

SO-CALLED JOURNALISM

THE prominence given to "horribles" in the literature of to-day is a feature that most sober-minded men and women would gladly see removed. There is not a single redeeming point in the custom. The feeling of rest and renewed strength, coupled with that sense of general good-will to all, with which most people rise in the morning, often receives a rude shock when the daily paper gives startling prominence to details of aggravated cruelty to man or beast, to accidents with unusually painful accompaniments, or to murders and suicides, which are thrilling and blood-curdling in the painfully affecting minuteness given to the circumstances of their commission.

To men, such details are more or less brutalizing. To women, they are, or at least should be, revolting, and, at certain times, absolutely dangerous, while to children, they strongly present such terrifying facts and suggest such gross immoralities, that if their medium were in any other guise than the favorite, so-called progressive daily journal, it would be promptly thrown into the fire.

The serious, demoralizing and crime-creating abuse, is not a new one. It is thoroughly false to regard it as a product of civilization. The news journal of the last century—in fact, the general literature of that time—was imbued with full accounts of direful affairs, and the class complained of, to a much greater and harmful degree than at present.

The presentation in the public prints of objectionable reading matter, which is most always prepared in the sensational "blood-and-thunder" style, is vicious in the extreme. Witness the almost daily chronicle of hanging and decapitation that can be found in old periodicals, and of the infliction of cruel and prolonged torture upon the victim to be executed. But whatever features of the past may now be worthy of emulation, journalistic literature is certainly not one.

The evil is widespread, but not less an evil. It is particularly noticeable in our second-rate American publications. A comparatively recent weekly journal, which claims for itself the highest position in the illustrated line, devotes a large portion of its pages to articles of this objectionable class, making them conspicuously and brilliantly attractive by means of the excellence of its mechanical work.

The keen competition nowadays rendered necessary in American newspapers has, of course, much to do with the continuance of this vitiating feature, but should a resolute stand be taken by any leading ones towards limiting or omitting the unseasonable details, it is altogether probable that such would be those most highly prized in the circle of home life.

The whole thing is debasing alike to the journalistic and typographic interests. The very types and presses

upon which the journals containing the sanguinary and diabolical tales are printed, cry out against the enormity of spreading the evil, depraving, literature broadcast in the homes of pure-minded people and innocent children, and seriously affecting, if not entirely destroying, the finer and holier feelings that the innocent, pure mind holds toward humanity.—*American Art Printer.*

A "NOSE" FOR NEWS

TULIUS CHAMBERS, editor of *Once a Week*, in giving his opinion of the importance of a reporter having an "instinct" for news, writes as follows in the *Boston Journalist*:—

"What I want to impress upon the young man who is entering journalism is that the gathering of news is one thing, and the preparation of it in an attractive shape is another and very different thing. Of the two, the faculty of finding news is much the more valuable, because a stirring piece of information may not lose much, however unskillfully it be written; but, should the reporter or correspondent be a veritable Macaulay in style, he cannot describe truthfully what he is not able to discover or to inform himself about. In trade, we are told that some of the best buyers are almost worthless as salesmen. Therefore, for value, give us the man with the instinct for news. The discoverer of a mine deserves the honor and reward; there may be other laborers who can wield the tools of the miner better!

"The immediate director and instructor of the reporter is the city editor. In saying this, I do not mean to praise the city editor too much, because within my experience the reporter has lifted the city editor from an insignificant and subordinate position to the second place on the executive newspaper staff.

"The reporter, therefore, after his engagement has his first conference with the city editor when he receives his first assignment. An 'assignment' is an order to do a certain piece of work. It may be to attend a funeral, to take the proceedings of a business meeting, or something equally commonplace. The beginner may be assured that the city editor will not entrust him with any important commission early in his career. And yet I could tell the story from actual life of a young man who was sent to Elm Park to make a ten-line paragraph about a picnic at that place in 1880, who returned that night to the *Tribune* office with the greatest local story of the year. And best of all, he rose to the opportunity."

THE creed of a narrow man; If a friend changes his mind he is a traitor; if a stranger does not think as you do he is a fool.