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THE WEEKLY PRESS.

THE LOCAL DEPARTMENT.

By Charles W. Landis, Osborne, Kansas.

IN the presentation of this paper we shall endeavor to adhere as closely as possible to practical lines, leaving the theoretical phases of the subject to some of the abler editors who are to follow in a discussion of this fruitful topic. During almost fifteen years' continuous service as "devil," typo and editor in the same newspaper office, our experience convinces us that the local department is the most important feature of a country weekly. There are many reasons why this statement is true. Most people subscribe for a paper in order to obtain the news, and the more local news the country weekly contains, the more readers it will have, the more advertising it will secure, at better rates, and the greater will be its influence in the community in which it circulates. Kansas has always been a prolific newspaper field, but we are glad to say that during the past few years there has been a tendency to reduce the number of papers in this State. Crop failures and consequent business depression were important factors in forcing the permanent suspension of many papers, but, above and beyond all this, the business sagacity of some editors prompted them to effect a consolidation of two or more newspapers in a number of Kansas counties. This has proved not only to be wise business judgment, but has greatly elevated the standard of the country press; for, with fewer papers in the field, those still in existence receive increased

patronage, and are thereby enabled to more nearly approach the ideal newspaper.

Kansas people are loyal in their support of newspapers, and, in return for the loyalty and patronage, we editors should be sufficiently appreciative to give them the best we have in the shop. Every editor should take great pride in publishing a newsy paper. He should strive to have every issue teeming and sparkling with bright, crisp local news. One page of local news isn't sufficient. Let the local items be so numerous that it is absolutely necessary to crowd out all your plates and some of your editorial matter, if need be. Such a paper will delight your readers, please your advertisers and bring your enemies, political and personal, to the point of secretly admitting that you are publishing the best paper in the State, to say nothing about the steady growth of your subscription list and the increased demand for advertising space. To publish a strictly up-to-date local paper requires incessant hustling every working day of the week. And some editors are heathenish enough to do a little rustling on the Sabbath, when about to be engulfed by a "prosperity wave." Some Kansas newspapers are misnomers. They don't contain enough local news to entitle them to respectability. But, let us add, there are very few of this kind of papers in Kansas. A lazy man was never intended for an editor. If there are any lazy editors in Kansas, they should quit the newspaper business, or let their wives run the paper. An editor owes it to his patrons to devote his entire time to the publication of his paper. If he does this, his income will be sufficiently large to make him a good living. (This isn't intended as a shot at the newspaper boys who are fortunate enough to hold post office commissions, because out in our country that is a prima facie evidence that a man is a successful editor.)

Some of the old-fashioned country editors still adhere to the practice of printing long-winded and uninteresting editorials. We believe they make a mistake. Two or three columns each week devoted to short, pungent editorial paragraphs is, in our judgment, more preferable to the readers of country weeklies. Nowadays, all progressive Kansas farmers subscribe for the city weeklies, depending largely upon these papers for their editorial and general news. A certain amount of editorial matter in a country paper is essential to maintain its dignity and stability. Of course, in a political contest, it becomes necessary to increase your editorial space to whoop it up for the fellows, who, as a rule, forget to even thank you for your gratuitous work after the campaign is over. Hence, the editor who makes his local department the leading feature of his paper, will make