

sions of those who have come into close contact with this conquering hero? These are some of the questions to be answered in this connection.

Did somebody say "Libel Law"? Well, this is a delicate question. You see, it is like this. A good many of us are friends of the Ontario Government, and the Ontario Government are friends of the legal profession and the rich Law Society, presided over by the Blakes and the Mosses. It isn't always policy to fall out with your friends, even when you have justice on your side. A big push for libel reform was made last year. This resulted in a bill being put through the Legislature—a bill which was a slight on a profession which can distinguish between empty form and substance. Quebec journalists seem to be much more fortunate in point of the courtesy of the law-makers which the province has elected. But Ontario will suffer in silence this year, and her legislators will be loved for the good they have done in other ways or are still expected to do—e.g., registrarships, etc.

But it is to be hoped that the Protective Association, which was mooted last year, will again be discussed. A permanent counsel hired by this protective or insurance association would be a great and present help in time of trouble. Moreover, a number of libel suits by the same plaintiff against several defendants would be blessed with only one set of expenses, one decision and one settlement. This matter fell through last year because of its novelty. Many who refused to sign last year are ready now if the promoters of the scheme will but bring it forward again.

A correspondent writes: "I hope that the standard of admission to membership will be placed high, and that ability, integrity, respectability and experience, as well as cash, will be the basis of qualification for admission to the charmed circle. A modicum of prison experience would do much to elevate the standard, but I object to cash, unlimited cheek and libel suits being the only limit, of qualification, and I regret that members of such calibre have crept in, void of brains enough to freeze at a temperature of six hundred and twenty below zero." This is a somewhat roundabout way of saying that triviality, frivolity, and gas-blowing on the part of members should be tabooed. The rich experience of the members, the trouble-trying result of long years of patient and thoughtful labor, is the one thing that will make the meetings successful. This should be drawn out and disseminated to the greatest possible advantage.

The members of the Press Association would do well to read an article on "The Ethics of Journalism," by the editor of The Week, which article is reproduced in this issue. He says: "But the special point to which we set out to call attention is the absence, among the members of the great fraternity of journalists, of anything like uniformity touching certain great questions of principle and practice in cases which must almost daily arise to perplex the wise and conscientious journalist." The questions of suppressing or shortening reports of certain kinds, of refraining from giving prominence to that which is degrading, and of acting so that one paper will try to take no mean advantage of another, are questions which "The Ethics of Journalism" should

regulate. Will the Canadian Press Association lay down this code? Will they enforce it, when they do lay it down?

Seeing that the power of the press is one of the most wonderful and far-reaching of the influences which work upon the complicated civilization of this nineteenth century, the members of the Fourth Estate have a grave responsibility. As is the tone of the Canadian press, so will be the tone of the moral and social life of the Canadian people. The newspaper wields a greater influence over a man between 21 and 50 than religion, relations, and friends. Before he grows to manhood, his mother, the church, and the school teacher mould him—if they are existent in his case. After he becomes a man, he is led by the newspaper and the magazine. To be a good journalist is never to abuse the power which one possesses, but to always carefully, persistently, and conscientiously aim to elevate as well as interest. It is only as the Press Association recognizes its importance that these aims will be carried into a greater degree of action.

The following article appeared in The Fourth Estate of January 3rd:

"Joe Howard, in The Recorder, writes:

The Fourth Estate, an admirably edited and most newswy publication, says: "The newspaper in its greatness is often unconsciously a medium of evil as well as of good." And our contemporary is dead right, as usual. A large majority of even well-edited newspapers do an immensity of good and evil unconsciously. With the fakir in journalism, who does evil with intent, we have nothing to do.

But that's different.

The unconscious evil done is incalculable. The publication of testimony, presumably necessary, as to the uncanny life led by the off-colored of our city opens the eyes of youthful readers to conditions of which they should ever be ignorant.

The daily newspaper comes regularly to the breakfast table in thousands of homes. Take a glance at yours this morning. Are narrations there which tell you of virtue, of elevated thought, of refining influences, of Christian methods, of honorable dealings?

Or do you find its columns filled with records of crime, beastliness, wickedness of every sort and nature, defalcations, robberies, murder, arson, butcheries? These, it will be said, constitute the news of the day. Precisely so, it might be said that manure is the natural tenant of a barnyard.

Why go to the barnyard?

"If asked for an explanation as to why so much that is unclean is printed, the average editor will say 'The public wants it.'

"Such, however, is not the case. From the newspaper that claims to educate the public and to mould public opinion, such an admission is puerile. The public will accept what is given to it, and is educated by what it reads.

"If it is the purpose of a newspaper to educate the public to all manner of crime, and to familiarize it with the particulars of crime and degradation, then it is proper that the news of all such should be given; but if its purpose is to elevate and enlighten and to make its readers better men and women, there is no excuse for the presentation of "news" that has its origin in crime."

