributed to the local press. About five years ago he succeeded in organizing the First Universalist church of Miami.

Miami's boosting spirit permeates all groups

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of its citizenship; in none of which, however, is this so pervasive and yet so little recognized by the general community as in the newspaper group. As in everything else, Miami has been, and still is, exceptionally fortunate in possessing an intelligent and fearless press. The wielders of the pen boost everything and everybody in the community except themselves — their names are seldom seen in their own or in the columns of other newspapers. The recipients of their boosting are not infrequently amassing fortunes while they themselves, with rare exceptions, remain the vanguard of the grand army of drifters — this does not apply to owners of newspapers, of course (locally, the worm has turned, as seen by the number of newspaper men who recently entered the realty field).

It is needless to emphasize the transcendent importance of Miami's newspapers to the city, county and state, suffice it to say that without them Miami would still be an Indian trading post.

Miami's newspaper men and women, whose names are listed below, are covering a vast publicity field, the ramifications of which touch every phase of modern journalism and every form of

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community boosting. It is due to some of these versatile scribes that Miami's public speakers, whose oratorical aspirations sometimes lure them into unfamiliar fields of rhetoric, are spared the disconcerting feeling of reading their own speeches as they had been delivered. It should be remarked that the best published speeches are not infrequently tinctured with the emanations of their reporters' fertile brains — instead of being commended, however, they are often accused of garbling.

Miss Jefferson Bell, society editor of the *Herald*, is a creditable representative of the reportorial school which is noted for the production of writers endowed with great imaginative power.

Mrs. Marjory Stoneman Douglas who is adding greatly to the growing popularity of the *Herald*, when not preoccupied in reporting her own speeches on city beautifying, current literature, ancient history and upon diverse other interesting subjects, charms her numerous readers with poetical compositions, some of which have been found worthy of reproduction in such a noted magazine as the *Literary Digest*. To add to her laurels, several of her short stories have been

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recently published in *The Saturday Evening Post* and other noted magazines.

"Isabel Stone" (*nom de plume*), writer of special articles for the *Miami Herald*, is gaining in popularity among countless readers of that paper through her highly interesting articles on local current events and the well-known characters that figure in them.

Miss Eleanor Bisbee, formerly agriculture editor for the *Miami Metropolis*, and now special-edition editor and biographer on the *Miami Daily News*, is one of Miami's capable newspaper women whose work is received by an appreciative reading public.

Of Miami's women journalists none has been more closely identified with the progress of this community than Miss Hattie Carpenter, who, for more than a decade, filled the editorial chair of the *Metropolis* (now the *Daily News*). Her familiarity with educational matters gained during her incumbency of the office of high school principal found illuminating expression in the editorials of that paper. Miss Carpenter severed her connection with that paper upon its change of ownership.

Arthur Keene, since his ascension to the edi-

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torial throne of the *Miami News-Metropolis*, has been writing forceful editorials on the imperative needs of the city. His editorial suggestions relative to park planning and other municipal improvements have attracted wide attention.

Charles F. Cushman, another editor of the same paper, was a member of its staff for a number of years. His quick perception of news values made him indispensable to that paper. (Both Mr. Keene and Mr. Cushman have recently severed their connection with the *Daily News* and have entered the realty field, the former as a broker and the latter as publicity director for a leading realty firm.)

Agnew Welsh, a valued member of the *Daily News* force, is doing highly constructive literary work by writing sketches of Florida history which appear in the columns of that paper from time to time. His comprehensive articles reveal a wide range of knowledge of the state's history.

Morton M. Milford, managing editor of the *Miami Daily News*, under James M. Cox's ownership, is a recent entrant into Miami's newspaper field. Mr. Milford was formerly the Washington correspondent for the *Louisville Courier-Journal*,

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and the Louisville *Times*. Prior to his coming here he published the Fort Meyers, Florida, *Press*.

Vernon Knowles, managing editor of the Miami *Tribune*, was formerly editor of the Winnipeg, Canada, *Tribune*. The Miami *Tribune*, since its establishment in this city about one year ago, has been making marked progress.

Reese Combs, Charles S. Bates and R. A. Reeder, while not writers, have been connected with the advertising departments of their respective newspapers for a number of years and are generally regarded as newspaper men. Mr. Combs has recently retired from the newspaper business and entered the realty field. Mr. Bates and Mr. Reeder, the former of the *Herald* and the latter of the *Daily News*, are still identified with their respective papers. Mr. Reeder occupies the position of business manager.

Clinton Page, of the *Herald* staff, is writing highly illuminating articles on agriculture and the development of Miami's back country.

Clayton Sedgwick Cooper is editor-in-chief of the Miami *Tribune*, and is taking a keen interest in Miami's progress and in its problems.

Frank B. Stoneman, editor-in-chief of the Miami *Herald*, is noted for his valuable contri-

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bution to the progress of this community, as well as to the state as a whole, through his timely and highly educational editorials and through his personal participation in all important movements tending to the promotion of the community's welfare. His temperate and erudite editorials are widely quoted. His just and liberal attitude on local, state and national issues evokes favorable comments from all classes of Miami's citizenship. His unfailing defense of the oppressed and his persistent and forceful advocacy of needed reforms have made him a host of friends and admirers all over the state.

Mr. Stoneman arrived in Miami in 1903, when, in partnership with A. L. LaSalle, Sr., he entered into the newspaper field, publishing a weekly paper called the *Miami Record*. Some years later the firm bought the *Miami News* and merged the two papers into the *Miami News-Record*. That paper was subsequently sold to the Florida East Coast Railway Corporation and its name changed to the *Miami Herald*. Upon consummation of this change Mr. LaSalle withdrew from the paper and with his son, Athos LaSalle, entered into the job printing business. (Mr. LaSalle, Sr., died a few years later.) Mr.

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Stoneman retained his office of editor-in-chief under the new ownership and after the paper had again changed hands, this time to Frank B. Shutts, he acquired a financial interest therein and at this writing continues to fill his former position.

O. W. Kennedy, managing editor of the *Miami Herald*, has been connected with this paper since 1920. His influence in the community soon made itself manifest by his vigorous attack, through the columns of his paper, under the *nom de plume* of "O" "K," against certain evils that existed during the experimental stage of the Commission-Manager form of government. His severe and persistent criticism of the official acts of the first incumbent of the City Manager's office is said to have contributed to a speedy change in the personnel of that office.

Rev. J. Delman Kuykendall, minister of Plymouth Church of Coconut Grove, is another valued member of the *Herald* force. His weekly editorials on religious subjects, especially his Biblical exegetics, are highly instructive and of great educational value. His notable liberality can best be expressed by a quotation from his book, recently published, entitled "The New

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Meaning of an Old Creed": "Loving God with the whole heart cannot be a matter of rules. No one can define for another how he must live in order to love God, nor what sacrifices he must make."

Edgar L. Hay, the popular *Herald* columnist and creator of "Rambles" has, during his short residence in this city, succeeded in "rambling" himself into the affections of his countless readers. His column character, the "Sage of Ojus," will some day be as widely known as the real "Sage of Potato Hill." (Mr. Hay resigned after this was written.)

E. W. Howe (the sage of potato hill), may properly be included in the list of Miami's literati and journalists. Mr. Howe has been spending the winters in this city for a number of years. He is a familiar figure on the streets of Miami and is possessed of a large acquaintance among the business and professional men and women of the city. His frequent contributions in the *Miami Herald* reveal true journalistic genius and give an inkling of the literary merit of his works that made him a national figure in the realms of journalism.

Lon Warner is another veteran newspaper man of ability. During his long residence in this

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city he served on the editorial staffs of the *Metropolis* and the *Herald*. In addition to his reportorial work he frequently charmed the reading public with delectable poems which attracted more than local attention. Mr. Warner is now publicity director for one of Miami's prominent realty firms.

Joe Hugh Reese, the talented and well-known journalist, while not connected with any local newspaper at present, is adding to Miami's fame through his notable contributions to a number of prominent magazines of wide circulation. He is an authority on Florida history and a fearless editorialist. His editorials in Miami's pioneer *Daily*, some years ago, proved of inestimable value to the city and county. His consistent and vigorous championship of the people's rights is frequently exercised at great personal sacrifice. His historical book, "Flashlights," is used as a textbook in many editorial sanctums. Mr. Reese, after several years' absence, has returned to Miami and will make this city his permanent home.

George L. Bradley, assistant-managing editor of the *Herald*, is an able newspaper man and a highly valued member of its staff.

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John R. Livingston has made himself indispensable to his paper, the *Miami Daily News*, as a reliable and proficient court-trial reporter.

William Stuart Hill, who is one of the oldest attachés of the *Herald*, is adding to the prestige of this paper by writing highly illuminating articles descriptive of the Everglades.

As in all other departments of Miami's development, its newspapers have made tremendous strides of progress. They have forged ahead from a one-sheet provincial weekly to its present four metropolitan dailies, namely, the *Miami Herald*, the *Miami Daily News*, the *Miami Tribune* and Cornelius Vanderbilt's paper, the *Illustrated Daily Tab*. In addition to these there are three weeklies, namely, the *Miami News*, the *Miami Post* and *Miami Life*. There are also several periodicals.

The *Miami News* is the official organ of local labor organizations. It enjoys a growing patronage of Miami's advertising public as well as that of the laboring class.

The *Miami Post* is liberally patronized by old-time admirers of the editorials from the trenchant pen of its publisher and editor, Judge Redmond B. Gautier.

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Miami *Life* is very popular with the younger set of Miami's smart society. It is printed on good quality book paper and is gotten up in attractive style. Wen. R. Phillips, its versatile editor, is becoming noted for his incisive editorials in criticism of persons in public life and of conditions affecting the public weal.

It is safe to assert that with a progressive and tolerant clergy and an intelligent and courageous press, Miami is destined to become one of the foremost cities of the nation. In a broader sense, this verity is applicable to the American nation as a whole. As long as the American pulpit and press adhere to the spirit of its sacred and inviolable constitution, so long will this great country of ours grow and prosper and fulfill its divine mission of diffusing the light of true liberty throughout the universe.