

NEWSPAPER WORK AND ITS REWARDS.

IN case the following article from The New York Herald has escaped the notice of readers of PRINTER AND PUBLISHER, it is reproduced for the purpose of comment :

"Some thirty, forty or fifty years ago, employes of all sorts, whether they were editorial writers, chief editors, city editors, managing editors, reporters, actors or others, worked for living wages. We mean by living wages a fair return for the work they did—that is, living wages for their employer. But to-day all this is changed. An employe, whether he may be an editor, a writer, an actor, an art critic or a musical critic, desires his wages in accordance with his opinion of himself. The trolley car conductor who spares two or three lives in a trip of a few miles by not killing anybody considers himself worth at least \$5 or \$10 a day. The reporter who saves his paper libel suits two or three times a month by not being too fresh considers himself entitled to an increased salary.

"In fact, we have come to the conclusion that the trades unionists—compositors, pressmen and all those people who naturally are associated with trades unions—are not to be considered when compared to the brainy reporter, the brainy artist, the brainy city editor, the brainy managing editor, or the brainy night editor. Evidently the press of New York, and maybe throughout the country, has come to the conclusion that those are the men that should be looked after and should be contracted with. How many contracts have been made in the last year with city editors, with managing editors, editors of colored supplements, etc.! In fact, there is only one thing left—that some proprietor should contract with another proprietor to reduce the size of their papers and increase their price. There would be money in that. But until that time arrives it will be nothing but contracts and contracts—city editors' contracts, night editors' contracts, reporters' contracts, artists' contracts, foreign correspondents' contracts, until there will be nothing left for the proprietors themselves except to make contracts for the poorhouse."

James Gordon Bennett, proprietor of The Herald, made one of his periodical descents from Paris on his New York office recently, and this article is supposed to be one of the results of the incursion. Perhaps there is a good deal of fiction in the stories told of Mr. Bennett's "revolutions" in The Herald office after each visit. But the views expressed in this article are entitled to some consideration, apart from The Herald proprietor's usual line of policy.

The complaints that "brainy" men on the press are getting too highly paid does not apply to Canada at all. The argument may be sound in New York, but it is pointless here. There are, of course, two points of view: the publisher's and the employe's. In Canada the best newspaper men are not over-paid, and it is rare to hear a complaint from a publisher that his salary list is out of all proportion to the value received. Publishers may feel that salaries, as a rule, tend to grow higher, but they will hardly say that they have to pay more than the work is worth. In fact, any publisher who does so has himself to blame, since he has a right to demand that his editors and reporters shall be efficient. And if they are efficient they are not, at present rates, over-paid.

From the employe's standpoint, however, it will hardly be denied that newspaper men are, as a class, rather slimly recompensed. The exceptions may be fairly numerous, but, con-

sidering the importance of newspaper work, the responsibility connected with it and the range of qualifications demanded of the man who seeks to do it even tolerably well, there is no money wasted in salary. The waste really comes from poorly-paid, illy-qualified men. The habit of drafting into newspaper life a number of men who are not suited to the work, who have no intention of remaining at it, and who have had no preliminary training, is one of the causes why positions in the press are often badly officered. Instead of promoting the reporters as they develop and improve, editorial posts are often filled by outsiders. A university graduate will sometimes drop into a position which could be better filled by a man who has been reporting for years and has the practical qualifications for outside and inside work. A reporter who feels that \$15 or \$18 a week, or at most \$25, is the highest point to which he may aspire is naturally discouraged. It is, of course, convenient to have on the reporting staff young men who are being trained to the business and who should not expect high salaries. But there is a distinct tendency to overdo this: to load up a local staff with juniors who certainly give value for their money, but who, necessarily, fail to cover the whole ground, who cannot go to the leading men of the community for their news, who are not by experience or judgment calculated to impress the public with the standing and weight of the journal they represent.

Neither is it usual in Canada for newspaper men to make contracts with the publisher. As a rule they are paid by the week, and may give or get warning by the week. Some criticism has been levelled at Walter Nichol's views, expressed on his retirement from The London News, that old members of the press are rare: they either die or leave the business before they get old. He complained also of ingratitude in the treatment of old employes. Some authorities, whose experience and character entitle them to respect, declare that this is not so; that members of the press fare no worse than any other class of employes. But almost any man who has been continually in active service for twenty years will bear witness that the system of promotion does not obtain as a general rule; that newspaper life is a kaleidoscopic view constantly changing, and that office positions are seldom given as a reward for active service on the outside staff.

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TO KNOW HOW REDUCED PICTURES WILL LOOK.

Printers, publishers and others who have occasion to give out a drawing or photograph for reproduction, no doubt often experience a difficulty in deciding how it will look when reduced. There is a very simple way of enabling one to see it in this way, viz.: By looking at the picture through a double concave lens. This latter can be bought for a small sum. According to the distance at which the lens is held from the object so the latter is more or less reduced. The concave lens, in fact, acts just the opposite to the convex or magnifying lens. It is just as though you look through the wrong end of an opera glass. Artists who draw for the press have discovered this useful property of the concave lens, and have adopted it in their work, carrying it always about with them in a pocket case. They call it a diminishing glass.

A handsome publication has been issued devoted to the interests of Kamloops and the mining camps there. It is issued by Messrs. Baillie & Bennett, and contains much interesting information.