

belief that people generally, up and down the road, are intuitively and predominantly moral. By this I mean that if persons are confronted with a clear and simple decision involving basic morals, most of us will conduct ourselves morally. Most everyone, without being a learned scholar of moral philosophy, seems to have a sort of innate sense of what is right, and tends to do what is moral *unless and until he becomes confused by circumstances which obscure the moral issue that is involved.*

Immorality Is News

The content of many magazines and newspapers with widespread circulations would seem to contradict my belief that most people are moral most of the time. They headline impressive and unusual events on the seamy side of life, which might lead one to believe that these events are characteristic of everyday human affairs. It is to be noted, however, that their content is in sharp contrast to the local, home-town daily or weekly with its emphasis on the folksy reports of the comings and goings of friends. Why the difference? Those with large circulation find that the common denominator of news interest in their audience is events on the rare,

seamy side of life; widely scattered millions are not interested in knowing that in Center-ville, Sally attended Susie's birthday party last Tuesday.

It is the rarity of evil conduct that makes it impressive news for millions. Papers report the events of yesterday's murder, theft, or assault, together with the name, address, age, marital status, religious affiliation, and other descriptive features of the guilty party because these are the events of the day that are unusual enough to be newsworthy. What would be the demand for a newspaper which published all the names and identifications of all the persons who yesterday failed to murder, steal, or assault? If it were as rare for persons to act morally as it is now rare for them to act immorally, the then rare instances of moral conduct would presumably become the news of the day. So we may conclude that evil is news because it is so rare; that being moral is not news because it is so prevalent.

But does not this still prove the dominance of evil in persons? Or, since magazines and newspapers print what finds a ready readership in the market, does not that prove the evilness of those who read of evil? I believe not. It is more like the millions who attend zoos, and view with fascination the monkeys