

A DISCUSSION ON READY-PRINTS.

THE following paper, read at the meeting of the North Central Kansas Press Association by H. R. Hovey, Mankato Advocate, will be interesting to those who employ ready-prints:

"The publisher has the choice of three alternatives: He can either publish an all-home print, leaving out a vast amount of important matter which his patrons have a right to expect him to furnish, which they do expect him to furnish; he may run a home-print and supply this information by means of stereotype plates, which are at best only portions of ready-prints; or he may publish a paper, reserving to himself a sufficient amount of space for his home news and editorial comment, and in addition supply the outside, general news, on the pages supplied by the ready-print house.

"In choosing between these three plans we are at once compelled to decide whether a large circulation is to be desired. To our mind it is clear that the larger the list of paying subscribers, the greater the profit to the publisher. The cost of composition, of setting advertisements and making-up forms for a paper form a large per cent. of the cost of publication of a country weekly. This part of the work costs no more for a list of 3,000 subscribers than it does for a list of 500. It follows, therefore, that the profit upon the last 500 of our circulation is greater than upon the first 500. The addition of 100 paying subscribers increases the aggregate cost of publication, but decreases the individual cost of production of each subscriber's paper. Then, again, with a large circulation, the business men soon recognize the fact that such a paper is the one paying the best returns upon money invested in advertising space. It is therefore much easier to secure a satisfactory advertising patronage than it is for a paper with limited circulation. The question then having been decided, that a large circulation is to be desired, we must next decide which of the three plans before mentioned is the most likely to secure and hold the circulation.

"The first plan, the all home print, with much of the general news barred on account of the expense of composition, we reject, for the reason that such a publication does not fill the place of a newspaper. The circulation of such a paper must be limited to the number who care only for the local news, or who can afford, and are willing to take in addition, another paper for the general news. The patrons of such a paper always feel that there is something lacking; they are never fully satisfied with the paper, and they will drop from the list at the slightest provocation.

"The second plan, the all home print, with a portion of the foreign and general news furnished by means of stereotype plates, we reject, because we deem it incomplete and unsatisfactory both to publisher and patron. If sufficient plates are purchased to give to the subscriber the same amount of general news which would be found in a ready-print, then the expense would be too great. If you do not get as much plate as would be found in the ready-print, then the paper is not so good, will prove less satisfactory and less liable to hold the circulation. We have figured the matter over carefully, and find that we can publish a ready-print with ten or twelve columns of late general news, congressional proceedings, foreign war news, telegraphic news from all portions of the country as late and fresh as we could furnish to our readers by means of plate matter, for at least 20 per cent. less money than we could furnish the same amount and character of news in plate, leaving entirely out of consideration the cost of making-up forms and cost of press-work. We therefore feel warranted in saying that the ready-

print is cheaper. But, you ask, is it necessary to furnish this amount of general news? We say, if it is news, yes. If we are running a newspaper, it is necessary that we furnish our subscribers all the real news. That is what they take the paper for. They do not want part of the news. They want everything, and it is our duty as a publisher to see that they get it, and it is to our interest to see that they find it in our columns, without being obliged to take another paper.

"In disposing of the first two plans we have convinced ourselves, if we have convinced no one else, that a well-selected ready-print comes the nearest to giving a subscriber a satisfactory country newspaper,—a newspaper which will give the most general satisfaction in the farming communities, and it is to the farmer we must look for the big end of our subscription list.

"In conclusion, we want to say that, in our opinion, the paper which is most valuable and entertaining to the readers is the one most likely to prove profitable to the publisher. A ready-print made up exclusively of miscellany is of little value to the subscriber, and therefore not profitable to the publisher. Although even that, to our mind, would be preferable to miscellaneous plates in a home print. Our idea is that a paper in any town, where there is room for a paper at all, should contain not less than four six-column pages of home print. If there is room in the town for a newspaper, the publisher can fill that amount of space brim full of live home news every week. By doing this, and then giving his patrons four pages of well-selected ready-print, he will produce a paper calculated to command and retain the support of the people. He should keep careful watch of his ready-print pages; see that the matter is live, up-to-date, and carefully selected. Into the home-print pages let him throw his whole heart. Never think of getting tired, never worry about giving his subscribers a better paper than they pay for, never hesitate about making an improvement in the paper because 'it is too much work.' Fill the paper chuck full of your own individuality. Go after the news, get the news, and give the news. Follow these instructions, and if the paper does not pay it is not the fault of the editor."

WHY "YELLOW JOURNALISM" THRIVES.

The enormous circulations attained by the so-called sensational newspapers are clearly indications of a popular demand for sensationalism in the press. The people would not buy these papers unless they wanted them, and a constant increase of circulation points to an ever-widening circle of those who prefer the froth to the solids. However much we may decry the effects of sensationalism, we cannot close our eyes to the fact that the demand for it exists and that the supply will be in evidence just as long as the demand continues. The American public will have what it wants; therefore, the greater share of the blame for the prevailing blight of "yellow journalism" should rest upon the public, and not upon the publishers, who are in business to make money by supplying an article for which there is a large demand. "Yellow journalism" is, in reality, a distinct branch of journalistic enterprise, appealing to a certain class of readers not reached by the legitimate newspapers. True journalism suffers in a great measure by seeming contact with the "yellow" variety, and this will be the case until the lines are so sharply drawn between the real newspaper and its perverted offspring that there will be no nearer relationship than now exists between the monthly magazine and the country weekly.—Newspaperdom.