

JOHN BULL JOURNALISM.

An Exchange gives the following inside view of English journalism: "That English journalism is insufferably dull is the unanimous opinion of Americans who have spent any time abroad. There is a heaviness about the make up of the newspapers, a leadiness in the style of composition and a sameness in the treatment of news which justify this verdict. But these offensive characteristics are exactly what the British public demands. Stolid in his temperament and lacking in those mental graces which form the chief charm of his neighbors across the channel, the Englishman has no relish for 'triviality' in the discussion of passing events. He represents any approach to humor in leading articles; he despises anything like literary embellishment in the narration of facts. He wants nothing but the dry bones of news, and he gets what he wants. The English newspaper is but a reflex of British character—slow, solid and dull.

It would seem therefore a simple task to run an English journal, but such is not the case. Slow, solid and dull as he is, the Englishman has a shrewd eye to the main chance. There are too many of him for the narrow bounds of his little island. He has to cast around for an outlet for the results of his plodding industry. His eyes look greedily for new territory in which to trade, and as a colonizer, an eager aspirant for profitable investments in other lands, he has no equals in the world. As a result of his grasping spirit he has many enemies and few friends in the family of nations. He has to be continually on the alert to avoid attacks on his "rights." He sleeps with one eye open so as to be ready to repel any encroachments on his vested interests in international commerce. France, Germany, Russia and even little Portugal are regarded as jealous rivals, and on the affairs of each he keeps a watchful eye. Consequently his newspaper must keep him posted as to the doings and intentions of foreign governments, even to the neglect of minor, if interesting, domestic events, which he has a lumbering notion will take care of themselves.

The editor of a British journal has to bear constantly in mind the vast ramifications of British interests in every quarter of the globe. He stations correspondents at the various capitals of Europe and the western hemisphere, whose instructions are to telegraph news of "general" interest, such news consisting invariably of political changes and complications. Ordinary occurrences, such as crimes, accidents and social happenings, are rarely touched, but cabinet changes, wars and rumors of wars call forth columns of dispatches and load the editorial page with solemn, portentous articles. It is this feature of English journalism more than anything else that emphasizes the general dullness of which Americans complain. It demands a peculiar order of editorial talent. The manager of an English newspaper must have his finger on the pulse of the world; domestic affairs except those which infringe on the international concerns of constituency, are of secondary importance so long as he keeps abreast of the political life of rival nations.

This is especially true of the London newspapers, which evince a supreme indifference to the every day affairs of the great metropolis. With a population of 5,000,000 to cater for one would naturally expect them to devote a page or two to local events; but we find nothing but a few miserable paragraphs relating to fires and other casualties, civil and police court items and more or less lengthy reports of the gatherings of charitable and benevolent associations. Parliamentary debates, political speeches, foreign telegrams, race meetings and the proceedings of the Stock Exchange cover the rest of the space not set apart for advertisements. But the work is admirable, of its kind. The reports of speeches are finished specimens of verbatim and condensed reportings; the city article is a careful review of the financial transactions of the day; the law reports consist of accurate and judicial in their tones, and the editorials models of correct English. These editorials follow a general plan. They are exactly a column in length, and are always divided into three paragraphs. After a little study the reader is able to tell from the beginning what the end will be. The first paragraph sets forth the proposition in stately periods, the second consists in natural deductions therefrom, and the logical conclusion roll forth in the third like the thunder of a verbal Niagara.

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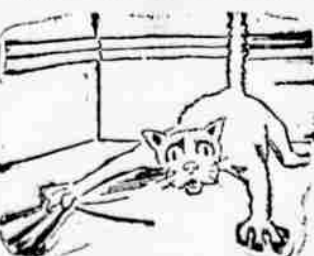
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