

NEWSPAPER MAKE-UP.

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE NORTHERN INDIANA EDITORIAL ASSOCIATION BY E. O. ROSE.

IN the make-up of a newspaper the two things especially desirable are a tasty and artistic arrangement of matter, and convenience of the reader; the one to please the eye, the other to meet the demands of an intelligent and critical public. As discriminating taste enables the manufacturer of our wearing apparel to turn out products which combine elegance with utility, so the newspaper man should study artistic effect in making up the matter which, when printed, is to be perused by those whose patronage he seeks.

CLASSIFY THE NEWS.

Classification of matter is important. Home news items (and by that term I mean only the happenings of one's immediate locality and of the country adjacent) should be grouped together, and always on the same page, if one page will hold them; and the excess, if any, should be given a place on some other page, under an appropriate heading, the page and place for this excess to be the same each week, so far as may be practicable. Reports of occurrences in adjacent counties, or news from places a little farther away, I would never merge with purely local news, but would group them under appropriate headings, such news making a department by itself. So editorial utterances and county or neighborhood correspondence should be in distinct departments; and these departments should never be moved from one page to another, excepting in case of emergency. Local, or home, news I would subdivide, making a department embracing items of personal mention and society affairs. While such a department may be of no special interest to the reader who is eager to scan the market reports and to learn the news from the national capital, it is surprising how many turn to it before perusing anything else in the paper.

THE QUESTION OF HEADINGS.

There is a great diversity of opinion with reference to the use of headings, some putting a caption or title upon nearly everything, while others omit headings almost entirely. In my judgment there is a happy medium on this question. In local news I would omit headings upon items of a dozen lines or less, but would give headings to those measuring a stickful or more. Whether it be a sidehead or tophead, is entirely a matter of taste. My practice is to use, in local news, a sidehead for items of from one to three sticks in length, and topheads for all of greater length. For articles of a column or more I use moderately displayed two and three-story headings, as their importance and the multiplicity of subjects embraced may suggest. A judiciously worded heading, like the table of contents or index of a book, enables the reader to know at a glance, and without a partial perusal of the article itself, what it is about, which, in this busy, bustling age, is often a source of satisfaction, if not a positive advantage to the reader. Some may object to such classifications as I have indicated, because of extra labor involved in make-up; but if the editor properly marks his copy, and compositors dump upon galleys set apart for each kind of matter, the trouble of classified make-up is very much simplified and reduced to a minimum.

ADS. MIXED WITH LOCALS.

The second part of the subject assigned me, "Where Should the Line be Drawn on Matter Subject to Advertising Rates?"

is one upon which country publishers widely differ—in practice, if not in theory. I have seen newspapers—in fact, I see a few every week when I open up my exchanges—which seem to be made up without reference to any system whatever; no articles headed, and no classification, the pages simply filled with a miscellaneous mixture, like the proverbial boarding house hash. I proceed to scan one of them in search of something for my "Round About" column, and this is about what I find:

"One Minute cough cure is the greatest remedy on earth."

"Jones is selling groceries cheaper than anybody else in town."

"Mr. and Mrs. Periwinkle have a new baby in their home."

"Dr. Hidalgo, the great Mexican healer, is at the American House this week."

"Tom Brown and Bill Flint went fishing yesterday."

"President McKinley has his eagle eye on Hawaii."

"Miss McQuirk has all the latest novelties in millinery."

"Pisley's is the cheapest place to buy hardware."

"The war between Greece and Turkey has about fizzled out."

"Bromide Johnson laid a big egg on the editor's table the other day."

And so on to the end of the page.

Now it may be that some subscribers have the time and patience to wade wearily through column after column of such stuff in order to cull out a few legitimate news items, but very few editors have—life is too short for that—and, as a result, such exchanges are consigned at once to the pile of old papers.

THE PRACTICE CONDEMNED.

Newspapers made up that way indicate that they are edited chiefly by the patent medicine vender, the quack doctor and the local shopkeeper, the editor and proprietor having very little to say about what kind of a sheet he'll furnish his subscribers; in other words, that he is not managing his own business, but is allowing a lot of cheeky fellows to dictate how his paper shall be made up. Instead of submitting to this imposition upon his readers, the newspaper man should insist upon managing and directing his own business. He should relegate paid reading matter to a department by itself under an appropriate heading, make a rule that no paid readers can have a place among legitimate local or other news items; and this rule should be firmly adhered to. Pure advertising matter—sometimes by brevet called "paid locals"—is as much out of place in legitimate news columns as plow-points and log-chains would be in a cutlery show case in a well-managed hardware store.

HOW TO SETTLE THE POSITION QUESTION.

"But," says some timid editor, "I must consent that such items go into my regular news columns—much as I dislike to see them there—or lose the patronage of those who want them published."

Now this is only partly true. As a rule, the publisher who peremptorily refuses to mutilate his news columns with such matter not only has quite as much of it as the easy-going man who can't say No, but he gets as good prices for his space as the other. The man who has allowed himself to be imposed upon by patent medicine agents and others of that ilk, may find it a little difficult to cut loose from old practices and establish a new rule; but once established, he can maintain it with very little trouble.

With some of my patrons, I agree to give their announcements a place immediately following pure reading matter, and that is the extent of my concessions. Clauses providing for insertion on local or editorial page, I always insist upon erasing