

would have as much or more "breathing room" than in the New York district. In the same parish the moral conditions of the people may be judged of in a measure by their opportunities for religious instruction. There are seven church buildings for the entire district, or one to over 13,000 souls, affording seating capacity for less than five per cent of the population; while at the same time there are 563 liquor saloons, or one for each 167 persons.

"PARTY PRESS" METHODS.

The base and paltry tricks of partisan journalism are no more identified with or condoned by the business of reputable newspaper-making, than are the low pursuits of a jackal pettifogger to be associated with the high and honorable profession of the law. Unfortunately, wherever the good seeks to establish itself, there will the evil come also; where there are lawyers and counselors of character and repute, there are also harpies and leeches who batten on scandal or their victims' misfortunes; and where there are journals that seek to furnish clean, truthful reports of the day's doings, there are others which have so poor an opinion of their cause and their readers that they distort, misrepresent, lampoon and insult everything and everybody that is not wholly in accord with their way of thinking. The result in the latter case is that no fair-minded man can trust himself to believe what he reads in either of the papers referred to; and if in his search for truth he reads another one of the same class, but with opposite views, he is more mystified than ever. Falsehood and exaggeration, innuendo and infamy, are their common tools of trade. So plain a matter as a public meeting or a public speech cannot be truthfully reported. On the one hand it is published that the "hall was crowded and the speaker's sallies were greeted with applause;" on the other hand we read of the same occurrence that "a few small boys composed the audience and the speaker encountered a chilly frost." This is no extreme case—we refer now more particularly to the political columns of the party organs; and instances might be multiplied without limit where almost daily a dozen wilful lies are published by the journalistic champions of both parties.

It is no wonder that such practices come in for a scorching now and then from independent men. It is only a pity that there are not more courageous and disgusted people to lift their voice against an offense at once so odious and so needless. The discernment and prudence of readers who despise such rubbish and who decline to be fed upon it, are to be soundly commended; and their unwillingness to place it before their children for their misguidance and misinformation would seem to be strictly in line with an honest parent's Christian duty. We have heard the idiotic argument that a man who admits that he does not read such papers is incompetent to pass upon their demerits. The same logic would say that the only man fit to give a temperance lecture is the "awful example," the ex-drunkard, the lately reformed sot; or that the only compe-

tent adviser against an ill-smelling morass, is the dull, dirty wretch who has long rolled and revelled in it.

All honest men rejoice in fair and just criticism of any and every method or business with which the public have to do. Sturdy, consistent champions of even a bad cause extort a measure of respect. But for him who has no more confidence in his principles and no other conception of honor than to slander and lie about his opponents, there can be no gentler sentiment than pity and no softer feeling than contempt.

TRAIN ROBBERIES.

The way train robbers are getting in their work of late must be decidedly interesting to both express and railway companies. The Arizona proceeding might not be considered of much importance, inasmuch as most of the hold-ups were captured and the rest probably will be; and when they come to trial it is not likely they will be given further opportunity to interfere with railway trains, since such a crime in that territory is rewarded by hanging the convicted parties. But the California and Virginia exploits are of a nature not only to attract special attention, but to occasion alarm. It has been suggested that the financial depression, by throwing many men out of regular employment, has led them to such desperate straits as to engage in the hold-up business. But the character of the crimes is such as to indicate that they were committed by persons who prefer that employment to the best kind of a job where there is honest work; and when comparatively big fortunes are to be secured as easily as in the proceedings in the states named, there always are found men reckless and villainous enough to make the venture.

The inefficiency of the defense made against the robbers in both cases is a most regrettable feature. It seems remarkable that, in view of the supposed precautions taken by railway and express companies to guard the treasure carried by them, their employees should be rendered so powerless in the hands of the small number of robbers making the attack. With the advantage that every express messenger should have, of a courageous sense of duty, steady nerve, quick hand and eye, and the covering afforded him by the flimsiest express car, it would appear that even when the doors are thrown wide to the highwaymen there ought to be a certainty that the first of them, and almost any number following, would be met by the crashing of well directed bullets into their carcasses. Such a reception would quickly divert any attention they may have been giving to engineers or firemen. And it also seems inconsistent that, when trainmen are brought in a condition under threats to plead for an express car to be opened, provision should not be made for the messenger to take advantage of his ambush to come to the relief of his associates.

The railways affected ought to find in their experience a suggestion for a more thorough system than one that permits a train to be stopped for a considerable period without notice being conveyed to the nearest station, inde-

pendent of any action on the part of trainmen. This is easily accomplished on some railways now, by what is known as the "block system" of signalling, in connection with an electric recorder. The general idea of this combined system is that at each mile point along the line, the passage of a train over the place operates automatically to display a signal to all following trains that one is on that particular "block" or mile; when the next mile is entered upon, the line-closing signal is extended there, while by the same operation the former signal is made to show an open track. This effectually prevents rear end collisions, for no two trains can be on the same mile at once, unless by going against the signal. But the feature that would be valuable in the case of accident to a train or its being stopped by robbers, is that by an electric device the passage of every train over a mile point is indicated at a central station for the district at the instant it is made, with as perfect accuracy as the rise and fall of temperature, both as to duration and extent, are recorded by the indicators in use by our weather bureau. Thus when there is a delay of two minutes on any mile, the stationman knows exactly when and on what "block" it is. And on roads which use this system it is the usual rule that trains delayed ten minutes cannot proceed until they report; and unless such report is made by signalling, assistance is forwarded to the point of trouble. Under such a regulation, the trainmen assailed by robbers would know that in ten minutes at the most aid of a character to frighten the highwaymen would be on the way to the scene, and thus would be afforded encouragement and safety to a vastly greater extent than now.

With the success that has attended recent robberies there will come a sense of security to those inclined to such crimes unless something of an opposite nature occurs. Officers cannot be expected to overtake the perpetrators of the deed except by long and tedious work, and in many cases the odds are decidedly against them. The express and railway companies will have to add to their precautions to confirm a sense of security with the public. It may be that recent events will lead to this, in some instances at least.

THE PEOPLE HAVE THE LAST SAY.

The NEWS has already hinted at the danger of the rejection of the proposed State constitution by the people if a more careful and economical spirit is not displayed by its framers than has been exhibited of late years by certain territorial, county and municipal legislators in their handling of public business. It might as well be understood now as one year hence that the people are in no mood for trifling with either men or measures that propose to play fast and loose with finances. The taxpayers are in a condition which leaves them little time for the consideration of any other subject than that of making ends meet and of relieving themselves of their annual share of the public burden. It is only natural that such features of the Constitution