

WIT AND WISDOM FROM CANADA.

A Study of American Journalism in Its Most Offensive Phases.

BRADFORD, Ont., July 10.—The *Cincinnati Enquirer* chronicles the fact that last week some feeble-minded individual lost what small amount of reason she possessed over the careful perusal of newspaper details relating to Gen. Grant's illness. Now I don't confront the American press with the awful charge of responsibility for that woman's sanity. I think it would have taken its departure sooner or later without typographical assistance, but as an illustration of popular greed for column after column of a doubtful sort of daily diet and a certain journalistic depravity that panders to this peculiar public taste it is significant. The score of civilization against American journalism is that it is no longer personal—it is vivisectional. The sick-room has no sanctities. The hero of the Appomattox is dying, and a great nation waits in reverent sadness for his last heart throb. In the meantime every moan is telephoned, every contortion photographed. This may be in answer to the demand of sympathetic interest and affection, but to outsiders it looks like a ghoulish kind of peep show at three cents a head. The ravens of "enterprise" find this lingering death far more to their interest than any speedy ending and flock in vast numbers about the summit of Mount McGregor. The General's last gasp will be in type before he has fairly uttered it, and if any American journalist has preceded him to the land whither he is hastening he will probably find it in the headlines announcing his arrival. There is a dire penalty upon greatness in the United States. I should think that native celebrities would prefer to die somewhere else, to bid farewell to some particular spot of earth where reporters do not sit upon the bed-posts and the great eye of the nation can be excluded by an ordinary blind.

Talking of journalism I have irreverently wondered sometimes if the sapient race of editors ever reflect upon how fully and entirely they "give themselves away." THE POST has my apologies for that slangy atrocity in every issue. We know the editor infinitely better than the author. He has no time to disguise his personality. It crops out all over the paper—in the editorials, in the character of the correspondence and critiques and clippings. I have even fancied it flurkingly detectible in the telegraphic headings and the advertisements. His opinions, tastes, habits of thought and expression, even the extent of his good breeding, like murder will "out." His paper is a reflex of himself. I have read journals with the conviction that the public should be more exclusive in its circle of unseen editorial acquaintances, and others whose very unfolding I love for the sake of the pleasant suggestion of cultured individuality that exhales with the odor of printers' ink.

Sweet girl graduates, be careful whom you snub. If your victim belong to the staff of any publication whatsoever, and it is absolutely necessary to impale him on the unrelenting hook of your contempt, do it tenderly, treat him like Isaak Walton's frog, "as if you loved him." Otherwise the result is apt to be disastrous to public opinion of graduating girlhood for several generations. I am thinking of an instance of reportorial revenge that ought to be a warning to us all—that wretched individual in the *Pall Mall Gazette* with his article about the girls of Girton College. I have no reason to believe that he has yet received adequate punishment, and am pleased to add my castigation. Upon reflection, however, I will not castigate. The unhappy scribe probably suffered considerably at the hands of some unappreciative sister of mine before he was goaded into calling her gown an antimaccassan. I haven't the facts with regard to his wardrobe, and if I had I think I should magnanimously refrain from publishing them in further retaliation; but Girton girls, I beg that you will not let this warning go unheeded. There may be no limit to his audacity and no aspirate to his proposal, but beware how you awaken his wrath, who can present you to the British public attired in a "pair of window-blinds"—the malice and envy and all uncharitableness that would compare your shining braids to a "bunch of twine!" I am informed that at a recent conference in Washington Mrs. Sara Spencer thought that "if women would go about to conventions and get some of the sunshine of life, there would be fewer of the insane among them," and that a "male delegate" gallantly arose and responded that he had a wife who stayed at home and attended to her duties, and she did not show as many symptoms of insanity as some of the women who gadded about to conventions; whereupon there was much merriment. I would not discourse upon the amount of the "sunshine of life" attainable at conventions, or the possible immunity from insanity to be found in staying at home and attending to one's duties. I merely desire to call attention to the man with the wife who made the joke, or, more properly, the man who made the joke with the wife. Washington is a good place to focus on him; but wherever two or three are gathered together in any corner of the land to discuss the affairs of the church or the nation, while the teacups are being washed in the vestry or the toasts pondered by anticipating speech makers, this man is to be heard with his marital witticism. It is the unanswerable argument with which he confronts all questions relating to femininity. He would have all womankind cut on the pattern he has stamped, so to speak, with the seal of his selection. He rises—this married fiend—smirks, and we know that the wife is coming. There is no dodging her. "I have a wife," and she does this, or that, or abstains from doing this or that, yet I find her a perfectly satisfactory spouse; *ergo*, the sex can do no better than comport itself accordingly.

I have never been able to fathom this confiding person's desire to unburden himself to the public concerning the state of his domestic relations. I think, however, that when he stands up there in his deacon's tail-coat, or his broadcloth claw-hammer, with a comfortable sense of good things within, and says he has a wife, he feels snugly conscious of having done well by society in general, and womankind in particular, in taking one, and wants the respect deserved for the exercise of such an expensive proprietary right. And one would suppose, from the invariable applause of his fellow-Benedicts, that he usually gets it. GARTH GRAFTON.