

"Nicholas, my son, I have not had a chance to speak to your mother. But I wish you to go for a year at least to Harvard College. Do you hear me, Ephraim?"

"Yes, mars', — whar's dat?"

"Or to some such place at a distance, to look at our whole country. We live in a distracted corner of it. Judge Ross often said that to me. The great men of my time traveled."

He stopped a moment. Then he said: "Ephraim, I wish to change my will. When I have seen your mother," turning to me, "I wish to sell the share of the land that will go to your father's estate when I die, and I wish you to travel and study with the money."

"Sell de lan', mars'er?"

"After that you can settle down with some knowledge of our whole country."

"Dere'll be less lan', ol' mars'er, atter you sell some."

"Does this plan please you?"

My grandfather dropped his turkey-

(To be continued.)

wing fan over the banister, and Ephraim went to pick it up, saying to himself: —

"Don' like dat sellin' ob de lan'."

"When Mr. Clay was here," — my grandfather said; but Ephraim interrupted him.

"Is he libin' yit?"

"His spirit must live, Ephraim."

"Speerits o' jus' men made perfect," said the old negro.

"As I was saying, the great things now going on in the world are going on elsewhere, not here. The war broke off our thought."

"Glad Mars' Nick gwine whar he want ter go, but I don' like dat sellin' ob de lan'."

And the old man arose by Ephraim's help and mine and walked in to supper.

I was busy wondering what Harvard College could do for me. I knew nothing about it. It was only a name. But it appealed at least to my spirit of intellectual adventure.

SOME ASPECTS OF JOURNALISM

BY ROLLO OGDEN

It is, in a way, a form of flattery, in the eyes of modern journalism, that it should be put on its defense, — added to the fascinating list of "problems." This is a tribute to its importance. The compliment may often seem oblique. An editor will, at times, feel himself placed in much the same category as a famous criminal, — a warning, a horrible example, a target for reproof, but still an interesting object. That last is the redeeming feature. If the newspaper of to-day can only be sure that it excites interest in the multitude, it is content. For to force itself upon the general notice is the main purpose of its spirit of shrill insistence, which so

many have noted and so many have disliked.

But the clamorous and assertive tone of the daily press may charitably be thought of as a natural reaction from its low estate of a few generations back. Upstart families or races usually have bad manners, and the newspaper, as we know it, is very much of an upstart. For long, its lot was contempt and contumely. In the first half of the eighteenth century, writing in general was reduced to extremities. Dr. Johnson says of Richard Savage that, "having no profession, he became by necessity an author." But there was a lower deep, and that was journalism.

Warburton wrote of one who is chiefly known by being pilloried in the *Dunciad* that he "ended in the common sink of all such writers, a political newspaper." Even later it was recorded of the Rev. Dr. Dodd, author of the *Beauties of Shakespeare*, that he "descended so low as to become editor of a newspaper." After that but one step remained, — to the gallows; and this was duly taken by Dr. Dodd in 1777, when he was hanged for forgery. A calling digged from such a pit may, without our special wonder, display something of the push and insolence natural in a class whose privileges were long so slender or so questioned that they must be loudly proclaimed for fear they may be forgotten.

This flaunting and over-emphasis also go well with the charge that the press of to-day is commercialized. That accusation no one undertaking to comment on newspapers can pass unnoticed. Yet why should journalism be exempt? It is as freely asserted that colleges are commercialized; the theatre is accused of knowing no standard but that of the box-office; politics has the money-taint upon it; and even the church is arraigned for ignoring the teachings of St. James, and being too much a respecter of the persons of the rich. If it is true that the commercial spirit rules the press, it is at least in good company. In actual fact, occasional instances of gross and unscrupulous financial control of newspapers for selfish or base ends must be admitted to exist. There are undoubtedly some editors who bend their conscience to their dealing. Newspaper proprietors exist who sell themselves for gain. But this is not what is ordinarily meant by the charge of commercialization. Reference is, rather, to the newspaper as a money-making institution. "When shall we have a journal," asked a clergyman not long ago, "that will be published without advertisements?"

The answer is, never, — at least, I hope so, for the good of American journalism. We have no official press. We have no subsidized press. We have not even an

endowed press. What that would be in this country I can scarcely imagine, but I am sure it would have little or no influence. A newspaper carries weight only as it can point to evidence of public sympathy and support. But that means a business side; it means patronage; it means an eye to money. A newspaper, like an army, goes upon its belly, — though it does not follow that it must eat dirt. The dispute about being commercialized is always a question of more or less. When Horace Greeley founded the *Tribune* in 1841, he had but a thousand dollars of his own in cash. Yet his struggle to make the paper a going concern was just as intense as if he were starting it to-day with a capital (and it would be needed) of a million. Greeley, to his honor be it said, refused from the beginning to take certain advertisements. But so do newspaper proprietors to-day whose expenses per week are more than Greeley's were for the first year.

The immensely large capital now required for the conduct of a daily newspaper in a great city has had important consequences. It has made the newspaper more of an institution, less of a personal organ. Men no longer designate journals by the owner's or editor's name. It used to be Bryant's paper, or Greeley's paper, or Raymond's, or Bennett's. Now it is simply *Times*, *Herald*, *Tribune*, and so on. No single personality can stamp itself upon the whole organism. It is too vast. It is a great piece of property, to be administered with skill; it is a carefully planned organization which best produces the effect when the personalities of those who work for it are swallowed up. The individual withers, but the newspaper is more and more. Journalism becomes impersonal. There are no more "great editors," but there is a finer *esprit de corps*, better "team play," an institution more and more firmly established and able to justify itself.

Large capital in newspapers, and their heightened earning power, tend to steady them. Freaks and rash experiments are

also shut out by lack of means. Greeley reckoned up a hundred or more newspapers that had died in New York before 1850. Since that time it would be hard to name ten. I can remember but two metropolitan dailies within twenty-five years that have absolutely suspended publication. Only contrast the state of things in Parisian journalism. There must be at least thirty daily newspapers in the French capital. Few of them have the air of living off their own business. Yet the necessary capital and the cost of production are so much smaller than ours that their various backers can afford to keep them afloat. But this fact does not make their sincerity or purity the more evident. On the contrary, the rumor of sinister control is more frequently circulated in connection with the French press than with our own. Our higher capitalization helps us. Just because a great sum is invested, it cannot be imperiled by allowing unscrupulous men to make use of the newspaper property; for that way ruin lies, in the end. The corrupt employment has to be concealed. If it were surely known, for example, that Mr. Morgan, or Mr. Ryan, or Mr. Harriman owned a New York newspaper, and was utilizing it as a means of furthering his schemes, support would speedily fail it, and it would soon dry up from the roots.

This give and take between the press and the public is vital to a just conception of American journalism. The editor does not nonchalantly project his thoughts into the void. He listens for the echo of his words. His relation to his supporters is not unlike Gladstone's definition of the intimate connection between the orator and his audience. As the speaker gets from his hearers in mist what he gives back in shower, so the newspaper receives from the public as well as gives to it. Too often it gets as dust what it gives back as mud; but that does not alter the relation. Action and reaction are all the while going on between the press and its patrons. Hence it follows that the responsibility for the more crying evils of journalism

must be divided. I would urge no exculpation for the editor who exploits crime, scatters filth, and infects the community with moral poison. The original responsibility is his, and it is a fearful one. But it is not solely his. The basest and most demoralizing journal that lives, lives by public approval or tolerance. Its readers and advertisers have its life in their hands. At a word from them it would either reform or die. They have the power of "recall" over it, as it is by some proposed to grant the people a power of recall over bad representatives in legislature or Congress. The very dependence of the press upon support gives its patrons the power of life and death over it. Advertisers are known to go to a newspaper office to seek favors, sometimes improper, often innocent. Why should they, and mere readers, too, not exercise their implied right to protest against vulgarity, the exaggeration of the trivial, hysteria, indecency, immorality, in the newspaper which they are asked to buy or to patronize? To a journalist of the offensive class they could say: "You excuse yourself by alleging that you simply give what the public demands; but we say that your very assertion is an insult to us and an outrage upon the public. You say that nobody protests against your course; well, we are here to protest. You point to your sales; we tell you that, unless you mend your columns, we will buy no more." There lies here, I am persuaded, a vast unused power for the toning up of our journalism. At any rate, the reform of a free press in a free people can be brought about only by some such reaction of the medium upon the instrument. Legislation direct would be powerless. Sir Samuel Romilly perceived this when he argued in Parliament against proposals to restrict by law the "licentious press." He said that if the press were more licentious than formerly, it was because it had not yet got over the evils of earlier arbitrary control; and the only sure way to reform it was to make it still more free. Romilly would doubtless have

agreed that a free people will, in the long run, have as good newspapers as it wants and deserves to have.

As it is, public sentiment has a way, on occasion, of speaking through the press with astonishing directness and power. All the noise and extravagance, the ignorance and the distortion, cannot obscure this. There is a rough but great value in the mere publicity which the newspaper affords. The free handling of rulers has much for the credit side. When Senior was talking with Thiers in 1856, the conversation fell upon the severe press laws under Napoleon III. The Englishman said that perhaps these were due to the license of newspapers in the time of the foregoing republic, when their attacks on public men were often the extreme of scurrility. "C'était horrible," said Thiers; "mais, pour moi, j'aime mieux être gouverné par des honnêtes gens qu'on traite comme des voleurs, que par des voleurs qu'on traite en honnêtes gens." And when you have some powerful robbers to invoke the popular verdict upon, there is nothing like modern journalism for doing the job thoroughly. Those great names in our business and political firmament which lately have fallen like Lucifer, dreaded exposure in the press most of all. Courts and juries they could have faced with equanimity; or, rather, their lawyers would have done it for them in the most beautiful illustration of the law's delay. But the very clamor of newspaper publicity was like an embodied public conscience pronouncing condemnation, — every headline an officer. I know of no other power on earth that could have stripped away from these rogues every shelter which their money could buy, and been to them such an advance section of the Day of Judgment. In the immense publicity that dogged them they saw that worst of all punishments described by Shelley: —

— when thou must *appear* to be
That which thou art internally;
And after many a false and fruitless crime,
Scorn track thy lagging fall.

It is, no doubt, a belief in this honestly and wholesomely scourging power of newspapers which has made the champions of modern democracy champions also of the freedom of the press. It has not been seriously hampered or shackled in this country; but the history of its emancipation from burdensome taxation in England shows how the progressive and reactionary motives or temperaments come to view. When Gladstone was laboring, fifty years ago, to remove the last special tax upon newspapers, Lord Salisbury — he was then Lord Robert Cecil — opposed him with some of his finest sneers. Could it be maintained that a person of any education could learn anything from a penny paper? It might be said that the people would learn from the press what had been uttered by their representatives in Parliament, but how much would that add to their education? They might even discover the opinions of the editor. All this was very interesting, but it did not carry real instruction to the mind. To talk about a tax on newspapers being a tax on knowledge was a prostitution of real education. And so on. But contrast this with John Bright's opinion. In a letter written in 1885, but not published till this year, he said: "Few men in England owe so much to the press as I do. Its progress has been very great. I was one of those who worked earnestly to overthrow the system of taxation which from the time of Queen Anne had fettered, I might almost say, strangled it out of existence. . . . I hope the editors and conductors of our journals may regard themselves as under a great responsibility, as men engaged in the great work of instructing and guiding our people. . . . On the faithful performance of their duties, on their truthfulness and their adherence to the moral law, the future of our country depends."

To pass from these ideals to the tendencies and perplexities of newspapers as they are is not possible without the sensation of a jar. For specimens of the faults found in even the reputable press by fair-

minded men we may turn to a recent address before a university audience by Professor Butcher. Admitting that journalism had never before been "so many-sided, so well informed, so intellectually alert," he yet noted several literary and moral defects. Of these he dwelt first upon "hasty production." "Formerly, the question was, who is to have the *last* word; now it is a wild race between journalists as to who will get the *first* word." The professor found the marks of hurry written all over modern newspapers. Breathless haste could not but affect the editorial style. "It is smartly pictorial, restless, impatient, emphatic." This charge no editor of a daily paper can find it in his heart confidently to attempt to repel. His work has to be done under narrow and cramping conditions of time. The hour of going to press is ever before him as an inexorable fate. And that judgments formed and opinions expressed under such stress are often of a sort that one would fain withdraw, no sane writer for the press thinks of denying. This ancient handicap of the pressman was described by Cowper in 1780. "I began to think better of his [Burke's] cause," he wrote to the Rev. Mr. Unwin, "and burnt my verses. Such is the lot of the man who writes upon the subject of the day; the aspect of affairs changes in an hour or two, and his opinion with it; what was just and well-deserved satire in the morning, in the evening becomes a libel; the author commences his own judge, and, while he condemns with unrelenting severity what he so lately approved, is sorry to find that he has laid his leaf gold upon touch-wood, which crumbled away under his finger." While all this is sorrowfully true,—to none so sorrowful as those who have it frequently borne in upon them by personal experience,—it is, after all, *du métier*. It is a condition under which the work must be done, or not at all. A public which occasionally disapproves of a newspaper too quick on the trigger would not put up at all with one which held its fire too long. And there is, when all is

said, a good deal of the philosophy of life in the compulsion to "go to press." Only in that spirit can the rough work of the world get done. The artist may file and polish endlessly; the genius may brood; but the newspaper man must cut short his search for the full thought or the perfect phrase, and get into type with the best at the moment attainable. At any rate, this makes for energy, decision, and a ready practicality. Life is made up of such compromises, such forced adjustments, such constant striving for the ideal with the necessitated acceptance of the closest approach to it possible, as are of the very atmosphere in the office of a daily newspaper. But the result is got. The pressure may be bad for literary technique but at all events it forces out the work. If Lord Acton had known something of the driving motives of a journalist, he would not have spent fifty years collecting material for a great history of liberty, and then died before being quite persuaded in his own mind that he was ready to write it. The counsel of wisdom which Mr. Brooke gives in *Middlemarch* need never be addressed to a newspaper writer; that he must "pull up" in time, every day teaches him.

Professor Butcher also drew an ingenious parallel between the Sophists of ancient Greece and present-day journalists. It was not very flattering to the latter. One of the points of comparison was that "their pretensions were high and their basis of knowledge generally slight." Now, "ignorance," added the uncomplimentary professor, "has its own appropriate manner, and most journalists, being very clever fellows, are, when they are ignorant, conscious of their ignorance. A fine, elusive manner is therefore adopted; it is enveloped in a haze." To this charge, also, a bold and full plea of not guilty cannot be entered by a newspaper man. If his own conscience would allow it, he knows that too many of his own calling would rise up to confute him. The jokes, flings, stories, confessions are too numerous about the easy and empty as-

sumptions of omniscience by the press. Mr. Barrie has, in his reminiscential *When a Man's Single*, told too many tales out of the sanctum. Some of them bear on the point in hand. For example:

"I am not sure that I know what the journalistic instinct precisely is," Rob said, "and still less whether I possess it."

"Ah, just let me put you through your paces," replied Simms. "Suppose yourself up for an exam. in journalism, and that I am your examiner. Question One: The house was soon on fire; much sympathy is expressed with the sufferers. Can you translate that into newspaper English?"

"Let me see," answered Rob, entering into the spirit of the examination. 'How would this do: In a moment the edifice was enveloped in shooting tongues of flame; the appalling catastrophe has plunged the whole street into the gloom of night?'

"Good. Question Two: A man hangs himself; what is the technical heading for this?"

"Either 'Shocking Occurrence' or 'Rash Act.'"

"Question Three: *Pabulum, Cela va sans dire, Par excellence, Ne plus ultra*. What are these? Are there any more of them?"

"They are scholarships," replied Rob; "and there are two more, namely, *Tour de force* and *Terra firma*."

"Question Four: A. (a soldier) dies at 6 P.M. with his back to the foe; B. (a philanthropist) dies at 1 A.M.; which of these, speaking technically, would you call a creditable death?"

"The soldier's, because time was given to set it."

"Quite right. Question Five: Have you ever known a newspaper which did not have the largest circulation and was not the most influential advertising medium?"

"Never."

"Well, Mr. Angus," said Simms, tiring of the examination, "you have passed with honors."

VOL. 98 - NO. 1

Many cynical admissions by the initiate could be quoted. The question was recently put to a young man who had a place on the staff of a morning newspaper: "Are you not often brought to a standstill for lack of knowledge?" "No," he replied, "as a rule I go gayly ahead, and without a pause. My only difficulty is when I happen to know something of the subject." But no one takes these sarcasms too seriously. They are a part of the Bohemian tradition of journalism. But Bohemianism has gone out of the newspaper world, as the profession has become more specialized, more of a serious business. Even in his time, Jules Janin, writing to Madame de Girardin apropos of her *Ecole des Journalistes*, happily exposed the "assumption that good leading articles ever were or ever could be produced over punch and broiled bones, amidst intoxication and revelry." Editors may still be ignorant, but at any rate they are not unblushingly devil-may-care about it. They do not take their work as a pure lark. They try to get their facts right. And the appreciation of accurate knowledge, if not always the market for it, is certainly higher now in newspaper offices than it used to be. The multiplied apparatus of information has done at least that for the profession. Much of its knowledge may be "index-learning," but at any rate it gets the eel by the tail. And the editor has a fairish retort for the general writer in the fact that the latter might more often be caught tripping if he had to produce his wisdom on demand and get it irrevocably down in black and white and in a thousand hands without time for consideration or amendment. This truth was frankly put by Motley in a letter to Holmes in 1862: "I take great pleasure in reading your prophecies, and intend to be just as free in hazarding my own. . . . If you make mistakes, you shall never hear of them again, and I promise to forget them. Let me ask the same indulgence from you in return. This is what makes letter-writing a comfort, and journalism dangerous." It is a distinction

which an editor may well lay to his soul when accused of being a mere Gigadibs —

You, for example, clever to a fault,
The rough and ready man who write apace,
Read somewhat seldomer, think, perhaps,
even less.

Even in journalism, the Spanish proverb holds that knowing something does not take up any room, — *el saber no ocupa lugar*. Special information is, as I often have occasion to say to applicants for work, the one thing that gives a stranger a chance in a newspaper office. The most out-of-the-way knowledge has a trick of falling pat to the day's need. A successful London journalist got his first foothold by knowing all about Scottish Disruption, when that struggle between the Established and Free churches burst upon the horizon. The editor simply had to have the services of a man who could tell an interested English public all about the question which was setting the heather afire. Similarly, not long since, a young American turned up in New York with apparently the most hopeless outfit for journalistic work. He had spent eight years in Italy studying mediæval church history, — and that was his basis for thinking he could write for a daily paper of the palpitating present! But it happened just then that the aged Leo XIII drew to his end, and here was a man who knew all the *Papabili*, cardinals, and archbishops; who understood thoroughly the ceremony and procedure of electing a pope; who was drenched in all the actualities of the situation, and who could, therefore, write about it with an intelligence and sympathy which made his work compel acceptance, and gave him entrance into journalism by the unlikely Porta Romana. It is but an instance of the way in which a profession growing more serious is bound to take knowledge more seriously.

It is, however, what Sir Wemyss Reid called the "Wegotism" of the press that some fastidious souls find more offensive than its occasional betrayals of crass ignorance. Lecky remarked upon it, in his

chapters on the rise of newspapers in England: "Few things to a reflecting mind are more curious than the extraordinary weight which is attached to the anonymous expression of political opinion. Partly by the illusion of the imagination, partly by the weight of emphatic assertion, a plural pronoun, conspicuous type, and continual repetition, unknown men are able, without exciting any surprise or sense of incongruity, to assume the language of the accredited representatives of the nation, and to rebuke, patronize, or insult its leading men with a tone of authority which would not be tolerated from the foremost statesmen of their time."

A remedy frequently suggested is signed editorials. Let the Great Unknown come out from behind his veil of anonymity, and drop his "plural of majesty." Then we should know him for the insignificant and negligible individual he is. It is true that some hesitating attempts of that kind have been made in this country, mostly in the baser journalism, but they have not succeeded. There is no reason to think that this practice will ever take root among us. It arose in France under conditions of rigorous press censorship, and really goes in spirit with the wish of government or society to limit that perfect freedom of discussion which anonymous journalism alone can enjoy. Legal responsibility is, of course, fixed in the editor and proprietors. Nor is the literary disguise, as a rule, of such great consequence, or so difficult to penetrate. Most editors would feel like making the same answer to an aggrieved person that Swift gave to one of his victims. In one of his short poems he threw some of his choicest vitriol upon one Bettesworth, a lawyer of considerable eminence, who in a rage went to Swift and demanded whether he was the author of that poem. The Dean's reply was: "Mr. Bettesworth, I was in my youth acquainted with great lawyers who, knowing my disposition to satire, advised me that, if any scoundrel or blockhead whom I had lampooned should ask, 'Are you the

author of this paper?' I should tell him that I was not the author; and therefore I tell *you*, Mr. Bettesworth, that I am not the author of these lines."

But the real defense of impersonal journalism lies in the conception of a newspaper not as an individual organ, but as a public institution. Walter Bagehot, in his *Physics and Politics*, uses the newspaper as a good illustration of an organism subduing everything to type. Individual style becomes blended in the common style. The excellent work of assistant editors is ascribed to their chief, just as his blunders are shouldered off upon them. It becomes impossible to dissect out the separate personalities which contribute to the making up of the whole. The paper represents, not one man's thought, but a body of opinion. Behind what is said each day stands a long tradition. Writers, reviewers, correspondents, clientele, add their mite, but it is little more than Burns's snowflake falling into the river. The great stream flows on. I would not minimize personality in journalism. It has counted enormously; it still counts. But the institutional, representative idea is now most telling. The play of individuality is much restricted; has to do more with minor things than great policies. John Stuart Mill, in a letter of 1863 to Motley, very well hit off what may be called the chance rôle of the individual in modern journalism: "The line it [the *London Times*] takes on any particular question is much more a matter of accident than is supposed. It is sometimes better than the public, and sometimes worse. It was better on the Competitive Examinations and on the Revised Educational Code, in each case owing to the accidental position of a particular man who happened to write on it, — both which men I could name to you."

Wendell Phillips told of once taking a letter to the editor of a Boston paper, whom he knew, with a request that it be published. The editor read it over, and said, "Mr. Phillips, that is a very good

and interesting letter, and I shall be glad to publish it; but I wish you would consent to strike out the last paragraph."

"Why," said Phillips, "that paragraph is the precise thing for which I wrote the whole letter. Without that it would be pointless."

"Oh, I see that," replied the editor; "and what you say in it is perfectly true, — the very children in the streets know that it is true. I fully agree with it all myself. Yet it is one of those things which it will not do to say publicly. However, if you insist upon it, I will publish the letter as it stands."

It was published the next morning, and along with it a short editorial reference to it, saying that a letter from Mr. Phillips would be found in another column, and that it was extraordinary that so keen a mind as his should have fallen into the palpable absurdity contained in the last paragraph.

The story suggests the harmful side of the interaction between press and public. It sometimes puts a great strain upon the intellectual honesty of the editor. He is doubtful how much truth his public will bear. His audience may seem to him, on occasions, minatory, as well as, on others, encouraging. So hard is it for the journalist to be sure, with Dr. Arnold, that the times will always bear what an honest man has to say. At this point, undoubtedly, we come upon the moral perils of the newspaper man. And when outsiders believe that he writes to order, or without conviction, they naturally hold a low view of his occupation.

Journalism, wrote Mrs. Mark Pattison in 1879, "harms those, even the most gifted, who continue in it after early life. They cannot honestly write the kind of thing required for their public if they are really striving to reach the highest level of thought and work possible to themselves." If this were always and absolutely true, little could be said for the Fourth Estate. We should all have to agree with James Smith, of *Rejected Addresses* fame: —

Hard is his lot who edits, thankless job!
 A Sunday journal for the factious mob.
 With bitter paragraph and caustic jest,
 He gives to turbulence the day of rest,
 Condemn'd this week rash rancor to instil,
 Or thrown aside, the next, for one who will.
 Alike undone, or if he praise or rail
 (For this affects his safety, that his sale);
 He sinks, alas, in luckless limbo set —
 If loud for libel, and if dumb for debt.

The real libel, however, would be the assertion that the work of American journalism is done to any large extent in that spirit of the galley slave. With all its faults, it is imbued with the desire of being of public service. That is often overlaid by other motives, — money-making, time-serving, place-hunting. But at the high demand of a great moral or political crisis, it will assert itself, and editors will be found as ready as their fellows to hazard their all for the common weal. To show what sort of fire may burn at the heart of the true journalist, I append a letter never before published: —

NEW YORK, April 23, 1867.

"There is a man here named Barnard, on the bench of the Supreme Court. Some years ago he kept a gambling saloon in San Francisco, and was a notorious black-leg and *vaurien*. He came then to New York, plunged into the basest depths of city politics, and emerged Recorder. After two or three years he got by the same means to be a judge of the Supreme Court. His reputation is now of the very worst. He is unscrupulous, audacious, barefaced, and corrupt to the last degree. He not only takes bribes, but he does not even wait for them to be offered him. He sends for suitors, or rather for their counsel, and asks for the money as the price of his judgments. A more unprincipled scoundrel does not breathe. There is no way in which he does not prostitute his office, and in saying this I am giving you the unanimous opinion of the bar and the public. His appearance on the bench I consider literally an awful occurrence. Yet the press and bar are muzzled, — for that is what it comes to, — and this in-

jurious scoundrel has actually got possession of the highest court in the State, and dares the Christian public to expose his villany.

"If I were satisfied that, if the public knew all this, it would lie down under it, I would hand the *Nation* over to its creditors and take myself and my children out of the community. I will not believe that yet. I am about to say all I dare say — as yet — in the *Nation* to-morrow. Barnard is capable of ruining us, if he thought it worth his while, and could of course imprison me for contempt, if he took it into his head, and I should have no redress. You have no idea what a labyrinth of wickedness and chicanery surrounds him. Moreover, I have no desire either for notoriety or martyrdom, and am in various ways not well fitted to take a stand against rascality on such a scale as this. But this I do think, that it is the duty of every honest man to do something. Barnard has now got possession of the courts, and if he can silence the press also, where is reform to come from? . . . I think some movement ought to be set on foot having for its object the hunting down of corrupt politicians, the exposure of jobs, the sharpening of the public conscience on the whole subject of political purity. If this cannot be done, the growing wealth will kill — not the nation, but the form of government without which, as you and I believe, the nation would be of little value to humanity."

This was written to Professor Charles Eliot Norton by the late Edwin Lawrence Godkin. The Barnard referred to was, of course, the infamous judge from whom, a few years later, the judicial robes were stripped. Mr. Godkin's attack upon him was, so far as I know, the first that was made in print. But the passion of indignation which glowed in that great journalist, with his willingness to hazard his own fortunes in the public behalf, only sets forth conspicuously what humbler members of the press feel as their truest motive and their noblest reward.

Copyright of Atlantic Magazine Archive is the property of Atlantic Monthly Group LLC and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.