

POLITICAL JOURNALISM.

Party Government is a questionable good at best. Many are inclined to think it an evil incident to the frailty of human nature, but in either case most men have made up their minds that in the present condition of human politics it is a necessity. A party press is an indispensable requisite to a party government, and as long as there is a party press we must expect a one-sided discussion of political questions. The press of either side must take the position of an advocate and present an *ex parte* view of any issue.

We are prepared to acquiesce in all this—to bow to what we believe an evil, but still a necessary evil—but there is a limit beyond which party representation or *mis*-representation should not go.

It is patent to every candid mind that the party press of Ontario of both sides has gone far beyond that limit. This journal is happily far removed from the arena of political strife, and perhaps for that reason can look at the situation more dispassionately than those who are in the heat of the conflict.

We must say that the acrimony of our political journals is a disgrace to the intelligence and education of our people. Only in a low state of intelligence is vituperation accepted for sound argument, and bitter invective for the rigid logic of facts. The political press of this country must consider that the people are in this low state, for their readers are regaled with little else but logic of this kind.

We cannot attempt to go into detail in our criticism of the tone of our newspapers. Both sides in politics are guilty of excesses that are not creditable. The recent attempt at bribery in the Local Legislature has given a wide field for political malignity to manifest itself, and it has not been slow to do so. In all fairness, speaking of our two local dailies, we must say that one side is as bad as the other. One paper regales its readers with villainous wood-cuts of the alleged conspirators that would be a disgrace to the *Police Gazette*. The organ of the opposite side has not ventured into the field of pictorial illustrations, but its word pictures of some of its foes are unique for their savage vehemence. A man whom an intelligent electorate considered honorable enough to be their representative in Parliament, is accused of adultery, seduction, and finally murder, and the most extravagant charges are made against others of their opponents. A fair-minded man is driven into one of two conclusions,—the people of the country have either sunk to a very low and degraded moral status, or the statements of the newspapers are not true,—and we are inclined to think that the latter would be the more accurate conclusion.

It is time that such a disreputable type of journalism should receive a check. As newspapers our leading journals are a credit to the country; as political organs they are a disgrace, and the evil they do in the latter respect does not stop with them. Their tone is reflected in all the country papers, and the vehemence of the latter is coarser and more reckless just in proportion to the inferior intelligence of their readers. In the name of the English language, whose force such journalism tends to destroy, by using the strongest terms on the most ordinary occasions; in the name of the culture and refinement that should treat opponents like men and gentlemen; in the name of that ordinary charity which forbids such outrageous misrepresentation of fellow men, we protest against this style of journalism. It defeats its own purpose, for extravagant and

unproved assertion originates prejudice against it, and makes us look more favorably on the other side.

From the stand-point of a University journal we cannot but regret that the only way to success in political journalism seems to be by violent partyism. The press is supported by the people, and to a large extent reflects the popular mind. Its tone cannot be very far above or very far below that of the people, for in either case it would lose their support, and it cannot live without this. Must we conclude therefore that the type of journalism now prevalent is in accord with the moral and intellectual development of our people? If this conclusion is inevitable it cannot bring cheering reflections to those who are concerned about our educational progress.

If such journalism is the only kind that will be supported by our people, it is time to awake to the fact that their mental acuteness is not of a high order.

The solution of the whole question after all is in increased education of the people. An educated people would not submit for a moment to the type of journalism we now possess. Every effort should therefore be centred on this point—increased educational facilities. The unsatisfactory *finale* that, for the present, the movement for increased state aid to the University of Toronto has reached, is not reassuring. Mr. Gibson justly complained in the Legislature of the members' indifference to and ignorance of University matters. On arousing them and the people from their somnolency in these matters depends largely, in our opinion, the moral and political elevation of our people in the future. Meanwhile we cannot condemn too strongly the style of political journalism now prevalent. The deleterious effect upon the country cannot be over-estimated. What must outsiders think of our political morality when our own journals place it in such a bad light? The reality is bad enough, but it is not as bad as the party journals paint it. True patriotism calls for a more correct picture of our political ethics than is now being given.

CANADIAN PATRIOTISM.

A writer in the *Saturday Review*, speaking of the dispute between the Dominion Government and British Columbia in 1876, with reference to the threat of the latter to withdraw from the Confederation, uses the following expressions:—'Patriotism would suggest the expediency of maintaining the connexion, which is one of the conditions of the future greatness of Canada; but it is useless to appeal to Canadian ambition if it is not sufficiently active to prevail over petty motives and calculations.' Such a charge, coming from the *Saturday Review*, would carry great weight, even though it stood alone. But, unfortunately, it is not the only instance of like sentiments in English papers. Canadians do not usually regard themselves as unpatriotic; and, indeed, from the connexion in which the above remarks occur, it is evident that the writer bases his opinion on a view of our conduct as presented in the field of party politics. That this is not an infallible guide in estimating a nation's character, happily needs no proof. If, then, we assume that the writer means no more than that, judging from party tactics, we are more provincial than national, his words, we must admit, have much to justify them. With their truth or falsity in any other sense we are not now specially concerned. That provincialism should be a paramount factor in Canadian