

THE PRESS AND SMALL-BEER POLITICS.

NO one has suggested that I should intervene in the dispute which is going on over Mr. Cooper's article on "Boomerang Journalism," in the last *PRINTER AND PUBLISHER*. But the temptation to take a hand in any fight that is in progress is too strong to be resisted. Of course, the person who rushes in between combatants usually gets a black eye from one side and a broken arm from the other, but he emerges always with a cheerful feeling of having done his duty, and of having been "in it." That is consolation enough for any amount of bodily injury.

In the first place, it should be said that any discussions carried on in these columns only reach the eye of members of the newspaper craft. The newspapers have a perfect right to bring the subjects ventilated here to general public notice if they please; but unless they do, the aforesaid g. p. would never hear of them. Mr. Cooper, doubtless, wrote with this feeling of security, and may not have expected that objections to his argument would appear elsewhere. Now, it is extremely probable that no one will care a beaver's dam for the views that are expressed in the following sentences, but it is just as well to premise them with the reminder that they are intended for the brethren only, and that the many-headed ass known as The Public is quite incompetent to decide a question of journalistic methods.

The grievance I have against newspaper editorials is different, in a way, from Mr. Cooper's. It is the practice of political newspapers to quote and comment ad nauseam upon some manly expression of opinion from a party journalist dealing freely with his own party. Take the latest cases in point. When men with the courage and honesty of Mr. Donly or Mr. Sellars, of Huntingdon, or Mr. Macgillicuddy, of Goderich, publish a free criticism of the party leaders they generally support, this is at once seized upon as a sort of confession that all the attacks on that particular party are thereby justified, and that the rest of the party journals, whose editors don't publish similar sentiments, are whited sepulchres, unworthy of belief and confidence. When the late Government was under fire from its own friends the same use was made of their candid utterances, so that the practice is not confined to one quarter. I am not complaining because these gentlemen's views have been quoted in the journals of the other stripe in politics. It would be missing news to omit them. It is what the gentleman in the book called the "damnable iteration" that annoys one.

Why should we make the lot of the outspoken editor as uncomfortable as we can? It is stifling, as far as possible, the free discussion of the press to follow the present practice. It is nothing more or less than small-beer politics, of which this country is already filled to overflowing. Instead of encouraging the expression of candid political writing we make it a task almost beyond the power of the average editor, since no man wants to be held up as a traitor to his party simply because he exercises his right to an opinion of his own.

There is an obvious retort to all this, of course: are you so perfect yourself that you are qualified to judge others? Perhaps not; though it is understood that the repentance of the vilest sinner is not rejected, consequently the humble individual who

writes these lines has a chance left yet. He seizes it to implore the brethren to regard one of the craft who speaks out his mind as one to be honored, not dogged day in and day out with constant reminders of his candor. I am not hitting at any journal in particular. The offence is common and has been going on in the political journalism of this country for twenty years anyway; the patriarchs may say how it was in the years immediately following the flood.

It is, after all, a very asinine policy from the purely newspaper point of view, and only the recent meeting of the Epworth League in Toronto prevents the use of stronger language. Mr. Cooper's criticism opens up another branch of the subject: the omission of newspaper editors to make certain topics their own, to be authorities on these topics, and then they can speak with greater force and effect. The big issues in politics are often monopolized by the city dailies, and naturally one suspects the provincial press to be more or less a reflex of metropolitan journals. The suspicion may be unfair, but it will occur. The provincial press have the remedy in their own hands. By cultivating certain phases of discussion with greater care than the city press they will easily be quoted on their merits. It is not a question of the distribution of brains. That commodity is not concentrated in the large cities by any means. The progress of daily journalism in Brantford, St. Thomas, Chatham and other places is ample proof to the contrary.

A. H. U. C.

MR. NICHOL'S NEW POSITION.

Editor *PRINTER AND PUBLISHER*:

SIR,—I find the following item in a recent issue of The London News:

Mr. W. C. Nichol, the clever editor of The London News, who threw up his position on the staff of The News and started for the gold fields of the Yukon because the newspaper business was no good, did not keep out of the newspaper business very long. He has taken a partnership in the publication of The Kaslo (B.C.) Kootenaiian.—Sarnia Canadian. This statement is correct, Mr. Nichol has purchased an interest in the paper referred to.

Will you kindly permit me to say through your columns that I did not throw up my position on the staff of The News in order to start for the Yukon or because I considered the newspaper business no good. My reasons for leaving were stated distinctly at the time and I have not changed my views in the slightest particular since. It is quite true that I have purchased a half interest in The Kootenaiian, and I may add, for the benefit of any friends of mine who may be interested in my welfare, that I am more than satisfied with my bargain.

Yours truly,

W. C. NICHOL.

Kaslo, July 29, 1897.

PRINTING FOR PROFIT.

Printers of half-tone cuts and fine color work can find in the Golding Art Jobber a press that for quantity of product, quality and convenience in handling is ahead of all competition. It is not enough now to do work well; it must be done quickly, else there can be no profit. The Art Jobber has four form rollers, a full length automatic brayer fountain, a duplex distributor (found only on the Golding presses), and possesses strength far in excess of any strain that is likely to be put upon it in letterpress printing or embossing. Made by Golding & Co., Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Chicago. (Advt.)