

PROFITS IN PUBLISHING.

From Address of H. A. Perkins, President Kansas Press Association.



GREAT many years ago a prominent newspaper man of the State, reading a paper before the association, made much sport of the man who attempted to run a nonpareil paper in a long primer community. At that time I was younger, and, with others, applauded the sentiment and thought the idea was expressive and correct. I knew a good many things about

the newspaper business 20 years ago that I am not quite so certain about to-day. At present, I am of the opinion that a man who cannot run a nonpareil paper in a long primer community, and in time educate that community up to a nonpareil standard, ought to get out of the business or change his location until he finds a nonpareil community or one that can be educated up to that standard. In a large majority of cases I am inclined to believe the fault lies with the individual and not with the community. In some cases, doubtless, the newspaperman finds it to his advantage to change his location and get out of the ruts into which we are very apt to fall and remain, simply because we think we are doing reasonably well and feel that we could not do as well somewhere else. New blood is often needed in business enterprises to bring out all there is in the business, so also it is good for a man to know his strength and realize that, after all, the world is kin, and that one good location is about the same as another. Change is the law of life, and applies as well in our business as in anything else. But the community in which you serve and labor is entitled to the best efforts of your life, and, if properly handled, will, as a rule, respond with generous and hearty support. A nonpareil paper properly managed and conducted will educate a long primer community to the nonpareil standard. It takes hard work and the use of common sense; and where is there a successful business that has not required the same?

I am speaking now of the country press; the daily field is another matter. But of the papers printed in the county seats and smaller towns of the State (the weekly papers) this argument of mine applies. I am here to maintain that out of possibly 450 weeklies in the State there are not a hundred that pay a decent living to the proprietor, and in regard to the question of what constitutes a decent living, there are, of course, many individual opinions. One man is happy and content with an income of \$600 per year, while another finds \$1,200 too small to make both ends meet. The average county seat paper of the dominant party ought to be worth from \$4,000 to \$8,000, an average, say, of \$6,000. The man who is capable of managing a business that requires that experience and capital ought to have an income that would allow him three several items: First, at least 10 per cent. on the amount invested, or \$600 a year; and also allow a second 10 per cent. for the wear and tear, renewal of his machinery and plant, and the risks and chances of any ordinary business; add to this amount from \$1,200 to \$2,400 a year as his salary and you have a net income of from \$2,400 to \$3,600 per year. How many country printing offices are there in Kansas that are doing that well? Count them on the fingers of your hand and you will have a finger or two to spare. What is the matter with our profession? One thing is the fact that we do not enforce the law of the

survival of the fittest. We are too willing to publish a long primer paper in what should be a nonpareil community. Every cross-roads town has a paper and detracts from the county seat paper. But what of that? There is room for them and room for the more pretentious county seat newspaper. It is not necessary to enter the field of the local paper to seek a job of printing or advertising that belongs to the other fellow, unless to bring him to terms and teach him to keep within the limits of his field. My observation has been that every town that is big enough to support a paper is loyal enough to that paper if the publisher on his part is loyal to his own town and county. But the people are not fools, not all of them, and they in time will gauge you most accurately. You can fool a part of them a part of the time, but you will not for any great length of time fool all of them.

The circulation, the advertising and the job departments of our papers are far widely different from the same fields in the daily papers of the larger cities. The country newspaperman meets his constituents and customers daily. Their support and patronage is largely a question of friendship or acquaintance. It is not a question of competition. The man who runs around and relies upon the element of "cheapness" cannot compete with the man who stands firm for a fair price and argues his case with discretion and wisdom. The Chinaman can beat the life out of the American on prices, but the appeal to the American pride and the American fairness of spirit will take the work away from John nearly every time.

THE OLD MAN'S SONS.

AN EPISODE OF THE LATE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR.

"We had two sons," the old man said unto the listening crowd, "Two strappin', husky boys of whom we was almighty proud. From infancy we watched 'em grow, an' tried to raise 'em right, An' all the neighbors used to say they was uncommon bright. In every class at school they stood almighty near the head, An' when they left their boyhood home admirin' people said They sure would make their mark in life; would some day write our name

In characters that all could read, upon the scroll of fame.

"We never dreamed that war'd come, in them bright, peaceful days,

Or that the kids 'd want to go where warfare was ablaze, An' when the letter came that told that both of them would go My heart just seemed a jumpin' lump o' pain, it hurt me so! I broke the news to mother in the gentlest way I knowed, An' it just seemed to break us down, so heavy was the load. An' in the apprehensive fear that mebbe they might fall, Our cup of agony seemed full of wormwood an' of gall.

"One of 'em is lyin' now on Santiago bay, An' one lies 'neath the tropic sun at Ponce, far away, An' I've bin told a many a time by them as knows their worth There ain't two more accomplished liars on top o' God's green earth.

No, sir, they are not boys blue; they're far too smart, I think, To fight when they can make a durned sight more in slingin' ink.

They've too much savey in their head for soldierin', I guess— Both of 'em's correspondents for the 'Sociated Press."

—Denver Post.