

be eminently unpatriotic to insinuate that the standard of morality is lower in our Dominion than elsewhere, and would strongly affect the returns?

6th. If the revenue tariff must still be resorted to, *treble* it on alcoholic liquors, tobacco and cigars. We must learn to pay for luxuries, if we require them.

7th. Economy in Government expenditure; and, as a first step, abolish entirely Provincial Parliaments and Senates.

8th. If still there be lack, then let us become hard-hearted and unscrupulous enough to let Amor de Cosmos, filled with an ardent "love of the world," bore his way through the rocky mountains himself, in order to reach it.

So let us have peace and freedom to trade and exchange what we have for what we need, that we may be able always to pay taxes and rejoice in the freedom their wise expenditure shall obtain for us. *Trade Reform.*

"WE"—THE GENTLEMEN OF THE PRESS.

Speaking generally, we are proud of the Press. We are proud of many things—of our daughters, our ships, our soldiers, our volunteers, horses and pigs; but we manage to spare a little pride for our Press. We toast it at our public dinners, and in that custom we honour the Press; the last in our fond affections on such occasions, if we except the Ladies. They come last of all; and some blushing youth has to return thanks for them, either on the expectation of favours to come, or on the perhaps wiser supposition that he who knows least about his subject can speak most fluently. But it is not of ladies that I now wish to speak, but of the Gentlemen of the Press, and indeed of the institution of the Press itself.

Recently I ventured to point out how dangerous the modern system of "interviewing" has become, and how the information given to the public through this medium is utterly unreliable. Since that writing, my opinion has received a very remarkable confirmation through some passing events. Mr. G. A. Sala has cried out that he did not say what the interviewer gave him credit for, but he good-naturedly attributed the mistake to his habit of talking quickly. This may perhaps be also regarded as the reason for some of the "scares" which have appeared lately in the New York *Herald*, purporting to be the result of "interviewing" some Canadian celebrities.

It is perhaps a difficult task for a reporter to represent correctly what a garrulous old gentleman wishes to convey; and if that same old gentleman should be dawningly-wise and a man who has been for many years before the public—and who, as a politician, has been all round the compass—the difficulty is proportionately increased.

The Press is a great power, and much feared. In Napoleon's time, and in his opinion, two editors of newspapers outweighed six armies. It is not everywhere so respected—because public opinion vacillates—and is not found dangerous. In Germany, France, Spain, Russia, and even in the United States, from different causes, the opinions of editors do not go for much. Outrages on liberty may be daily perpetrated, and a journalist dares not comment on the matter, since if he does so his journal suffers. Gold rules the day, and compliance with the Government makes gold. In America the small weight of the newspaper is owing partly to the number of papers, whereby one writer's opinions negative those of another. Next to this is the violence of expression and the latitude of language allowed; and thirdly, there is the commercial poison of gold, which kills respect. If one journal is successful, another will copy it or oppose it to obtain a portion of its success: hence opinion is seen to be based upon what should *be*, as upon what should *pay*, and the reader finds at once that force of expression is simply simulated or pumped up; for newspaper readers are not fools. If they find that a paper is in earnest, they respect it, even if it opposes them; if they know that the writer is a mere sham, a pretence, a garden engine or water-squirt used for the purpose of shedding abroad the liquid guano of diluted opinion, they do not after all care much for him.

In England, Ireland and Scotland, and in Italy and some parts of Germany, the editorial *We* is a power. As such the Press has been complimented overmuch. It is the palladium of liberty—the Fourth Estate. Although their profession is not recognized, its officers are, *par excellence*, "Gentlemen of the Press." It has done, and does do every week, much good. It does much harm, too. It saves men from thinking; it moulds the purposes of a ministry; it changes the future of a nation; it raises or it depresses a reputation; it lifts a writer or an actor to the skies, or it dashes him to earth; it colours men's thoughts, makes people sorry or glad, sends prosperity below or above par, sets in motion those springs which lead to war; and when strong, determined and consistent, it lays down that curious Mosaic pattern by which the minds of future generations shall be moulded. All this is no exaggeration; and if it be true, a powerful leader-writer or an editor must be a great and powerful man; how is it, then, that he is of little reputation?

Every good and successful writer has become what he is by years of labour acting on a genius for his work. You cannot make a Carlyle or a Captain Sterling of the *Times*. Such men are born to their position. Every true writer

is so. He has an irrepressible desire to write; he wishes to teach in his way, whatsoever it be, his fellow-men. And he is so far inspired. He has as true a call as any one of the prophets in Samaria. Alas, like many of the prophets, he sometimes turns aside, and is not true to himself! But this is seldom. It is with Carlyle, in a less degree, as it was with Balaam—he can only speak what is in him.

Some persons regard the newspaper with an over-great, because an ignorant, reverence. The editor is supposed to know everything, and to be able to go anywhere; to assist at the interviews of politicians, and to be a welcome guest at every fireside. With others, he is held to be a mere weak old (or young) man, one who knows nothing, but who is merely the mouthpiece of others. In either view, wrote Mr. Beresford Hope, "the periodical writer, whether in his nobler or his baser aspect, is a Child of the Mist." And the way in which Mr. Hope would propose to elevate the newspaper writer, is by taking away from him the veil of the anonymous, and by making him sign his name to every article that he writes; for, he says, "at present society does not look upon a journalist as a gentleman." A man who writes for his bread is not regarded with the same favour as one who feels people's pulses for his bread, or who puts a gown on his back, and makes a hired advocate of himself for his bread. One who becomes a newspaper-writer is not looked upon in the same category as a barrister or surgeon; it is "not a means of gaining a livelihood that would occur to the young man of family equally well with the army, the navy, the public office, or holy orders."

Well, that cannot be helped; if public writers were pushed into the Press like men are into the army or navy, the chances are that our newspapers would be prosy enough, and editors as dull as our soldiers and sailors. If people look down on newspaper writers, we cannot help it. "When they get paid as well as other professions they will be thought as well of," said Thackeray, himself a newspaper correspondent.

If the newspaper writer were known, half the charm and half of his independence would be gone. Many journals do not speak as they should do because of the surroundings of the proprietors. A newspaper is degraded if it be not free. If it fears respectability or prejudice, or anything but truth, it becomes merely an organ—and a very detestable organ sometimes—on which a party grinds tunes which annoy others and do no good to humanity.

Therefore it seems that the newspaper writer is best anonymous. People often would like to know who blows so fierce a blast on the *Daily Trumpet*, or who wrote the tender article which made us shed tears. But the public is not gratified, and the writer goes on his way with the simple, and after all the truest, satisfaction of knowing that he has done his duty. Those who know him give him due honour—sometimes undue jealousy, too. Nor do we find that in France, where every one signs his name, newspapers are better written. The old name ceases to please, and if a man wishes to attack any one, he can assume a pseudonym. The plea that a writer would be more careful if he put his name to his writings is not proved. Charles Churchill, Samuel Butler and Thomas Paine wrote some very wild and bad things under their own names. Voltaire wrote his *Pucelle d'Orleans* openly. The fact is that a gentleman is a gentleman always. If he is writing anonymously he will do just as if he signed his name, because he is ever in his great Master's eye. If a man merely writes for bread, he will pen that which brings him most money, whether he puts his name to it or not. He becomes a mere advocate, one who vacates his thoughts and lets out his talents without for a moment inquiring of the truth of the side he advocates.

It seems, then, that the editorial *We* is of some use. It is very awkward to use. It often means more than the mere mask; for if the writer is what he should be, he carries the commercial part of the journal with him, and is a friend, not a creature of the proprietors. He speaks his own thoughts; and those ideas are identical with those about him. "My own thoughts, Sir," says the polite gentleman in the play, "only infinitely better expressed." The article in the paper is not the mere *ipse dixit* of the writer, nor is the *We* only the algebraist's unknown quantity. The writer must have tact, knowledge, learning, political foresight, honour, clear expression, warmth, earnestness, and a great capacity for hard and sometimes unpleasant work as well; a good newspaper writer is not to be found every day, and therefore should be honoured.

The Gentlemen of the Press are indeed important. They have been antagonised by other professions, but they have won their way. Some have called them a new priesthood, but this they can only be in a few cases; others have said that they are to overthrow armies. It will be well if the Gentlemen of the Press are content to be looked on as schoolmasters,—men of a noble profession, but always underpaid and under-rated. But what of that? If a true philosopher could choose what he had to do, perhaps such as Socrates would to-day have taught through his two or three columns of print. Rightly undertaken, the profession should rank with the highest.

In the far-distant good time, when a man's social position will be determined by the weight he carries, and the good he does, it seems to me that the Gentlemen of the Press, the editorial plurality *We*, will be moved up higher and much nearer the vanguard than they are at present. *Quevedo Redivivus.*