

Confessions of a Correspondent

How some Journals are conducted and what it means to Support an Independent champion of the people

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Speechless, dumb; able to see, able to hear, to appreciate, but unable to ask for information; to give the answer eagerly sought for. To see ones nearest and dearest moving steadily towards impending danger and stand within easy hearing distance, mute—

Oh! it is awful!
Joy thrills the soul! Hope runs high! a vision of deliverance for self and those around us would color the horizon in glorious tints of a bright days' dawn, but alas! we cannot communicate with those whose pulse beats should quicken with our own, and helpless we feel our opportunities pass, because as the lambs before the shearer we are dumb. Yet such is the fate of great numbers in society; foremost among them come the farmers. Mouths have they but they speak not. The thought of today is the fact of tomorrow—provided—we can give expression to that thought, but since nothing is, that is not expressed the thought withers and dies, fills a space with useless lumber unless it is cleared out and cultivation of further thought resorted to.

Crazy—my boy—just a good natured lunatic with pipedreams.

Just look at the agricultural press and then tell me again that the farmer has no mouthpiece! Wake up! Wake up! Have you not read The Grain Growers' Guide? Ah! my friend, it is just the reading of The Grain Growers' Guide that fills my soul at once with hope and anguish mingled, and I wish I was possessed with all eloquence and pathos, and could wield my pen so that every farmer in the land could see and understand his needs as they exist.

It is an axiom that "the measure of our Opportunity fixes the measure of our Responsibility!"

To whom much shall be given of him much will be demanded, and if he shall fail to make use of his gifts, they shall be taken from him and given to him who hath so availed himself.

The Publishers' Problem

A paper costs money to print and get out, and it must therefore have a source of income, and this source of income frames the nature of the paper. It is not possible for a paper to give expression to views and needs which are not in accordance with its source of income.

Faddists of all kinds have attempted to publish papers airing their peculiar views and they have had shortlived existence, they were not desired and so they flourished for a short time but perished sooner or later and crumbled into dust with the erratic views of their creators.

"The confessions of a managing editor" (see issue of The Grain Growers' Guide, November 15 last) should sink deep into the heart of every farmer reading the papers as they come to him.

A Personal Experience

Personally I had a similar experience. As an unknown quantity I was asked by the secretary of the Washington State Dairymen's association to read a paper at the annual meeting to be held in Everett in 1909. I was most unusually successful, and after the meeting I was asked by the editor of the "Ranch" if I would accept a position on the editorial staff. I told him the farm I had rented had changed owners and that when my bunch of hogs had been fed off and sold in the course of about three months I would be glad to enter into the work since I had a great liking for it.

Accordingly we agreed and I at once furnished a weekly editorial and began as soon as possible to gather market reports, until I announced that I was ready to give full time. It was suggested that I go afield and visit farmers in the state and give interesting reports of what was being done, taking subscriptions and advertising at the same time.

I made the acquaintance of Mr. J. F. Littory, the horticultural inspector of Snohomish county at this dairymen's gathering and became at once his guest and soon after his friend. We had arranged a series of meetings throughout the country at which he wished to elucidate to the farmers his entirely new ideas on

pruning; I was to speak on dairying and then together we were to tackle the meetings on organization. The plan matured and success followed our efforts beyond our most sanguine expectations.

Dangerous Ground

At the outset I conceived the idea that if our paper was to be useful to the farmer it would be proper to find out what was the greatest danger besetting his calling, inform him clearly of it and suggest the remedy, leading the fight against corporate greed and giving details of the entire campaign.

My plans outlined, I began observations and soon found out that the dairy industry—to which the country was peculiarly adapted—was being hampered and unsettled by the unscrupulous actions of the big wholesale dairies in Seattle. At several points, but notably at Stanwood, the farmers had for years conducted splendid co-operative creameries. The method of the big dealers was to influence any susceptible, ignorant and therefore prejudiced patron against their fellow

patrons and the management of the concern. They made alluring contracts with some of the strongest patrons when possible, hoping that once the organization was destroyed they could buy the equipment cheap and then skin the dairymen individually to very near—but not quite—the limit of endurance. My principal had told me that my articles were quite readable and my logic was good, and at the start of our tour the reports were given prominent positions; but I soon noticed a change and then the blue pencil was applied to the matter nearest my heart and of which I had made a thorough study.

Quite Natural

Upon entering the office one day the editor was violently angry when he accosted me and said: "Have you wheels loose in your head? Do you suppose I am going to publish such trash? See this advertising and that, and that, whole pages of it and if I print your stuff all that goes. I have no rich Dutch uncle feeding me. I am not here for the education of the down-trodden farmer. I am running this paper for my bread and butter and if the darned fool wants information let him go and pay for it! Just cut out all that balderdash and write for what will bring circulation and advertising."

And our relations ended abruptly.

Learn the Lesson

He was right; the farmer could go and must go without the information he re-

quires unless he is willing to pay or work for it himself. Fortunately I was in the position where I could sell my labor power to a master and need not prostitute my manhood for a so-called "respectable" position.

As a down-trodden farmer, as a member of the great working class, I beg of you, my fellow workers, to grasp your opportunities and work them—as did our editor his—for all they are worth. There is no power greater than that of co-operation and your chance is now knocking at your door.

What The Guide Needs

The Grain Growers' Guide is a farmers' paper; but it is only in its infancy and it can no more blossom into manhood without the nurture and care of your assistance than your calf can become a cow, or your pig reach the packing house without your attention and skill. Dollars are needed; but they are only a mechanical aid; the brain and intelligence of each one is required to make THE GUIDE our mouthpiece, our organ, and to send it to the top rung of the agricultural press.

We need circulation first, advertising next and exchange of ideas and thought as well.

"OUR" paper must mean "OUR" in the sense of being an integral part of ourselves, yea, our intellectual selves, our mouthpiece, our voice giving expression to our hearts' desires. I would like to see one of our fellow workers, who is good at organizing, start in complete co-opera-

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