

DURING the past few weeks there has been a marked deterioration in the tone of certain of our Montreal daily journals. These journals have, taken all in all, a relatively enormous circulation. They are read not only in Montreal, but throughout the Eastern provinces. We all gladly acknowledge our indebtedness to the daily press: it is a pleasure to praise it. But when that press becomes unmanly, not to say foul, it is the duty of all right thinking men in the interest of the fair name and healthy development of Montreal and the Dominion to protest. It is true that our daily papers are private undertakings, but it is also true that they, in common with the daily press throughout the English speaking world, acknowledge the function of attempting to mould or at least to influence public opinion—they have a public position and a public trust, and when upon this continent they, in common with the daily press of other cities, have obtained so great a vogue that they form the sole reading matter of the majority of the people, the consequences of a deterioration in the matter supplied to them are awful to contemplate. Unhesitatingly we affirm that the daily press can and does educate the public taste. That being so, it is the clear duty of our journals to strive to influence that taste: we do not mean that it is absolutely necessary that they should quote a daily text, but it is for them to realize their responsibility, to recognize that they are a factor in the making of the individual, and so of the nation, and to interest their readers in what is of good report. Surely the world is wide, and there is in it enough of what is useful and stimulating to form abundant daily paragraphs. And it is criminal for journals which pride themselves upon appealing to a large public to glut their columns with details of crime, to demand the attention of their readers to all the nauseating details of murder or *cause celebre* by the employment of headlines in biggest capitals, and to give the best position to the portrait of the latest malefactor. Will such actions raise the nation? Will the constant iteration of the sordid minutiae of crime make the readers nobler and better? We are a young nation, and it is not for a youth to be fed on garbage. We have, we must admit, come to recognize that a big dose of sensationalism is inevitable in our daily papers, but there are depths of low taste which we cannot longer endure. We must call a halt.

Thus a man known to many here suddenly disappears. Is not the wife's trouble great enough to be respected? What high edification for the reporter to beat his fellow reporters and make so many cents per line, and for the publishers to sell so many extra copies because they can make an exhibition to the crowd of the poor, troubled woman. Shame upon them! A wretchedly brought up young fellow murders in cold blood his brothers and sisters. Forthwith the reporter must interview the girls he had courted, must give a word picture of these girls, their appearance, their characters, their actions and words upon hearing of the crime, the details of the courtships and everything that is most personal and vulgar about them and their surroundings. The girls, it may be, were poor and uneducated, but they had done nothing. However humble their station, there was no call to pillory them in this low fashion. They were private individuals, and any man with a trace of manhood left in him could have treated their association with the prisoner with some respect. But no, the reporter must pen his contemptible lines, and the editor must insert all the loathsome stuff in what purports to be one of the leading Canadian journals. A poor misguided youth, crossed in love, shoots himself. That surely is all or nearly all that a self-respecting daily would say, but some unutterable cad forwards to the papers the name of the young lady who had been unable to return the proffered love. It makes one's blood boil that such things can be here in Montreal. The English term of "unutterable cad" is the only one we can find to stigmatize whoever descended to such an action—to call him a "hound" would be to degrade a noble animal. As for the paper that published such details——?

To repeat: for the good of Canada and the fair fame of Montreal, these things must stop.

Something more than commercial rivalry must govern the action of many of our leading daily papers. Theirs is a public function, and the public good demands that they at the least do not continue to drag down the public taste. If the press beyond the border is debased, it is not for us to follow suit. If we are proud of being British, it is not for our press to become un-English, or to depart from the healthy traditions of the Old Country.