

editor as a poverty stricken wretch, who is not only willing but anxious to accept contracts at ridiculously low prices. What gives him that impression? Well, unfortunately, there are a number of "happy-go-lucky" publishers who are willing to take what they can get for their space rather than burden their readers with too much reading matter. And, strange as it may appear, the boastful "all-at-home" editor is frequently the greatest sinner in this matter. He is too proud to use "boiler plate," for then the "patent sheets" men would point the finger of scorn at him; he hates to use the ready-print sheets, because that would hurt his self-esteem; and so it comes to pass that he accepts every contract that comes in his way without question thus enabling him, as he thinks, to avoid "disagreeable contingencies." He avoids the latter, it is true, but in doing so, he jumps from the frying pan into the fire. The "patent sheets" editor can turn out a larger and better paper, at much less expense; and, as can be very readily understood, he can command decent advertising rates. He is not under the thumb of the advertising agent; and for that reason—if for no other—he should feel truly thankful.

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Unfortunately the "all-at-home" slaughters of rates are not the only sufferers through their own foolishness and stupidity. Their senseless and unbusinesslike way of handling foreign advertising pinches the horns of "saint and sinner," and explains how it is that many advertising agents offer such ridiculously low rates. And, although some editors flatly refuse to accept as low rates as other editors—who have been incidentally quoted by the agent by way of illustration—yet, in many instances, it results in their accepting contracts at an advance upon the prices secured by the cut-and-slash man, it is true, but still at something less than two-thirds of the regular figures. In this connection, I might add, that it is a notorious fact, that the men, who do foreign advertising at absurdly low rates, do not scruple to exact outside prices from their local patrons. It is a clear case of journalistic highway robbery.

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The advertising rate cards of some publishers are fearfully and wonderfully constructed. Take, for instance, a certain Dufferin Co. paper's rates. This paper charges \$16 for inserting a column advertisement three months and \$15 for inserting a half column ad. the same length of time!!! Comment is unnecessary.

Streetsville, Sept. 19th.

A. R. FAWCETT.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

MR. J. W. KELLER, editor of the New York Recorder, writing in the August Forum, says that the fundamental principle of modern journalism is to buy paper at three cents a pound and to sell it at twelve cents a pound, and that the successful journalist is he who can sell the largest number of pounds. This view of the case places journalism on a purely commercial basis, and ignores the duty of a newspaper as a public teacher, except in so far as the public taste can be assumed to be so sound that the best newspaper will also be the most popular. As a matter of fact, that is known to be not the case. The newspaper which contains the largest amount of scandal and sensational matter will attain the largest circulation, though it is deficient in knowledge, scholarship and principle,

as compared with its rivals. The World, which is one of the worst newspapers in New York, has a larger circulation than the Tribune, which is one of the best; there are half-penny papers in London which circulate five copies to one of the Times; the Petit Journal of Paris has a circulation ten times as great as that of the Debats or the Siecle. It is evident that mere circulation is no test of merit, and that the publisher who sells the largest number of pounds of printed paper must be content with a merchantile success and cannot likewise claim supremacy of journalism.

At the same time it is clear that a newspaper devoted to high problems in politics or sociology, and to other lofty aims, may shoot over its readers' heads and acquire neither circulation nor influence. The mass of mankind, for whom newspapers are written, are neither learned nor judicious; the most that can be expected of them is that they will move on a dead-level of mediocrity. To influence them and to command their support, a public journal must not be very much better or very much wiser than they are. If it falls below them in intelligence, they will despise it, if it soars too far above them, they will ignore it as beyond their comprehension. This does not mean that a newspaper should truckle to caprices and whims begotten of prejudice and ignorance. No conscientious journalist will abet that which his principles condemn as wrong. But if he is wise, he will couch his condemnation of popular errors in such a manner as not to alienate his readers or to provoke them to reject his teachings altogether. If he runs amuck at the public, he will simply sacrifice any influence he might have exercised. He must show that he differs in opinion from the rank and file of his readers without slapping them in the face.

The time-honored controversy between the business end and the editorial end of a newspaper has lately been discussed at some length in the Forum. Low-class journalists act on the principle that the business end must govern, and that a burglary should be handled delicately, because one or two of the burglars may be subscribers. On the other hand, doctrinaire journalists sometimes insist on the publication of radical views though they are odious to the class upon which the journal depends for support. It is clearly impolitic for a journal to make itself constantly and persistently offensive to those on whose support it relies for existence. But the man who subscribes to a newspaper does not buy the editor, body and soul.

Editors are frequently misled by fancying that they will destroy the value of their property if they express unpopular opinions. As a matter of fact, if they make a good paper, their subscribers will rarely quarrel with them because the paper's views do not agree with their own. In time of war, a paper must not take sides with the enemy. In time of rebellion, it must not aid and abet the rebels. But these are extreme cases, in which popular passion is roused. In ordinary times, newspapers are pretty free to speak their minds, so long as their conductors appear to be honest. A journalist is more likely to lose standing and his paper to lose business if he acquires the reputation of a lickspittle who is always cringing in the hope that thrift will follow fawning than if he boldly tells the truth that is in him at some risk of temporary popularity.

Jas. Hooper, of Winnipeg, has gone to Portage la Prairie and assumed control of the Portage Review. The policy of the paper will be on strict Conservative lines, in both local and Dominion politics.