

poverty sights that in truth are worse than this, confront us every day; but we have grown accustomed to them. This, however, at least while its novelty lasts, cannot but make thoughtful observers sick at heart.

The evidence that the war department supplied bad food to our soldiers in the field is now supplemented with testimony that it has been selling good food at a sacrifice to merchants in the south. In an interview in the Baltimore Sun of the 3rd, President Donaldson, of the well-known Numsen Manufacturing company, of Baltimore, published a lot of information picked up in the course of a recent business trip in the south, regarding the working of the commissary department last summer. Some of the most prominent jobbers in Savannah told him of having bought from the army hundreds of barrels of vinegar at 4 cents a gallon when it was selling at 16, and thousands of pounds of first rate bacon at 3 cents a pound when it was worth not less than 6. In Jacksonville a leading jobber told him that he had bought 170,000 pounds of bacon at one-half a cent a pound, 160 barrels of vinegar at 4 cents a gallon, and other goods at ridiculous prices. Numerous other merchants and jobbers in the camping district told Mr. Donaldson similar stories. Hay, oats and other feed were sold in the same way. It appears that stores were shipped in enormous quantities to the camps without regard to the soldiers' needs, the surplus being then sold off in this manner. At one point it was estimated that enough vinegar was shipped to the camp to provide each soldier with 15 gallons. These discoveries of Mr. Donaldson still further strengthen the conviction, which has been gaining ground all the fall, that the war department was incapable if not corrupt.

Without any obvious legal authority, but apparently by an act of mere arbitrary power, the postmaster of Chicago has ordered the inside employees of the Chicago post office to

wear uniforms. Only women clerks, the assistant postmaster and the postmaster himself are excepted. There is no justification for this order. When the occupations of large numbers of men are of a character to make it important that they be readily identified by the public as having authority, it is entirely proper that they should be in uniform. In this category would come policemen, firemen, trainmen on railroads, conductors on street cars, and so on, including out-door postal employees. But in cases other than such as these, the requirement of uniforms is indefensible; for then the object, if not merely childish, is either to give a military aspect to a civil occupation, or to degrade men by putting them in livery. Within this principle the postal clerks at Chicago are right in complaining of the postmaster's decree. They come into no such relationship with the public as could make uniforms necessary. While at their public duties they are sufficiently identified by the official surroundings in which the public finds them when it comes to be served; when they leave those surroundings they have no public duties to perform. There would be as much sense in uniforming bank clerks as postal clerks; and congress might engage in worse business than in interfering with the plans in this particular of the Chicago postmaster, if the postmaster general declines to do so.

Not long ago the manager of the Associated Press read before a club a paper on "The Limitations of the Press," in which he enumerated as one of these limitations the inability of editorial writers to get what they write read. This is indeed a limitation of modern journalism. But it is easily explained, and could be easily remedied. The explanation is that newspaper editorial writers have become mere literary clerks to publishers and "backers." There is consequently a flavor of insincerity in most newspaper editorials, which the reader instinctively detects. It is unavoidable, under the circumstances,

for no one can write up to the demands of a boss whom he holds in contempt as a man void of convictions, without putting that flavor into his work in spite of himself. Editorials in the few American papers that are still edited by editors instead of managers are read by the public, and they influence the public. So long as a newspaper remains conscientiously true to its function as a public teacher, its opinions command public interest and respect. But when papers turn their editorial consciences over to business managers to be swapped off for advertising patronage and "backing," as most newspapers of the present day have done, they must expect limitations in the way of distrust of their policies and indifference to their editorials.

Torrey E. Wardner, the editor of the Boston Traveler, whose imprisonment for contempt of court in Massachusetts was a subject of comment in these columns last week, has been released. His discharge was granted by the judge who committed him, he having first apologized for the editorial that gave rise to the proceedings. Mr. Torrey's appeal to a supreme court judge had been decided against him, and he was advised by his lawyers that a similar result would follow an appeal to the full bench. In other words, he became convinced that under the laws of Massachusetts the editor of a newspaper which criticises court proceedings before their termination may be prosecuted for contempt, and without jury trial convicted and sentenced in the discretion of the judge who institutes the proceedings. An attempt is to be made, therefore, to secure the passage of a law in Massachusetts, providing that no person shall be tried for contempt of court committed out of the presence of the court, except after indictment and before a jury. Such safeguards are needed in the laws of every state where they do not already exist. Judges cannot be trusted to regulate private conduct and the freedom of the press in their personal discretion.