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912 The Press Fund Dinner.

Evidently the journalists of this country are not without their friends and admirers—even on the financial side the Newspaper Press Fund dinner in London last night was not a negligible affair. Ten thousand pounds from Lord Rothermere, 2,300 guineas from Sir James Barrie as the result of the sale of the manuscript of "The Twelve-Pound Look," and the prospective portrait by Mr. Philip Laszlo—these are tributes that will mean a good deal to journalists who have fallen on evil days. As for the spoken tributes, Mr. Baldwin was as happy as he usually is on such "off" subjects—and, at the bottom, as sensible and serious. He has the great gift which alarmed the elder Mirabeau in his famous son—"the terrible gift of familiarity." He speaks to all sorts of men as their understanding equal, and, though he joked about the modern press and its equally terrible gift of familiarity which at times appears to threaten the last vestiges of personal privacy, in the end he wound up with a real commendation of that ultimate sense of responsibility which must be the basis of successful journalism as well as of successful politics. Journalists are inevitably in a position of influence, as Mr. Baldwin suggested; and if they do not regard that position seriously, then in the long run they waste their influence and no amount of gifts or after-dinner compliments will restore it.