

NOTES HERE AND THERE.

CANADIAN newspapers have been spending a lot of money since the outbreak of the Spanish-American war on special correspondence and extra telegraph rates. What cash returns do they get for it all? The arrangements made by the leading Toronto and Montreal dailies certainly showed enterprise. But in Canada large expenditure on news of this sort does not bring adequate results in the permanent circulation or in advertising contracts. This is not a fake community, and a Canadian newspaper never builds up a reputation on such news. It is not worth while paying too much for. I do not mean that The Mail and Empire was altogether wrong in arranging for its service and in sending "Kit" to Florida, or that The Globe made a mistake in ordering its well-written specials and despatching Mr. Ewan to Cuba with the United States Army. But the question is, gentlemen, does the lavish expenditure necessary to these things bring you the requisite business return?

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It is asserted, of course, that newspapers make fortunes during periods of great public excitement like this. A London, England, paper of recent date draws a fancy picture of the way in which the United States papers coin money out of specials. Dealing with English journals, along the same line, it says:

"If you could clear the profits made by any of the big London papers during a war, you would be able to retire comfortably with a balance of several thousands in the bank. The Daily Telegraph coup during the Russo-Turkish war was probably the biggest war boom ever known. The Plymouth Western Morning News had scarcely ever been heard of till it was the first to publish the news of the Ashantee war of 1873; and no one can tell but what some obscure provincial paper may suddenly boom out with some exclusive news about the Spanish-American war. It's a glorious time for editors, and there is a great temptation in Fleet street to start a newspaper devoted exclusively to war news; but the fortunes of war are so ruinously fickle. In the Crimean war, however, a Mr. Finlay, realizing the thirst for news, started a paper in Edinburgh, containing only war intelligence. The first week he made a clear profit of 100 guineas, which increased every day till the end of the war, when he retired on a comfortable fortune."

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One must take these glowing stories with a good sized pinch of salt. No doubt they may be true of large centres like London, Glasgow, etc., containing thousands of people who only buy newspapers during a war excitement. Their extra circulation is found money. But, does this apply to Canadian cities where prices are practically down to a cost basis? Not much.

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You get some queer headings in the hurry of the moment. Here is one that appeared in a Canadian paper in connection with Mr. Gladstone's funeral:

WITH COURTLY GRACE

The Prince of Wales Kissed Mrs. Gladstone's Hand—The Earl Marshal Receives the Remains.

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The legal advisers of the Hamilton Herald having given an opinion to the effect that the local theatre can, if it likes, exclude the reporter of a paper which adversely criticizes the performances, the Herald's contemporaries are commenting upon the

extensive powers this reading of the law, if sound, gives to theatre managers. There is also another point, but, unfortunately, it "has nothing to do with the case." That is the space given by daily papers to free puffs for theatres, concerts, and other entertainments. This costs newspapers many dollars a year. It costs in reputation as well, because the public has ceased to pay much attention to the so-called criticisms of plays in the press. My own idea is, that a large city daily should pay the way of its representative everywhere, on railway journeys, for theatre performances, etc. Take no favors, and give as few as need be. This would cheapen publication. Newspapers now print columns of matter to please organizations or politicians, or some other nuisances. The newspaper of the future will rigidly condescend. So complicated has modern society become with its sneers at everyone's virtue, that newspapers will be forced, sooner or later, to avoid even the appearance of being influenced by influential interests or wealthy corporations. From what you hear said by the ordinary man in the street, you would think most newspapers are corrupt. I don't believe a word of it. But, as newspapers have no means of meeting this kind of slander—or even hearing it sometimes—the wisest course is careful avoidance of anything that gives ground for it.

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Mr. Andrew Pattullo did a public service by his speech before the Canadian Society in New York, May 24. It was a timely declaration of friendliness towards the United States people, who, if their protestations hold out, are anxious to be on good terms with us. Mr. Pattullo acted as a responsible journalist should, and, on this occasion, voiced the soundest wisdom now being shown in Canada. The coming conference in Quebec ought to make Canadian editors careful in their comments. A neatly-turned gibe is all very well, but sometimes jokes are expensive.

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The copyright question has been up in Parliament, and Mr. John Ross Robertson has secured from Government some valuable admissions regarding the present position of this question. The Ministers, for instance, believe that Lord Herschell's bill, now passing through the House of Lords, tends rather to improve the Canadian position, since it provides for future Canadian legislation on copyright. Secondly, Sir W. Laurier says the Government think the compromise arranged at the time of Mr. Hall Caine's visit to Canada can now be effected. Why can the Government not effect it, then? Goodness knows it has been pending long enough. The Premier is always hopeful and soothing in getting over difficulties, but he is not so energetic in pushing his promises to the stage of performance. Mr. Fisher, the Minister of Agriculture, says we must go slowly in this matter. He has certainly been taking his own medicine. The Copyright Association should keep an eye open during the next three months, and, if no steps are taken to bring the matter to an issue, let them begin once more a vigorous campaign in the press. Let a document be drawn up for popular consumption. Mr. R. T. Lancefield, librarian of the Hamilton Public Library, who has issued a clear statement of the difficulties that the Herschell bill might cause, is well qualified to enlist the sympathy of the public—which Sir W. Laurier says we have not yet secured. Apparently you must get up a clamor (which means votes) before you can make a Government budge. C.