

THE PRINTING DEPARTMENT.

CONDUCTED BY IRA ENOS.

Readers of this department are invited to make use of these columns for the expression of opinion, or by making inquiries regarding any topic having relation to the printing department. All opinions will be gladly welcomed, and all inquiries will be answered as fully and carefully as possible. Any criticisms of what appears in this department will also be welcomed. Communications should be addressed to IRA ENOS, "Printer and Publisher," Toronto.

THERE IS PROFIT IN FIRST-CLASS WORK.

EVERY difficulty is accompanied by its own compensations. It is a comparatively easy matter to make a living in the printing business. A man may go to a small town or a village, and, by virtue of the fact that he has no local competitors, secure enough work to pay the running expenses of his plant, himself, and (if he possesses one) his family. It is not essential that he be a first-class printer, or even that he be a printer. He can secure a foreman (?) for \$6 or \$7 a week, who will "turn out" with ease and rapidity every job offered, and, as a rule, his work will be received with a certain measure of satisfaction. But the chances of the proprietor of such a business ever becoming rich and retiring with a competence are indeed slight.

In the large centres the man who engages in the printing business must know at the start, or he will speedily learn, that he has entered on a struggle in which he must fight hard, long and continuously. But if he is shrewd he soon learns that his difficulties bring the compensations of not only success in securing a livelihood but the possibility of a competence, if not a fortune.

The very keenness of competition in the large cities develops in the shrewdest workers an ability to design and to execute which gives to the output of the shop an individuality, a quality which not only holds customers, but attracts new ones.

After a careful study of the conditions, one is forced to the conclusion that here is the factor that has made some printers successful where many fail. The printer who makes "quality" his watchword, and who is ever on the alert to adopt new ideas, to make necessary or wise expenditures for new stock, machinery or type, and has the courage to put a value on his work according to his own judgment, has not the easy walk through life that falls to the lot of his brother who does all the printing in a small town or village, but there is open to him possibilities well worthy of the struggle entailed.

There is a class of printers in every large centre, however, who face the struggle in a manner that brings to them little of the compensation. Their experience is well described by an extract from the experience of "A Proprietor" in an exchange, who writes as follows: "One month, some years ago, I did a business of over \$700, and I thought that I made \$300 for myself, or about \$200 more than I could earn as wages. The next month I only did \$187 worth of printing, and I made about—nothing. This

set me to studying, and I decided that the thing to do was to keep the place filled up with work; so I sent out a canvasser, who brought in some business, but whose expenses were about a third of what he brought in. Then I tried advertising, and offering to do work at low prices, and sending in bids to large concerns within a 50-mile radius. This did the business, and I was soon loaded up with work, and had \$700 a month again, which was all I could turn out with my pony cylinder and two jobbers. Then I thought that I was going to get rich quickly, and had a sure thing on making at least \$250 every month. But I soon found that I required a larger cylinder press, and so bought a second-hand one at \$1,200 on easy terms, and took in more work by cutting prices. I worked early and I worked late, and after a little it began to dawn upon me that I was injuring my health. My wife said that I ought to take a vacation, and I told her that I could not afford it

" 'Why, I thought that you were making so much money now,' she said.

" 'Well, I am; but I have to pay \$100 a month on the press, and next week I have a big paper bill to meet, and then you know the type bill is bigger than it was, and the help must be paid Saturdays, and I have to get the money in. If I hired a foreman and laid off, things would not go right.'

" 'I don't see where you are making money, if you have to pay it all out for presses and paper,' she said."

Here the experience of the class I refer to and this particular proprietor differ. His wife's remark set him thinking. And after looking thoroughly into the matter he decided that he would get better prices for his work. The experience, consequent to his raising prices, he describes thus: "Inside of two months my cheap work had all flown, but I had had time to issue some very attractive booklets to possible customers. These caught the fancy of the biggest advertiser in town, and he came in and ordered \$100 worth. That was just the way he put it—didn't say how many he expected for the money—just 'get me out \$100 worth of those, and if they take I'll order a whole lot more.' They did take, and that man's printing during the next year averaged over \$100 a month, and he brought me two other steady customers. I kept on looking for high-grade work, and now I am again doing a business of \$700 a month and over, but I do not seem to do more than half as much work as formerly to get in that much money. I have the leisure to do the work as it should be done, and put a little thinking into it."

There are many printers who, if they possessed the courage to raise their prices 25 per cent. or so, would find, possibly to their surprise, that they have the facilities and the ability to do high-class printing and get first-class prices in competition with the best houses in their town. And it