

## NEWSPAPER CONTROVERSIES.

By A. L. Gale, Before the Northwest Missouri Press Association.

**P**ROBABLY every newspaper reader in the world will say, without second thought or even momentary deliberation, that many of the newspaper controversies, thrust under his face and poked before his nose from week to week, are very bad.

The newspaper controversy that is bad is the one in which columns of good space are taken up in the indiscriminate use of ugly adjectives and the reckless employment of disgusting personalities and vulgar abuse. Readers do not always like such controversies, and for a newspaper, whatever the readers do not like, is, of course, bad.

There is no need to assert that such unprofessional warfare, waged until the spring of vituperation has run itself dry, and the vocabulary of abuse has been pulled into shreds, is uninteresting to readers and bad for a newspaper. For a time such controversies may be profitable, in that they test the metal and resources of the contestants; but they wear out. At sight of the first hole or threadbare spot, they should be quickly dropped.

All this is said in the face of the fact that it is mighty hard to keep still when your rival has made a particularly cruel fling and has wounded you in a sensitive spot. The first inclination is to strike back, just as you would if a man struck you, and intended it for an insult. Perhaps it is all right to strike back for a time or two. The only way to gauge the proper number of counter-thrusts and parries is to watch the readers. If they are interested, and you are succeeding in keeping nasty words out of the paper, it is well enough to keep it going for a season.

There are newspaper controversies that are run entirely on friendly lines, and the public knows this fact so well that the matter becomes a good joke, and no one minds it at all. One true instance can be cited, it is said, of two well-known Missouri editors, who fight each other during most of the year like two alligators, with their teeth buried in a grip that means never let go; and then, along in the Winter, they may be seen with gun and bag, arm in arm, making their way to the depot for the purpose of going to Arkansas for their annual hunt. The story goes further, and says that while on these hunts they think up mean things to say about each other during the coming year, and that they compare notes in order that each may get credit for a fair number of bright, spicy and cutting things.

Whether or not such a controversy is a wise use of valuable space is another thing. The chief objection to such a warfare is that the average reader, acquainted with the mutually-understood plan that is pursued, will fall into the habit of taking what is said about the other fellow with an additional grain of salt, because he does not believe the editor means what he says, anyway.

In addition to its value as a space-filler on dull days, there is little doubt that a clean, spicy newspaper controversy, continued just long enough to prevent that disastrous mistake of wearying the readers, is a wise method of enlivening a newspaper.

Only the artistic master of language, and the writer who is able to acquire syllables and sentences to do his clever bidding,

can successfully conduct his end of a newspaper controversy of the "roasting" sort, and wound the feelings of his opponent, without resorting to words that are coarse and disgusting and correspondingly distasteful to his readers. Unless a newspaperman is so blessed, and endowed with the rhetorical elegance and constructive trickery of a literary genius, he had better express his opinions in one or two short articles, and then let the matter drop.

There will probably be no dispute over the assertions already submitted: That newspaper controversies may be both wise and otherwise; that they may be helpful and good in some instances, and that, again, they may be very bad.

### THE EASTERN TOWNSHIPS' ASSOCIATION.

Preparations are going ahead for the Muskoka trip of this association. The members will leave Sherbrooke on Friday, June 16, and go straight through by Grand Trunk to Gravenhurst. They will explore the lakes and islands until Tuesday, leaving for Toronto on Wednesday morning, June 20. Thursday will be spent by a trip across Lake Ontario to Niagara Falls. Friday will be spent in Toronto, leaving that night for Kingston to take the steamer down the St. Lawrence to Montreal. The members get ordinary transportation free from railways and steamer companies, on condition of writing up the whole route. The sleeping car rates agreed upon are \$1.50 per double berth from Sherbrooke and \$1.25 from Montreal to Muskoka. The sleeper from Toronto to Kingston will be 75c. per double berth. From Kingston to Montreal (day trip) by R. & O. steamer, the rate will be \$1.50, meals extra. These are good rates all through. The arrangements are in charge of E. S. Stevens, the secretary-treasurer of the association, who will make a preliminary trip over the route the end of this month to complete all plans.

### RESULT OF A BOYCOTT.

The fight of The New York Evening Post, one of the most trustworthy and respectable journals in the world, against the harrassing Customs regulations of the port of New York, with the subsequent boycotting of the paper by influential retail stores, which withdrew their advertisements, has aroused great interest. The outcome seems to have been that the support, publicly expressed, given to the paper by its readers has done a good deal to frighten the boycotters.

Buntin, Gillies & Co., Hamilton, are offering a good range of round cornered cards, in white and colored. They are called the "Oxford Series," and come in five sizes.

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