

his readers. If they are 500, or 5,000, or 50,000, so is the moral responsibility multiplied upon him. He stands to hundreds or thousands, in a relation as intimate as that of the physician to his patient, or the lawyer to his client; and only in a degree less sacred, than that of the pastor to his people. He is their harbinger of light, their counsellor, their director; it is for him to build up the gaps in their educational training; to cut away the prejudices; to enlarge the sympathies; to make of his readers men, honest and brave, lovers of truth and lovers of justice. Modern society does not afford educated men any position, short of the pulpit and the altar, more honorable, more powerful for good or evil, and more heavily responsible to society. The editorial character as we now know it, is not above a century old; that length of time ago, correspondents addressed the publisher or printer, but never the editor. Original views on events and affairs were in those days usually given to the press in pamphlet form—of which subdivision in literature England alone has produced enough to fill many libraries. This pamphlet literature is now for the most part a dead letter; as ephemeral as old newspapers; unless when falling into the hands of men like Swift, Addison, Johnson and Burke, the publication of a day in dealing with great principles and great characters, rose to the dignity and authority of a classic. There is no insuperable obstacle in the case, to prevent our newspaper writing undergoing a similar improvement. The best English and American journals are now written in a style not inferior in finish to the best books, and though ours is the limited patronage of a Province, it is not unreasonable that in our principal cities we should look for a high-toned, thoughtful, and scholarly newspaper style of writing. In the Australian colonies, where, by sheer force of distance, much smaller communities than ours are thrown more on their own mental resources, they produce newspapers in all respects, superior; and even when they do borrow from their antipodean exchanges, they borrow only the best extracts. With us the scissors does much, and does well; but I would say with profound deference to the editorial scissors, to spare us, on all occasions, what passes for Irish anecdote across the border; and especially to avoid naturalizing amongst us, those discourses or narrations which are disfigured by blasphemous perversions, and parodies of the Sacred Scriptures. Such writings are too frequent in an inferior class of American prints; they are bad enough in their authors; worse still in their copyists in Canada. But while we ask for a higher style of newspaper, we must not forget, that the Public also have their duties towards the press. My neighbour Goodfellow says with a self-gratified groan of resignation—"I take 'in ten or twelve papers a week—French and English,—of all sides and shades in politics and religion." Well I say to my neighbour, "Don't take them. This miscellaneous rabble

"of notions poured into your hopper every week, is neither good for you, nor for any one else. If there should be a good or a better among them stick to that; take two or three copies of what you think the best paper; one for some other Goodfellow at New York, or Glasgow, or Melbourne, but don't din and 'deadens yourself' with the clamour of so many contradictory commentators, on mere events of the day." If he took this advice my neighbour might escape much mental dissipation arising from too freely mixing his newspapers; he would probably acquire instead a certain stability of thought on public matters; his influence as a patron of the press, would be felt; and what he sent abroad would probably bring some credit to the country.

While on this topic I may observe that there is a Press Association—hitherto flourishing chiefly in Ontario—which it may be hoped will be extended to the whole Dominion. In this Association the public are more interested than they are aware of. It is a first attempt long required, to extend the laws of personal courtesy and good faith to this all-powerful fraternity. If it succeeds it will be no longer possible for a man to utter behind a printing press, to a thousand or ten thousand readers, what he dare not take the personal responsibility of stating in a private room, or anywhere else. If it succeeds it abridges the privileges of scoundrelism, but it elevates the reputation of the whole class. It will go far in placing the editors on the same professional plane with the Faculty and the Bar, and by enforcing on their own profession their own laws, will obviate the intervention of the civil power, always to be regretted, even when rendered unavoidable, in relation to the press.

As to the other branch of supply, I believe our booksellers have nothing to complain of. The sale of books is on the increase, though not at all so largely as the sale of newspapers. Our books are mainly English, or American reprints of English originals. In point of price the editions are not so far apart as they were on the other side of the Civil War. As to the classes of books most in request, I have been informed by one of our members well informed on the matter, that the sales may be divided somewhat in these proportions; religious books, 18 per cent; poetical works, 10 per cent; books on historical, scientific and literary subjects, 28 per cent; and works of fiction 44 per cent. My obliging informant, (Mr. Samuel Dawson) adds in relation to the comparative money value of the several classes of books most in demand, that the historical, literary and scientific works would represent about 45 per cent, the works of fiction 22, the poetical 15, and the religious 18 per cent of the whole. We thus have this striking result, that whereas the works of fiction are in volume, nearly one-half of all the reading done among us, in cost they come to less than one-fourth what is expended for other and better books. An accu-