

# The Country Editor.

ON. CHARLES M. HARGER, editor of the Abilene Kansas, Daily Reflector, director and lecturer of the Journalism course of the Kansas University, and magazine writer, has contributed an article to the Atlantic Monthly on the subject of the Country press. Referring to the future of this class of journalism he says:

The city daily may give the telegraph news of the world in quicker and better service, the mail order house may occasionally undersell the home merchant, the glory of the city's lights may dazzle, but at the end of the week home and home institutions are best. So only one publication gives the news we most wish to know—the country paper. The city business man throws away his financial journal and his yellow "extra" and tears open the pencil addressed home paper that brings to him memories of new mown hay and fall fields and boyhood. Regardless of its style, its grammar or its politics, it holds its reader with a grip that the city editor may well envy.

In these times the country editor is, like the publisher of the city, a business man. Scores of offices of country weeklies within 200 miles of the Rockies (which is about as far inland as we can get nowadays) have linotypes or typesetting machines, run the presses with an electric motor and give the editor an income of \$3,000 or more a year for labor that allows many a vacation day. The country editor gets a good deal out of life. He lives well, he travels much, he meets the best people of his state, and, if he be inclined, he can accomplish much for his own improvement. Added to this is the joy of rewarding the honorable, decent people of the town with good words and helpful publicity and the satisfaction of seeing that the rascals live, for in the country town the editor's turn always comes. If he use his power with honesty and intelligence, he can do much good for the community.

In the opinion of some this danger threatens: The increased rapidity of transportation, the multitude of fast trains and the facilities for placing the big city papers within a zone of 100 miles of the office of publication mean the large representation of par-

ticular localities or even the establishment of editions devoted to them. The city paper tries to absorb the local patronage through the competent correspondent who practically edits certain columns or pages of the journal. In the thickly settled east this is more successful than in the west, where distance helps the local paper. But the zone is widening with every improvement in transportation of mails, and soon few sections of the country will be outside the possibilities of some city paper's enterprise in this direction.

When this happens, will the local weekly go out of existence and its subscribers be attached to the big city paper, whose facilities for getting news and whose enterprise in reaching the uttermost parts of the world far outstrip the slow going weekly's best efforts? It is not likely. The county seat weekly today with its energetic correspondent in the town of Centerville, adds to its list that section because it gives the news fully and crisply, but it does not drive out of business the Centerville Palladium, whose editor has a personal acquaintance with every subscriber and who caters to the home pride of the community. It is probable that the Palladium will be more enterprising and will devote more attention to the doings of the dwellers in Centerville in order to keep abreast with the competition, but it cannot be driven out or its editor forced from his position by dearth of business. The life of a forceful paper is long. One such paper was sold and its name changed eighteen years ago, yet letters and subscriptions still are addressed to the old publication. A hold like that on a community's life cannot be broken by competition.

The evolution of the country weekly into the country daily is becoming easier as telephone and telegraph become cheaper and transportation enables publishers to secure at remote points a daily "plate" service that includes telegraph news up to a few hours of the time of publication. The publishing of an Associated Press daily, which twenty years ago always attended a town's boom and generally resulted in the suspension of a bank or two and the financial ruin of several families, has become simplified until it is within reach of modest means.

Instead of the big city journals extending their sway to crush out the country paper, it is more probable that the country papers will take on some of the city's airs and that, with the added touch of personal familiarity with the people and their affairs, the country editor will become a greater power than in the past, for it is recognized today that the publication of a paper is a business affair and not a matter of faith or revenge. If the publication be not a financial success, it is not much of a success of any kind.

The old time editor who prided himself on his powers of vituperation, who thundered through double leaded columns his views on matters of world importance and traded space for groceries and dry goods, has few representatives today. The wide awake, clean cut, well dressed young men, paying cash for their purchases and demanding cash for advertising, alert to the business and political movements that make for progress and taking active part in the interests of the town, precisely as though they were merchants or mechanics, asking no favors because of their occupation, are taking their places. This sort of country editor is transforming the country paper and is making of it a business enterprise in the best sense of the term, something it seldom was under the old regime.

This eulogy is one often quoted by the country press: "Every year every local paper gives from 500 to 5,000 lines for the benefit of the community in which it is located. No other agency can or will do this. The editor, in proportion to his means, does more for his town than any other man. Today editors do more work for less pay than any men on earth."

Like other eulogies, it has in it something of exaggeration. It assumes the country editor to be a philanthropist above his neighbors. The new type of country editor makes no such claim. To be sure, he prints many good things for the community's benefit, but he does it because he is a part of the community. What helps the town helps him. His neighbor, the miller, would do as much; his other neighbor, the hardware man, is as loyal and in his way works as hard for the town's upbuilding. In other words, the country editor of today assumes no particular

virtue because his capital is invested in printing presses, paper and a few thousand pieces of metal called type: He does realize that because of his vocation he is enabled to do much for good government, for progress and for the betterment of his community. Unselfishly and freely he does this. He starts movements that bring scoundrels to terms, that place flowers where weeds grew before that banish sorrow and add to the world's store of joy, but he does not presume that because of this he deserves more credit than his fellow business men. He is indeed fallen from grace who makes a merit of doing what is decent and honest and fair.

It is often remarked that the ambition of the country editor is to secure a position on a city paper. I have had many city newspaper men confide to me that their fondest hope was to save enough money to buy a country weekly in a thriving town. At first thought it would seem that the city journalist would fall in the new field, having been educated in a vastly different atmosphere and being unacquainted with the conditions under which the country editor must make friends and secure business. But two of the most successful newspapers of my acquaintance are edited by men who served their apprenticeship on city dailies and finally realized their hearts' desire and bought country weeklies in prosperous communities. They are not only making more money than ever before, but both tell me that they have greater happiness than came in the old days of rush, hurry and excitement.

So long as a country paper can be issued without the expenditure of more than a few hundred dollars, so long as the man with ambition and money can satisfy his desire to "edit," the country paper will be fruitful of jocose remarks by the city journalist. There will be columns of odd reprint from the backwoods of Arkansas and queer combinations of grammar and egotism from the Egypt of Illinois. The exchange editor will find in his rural mail much food for humorous comment, but he will not find characterizing the country editor a lack of independence nor a lack of ability to look out for himself. The country editor is doing very well, and the trend of his business affairs is in the direction of better financial returns and wider influence. He is a

greater power now than ever before in his history, and he will become more influential as the years go by. He will not be controlled by a syndicate nor modeled after a machine made pattern, but will exert his individuality wherever he may be.

The country editor of today is coming into his own. He asks fewer favors and brings more into the store of common good. He does not ask eulogies, nor does he resent fair criticisms. He is content to be judged by what he is and what he has accomplished. As the leader of the hosts must hold his place by the consent of his followers, so must the town's spokesman prove his worth. Closest to the people, nearest to their home life, its hopes and its aspirations, the country editor is at the foundation of journalism. Here and there is a weak and inefficient example, but in the main he measures up to as high a standard as does any class of business men in the nation, and it is as a business man that he prefers to be classed.



He Hoped Not.  
Kangaroo (in circus cage)—See that woman over there?  
Lion (in next cage)—Sure. Why?  
Kangaroo—I wonder if I walk anything like that?

Bobbs—Do you believe in the saying that music hath charms?  
Dobbs—Yes; if you don't have to pay for your piano on the instalment plan.

## Splinters.

Hard-headed—Goats.

To the ignorant traveling is a fool's errand.

The test of a good play is, does it make the audience better?

As an answer to calumny invective is vulgar and proves nothing.

"Do you always leave cards when you call?" "No, sometimes I leave an umbrella."—Judge.

It is all right to watch the busy bee if you don't monkey too close to the hive.

Boyce—Jones says he married the sweetest little woman on earth.

Joyce—Yes, she hasn't worn out all the clothes her father bought her before the wedding yet.

"De man dat's continuously kickin'" said Uncle Eben, "generally soun's like he was apologizing in his own special way foh not havin' had better sense."—Washington Star.

"That vulgar Mrs. Nurich can talk of nothing but dress." "Well, her line of conversation is naturally a clothes line. You know, she was a laundress before they struck oil."—Baltimore American.

First Traveler (cheerily)—Fine day, isn't it. Second Ditto (haughtily)—Sir! You have the advantage of me. I don't know you! First Traveler—Humph! I fail to see the advantage.—Town and Country.

A Fatal Beauty—It is told of her that when, as a bride, she entered Dublin Castle at a ball, the musicians dropped dead in the middle of a waltz to gaze at her in open-mouthed admiration.—Irish Society, quoted by Punch.

# The Square Deal.

Sayings of Theodore Roosevelt in his latest book

There is no room in our healthy American life for the mere idler, for the man or the woman whose object it is throughout life to shirk the duties which life ought to bring.

The woman who has borne and who has reared as they should be reared a family of children has in the most emphatic manner deserved well of the Republic. Her burden has been heavy, and she has been able to bear it worthily only by the possession of resolution, of good sense, of conscience and of unselfishness.

But, if she has borne it well, then to her shall come the supreme blessing, for, in the words of the oldest and greatest of books, "her children shall rise up and call her blessed," and among the benefactors of the land her place must be with those who have done the best and the hardest work, whether as lawgivers or as soldiers, whether in public or in private life.

No man needs sympathy because he has a burden to carry. Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing, and this is a prize open to every man, for there can be no work better worth doing than that done to keep in health and comfort and with reasonable advantages those immediately dependent upon the husband, the father or the son.

The law of worthy work well done is the law of successful American life. I believe in play too. Play, and play hard while you play, but don't make the mistake of thinking that that is the main thing. The work is what counts, and if a man does his work

well, and it is worth doing, then it matters but little in which line that work is done; the man is a good American citizen. If he does his work in slipshod fashion, then, no matter what kind of work it is, he is a poor American citizen.

This is not a soft and easy creed to preach. It is a creed willingly learned only by men and women who, together with their softer virtues, possess also the stronger, who can do and dare and die at need, but who while life lasts will never flinch from their allotted task. It is not enough to be well meaning and kindly, but weak; neither is it enough to be strong unless morality and decency go hand in hand with strength. We must possess the qualities which make us do our duty in our homes and among our neighbors, and in addition we must possess the qualities which are indispensable to the makeup of every great and masterful nation—the qualities of courage and hardihood, of individual initiative, and yet of power to combine for a common end, and, above all, the resolute determination to permit no man or set of men to sunder us one from the other by lines of caste or creed or section.

There must be ever present in our minds the fundamental truth that in a republic such as ours the only safety is to stand neither for nor against any man because he is rich or because he is poor, because he is engaged in one occupation or another, because he works with his brains or because he works with his hands. We must treat each man on his worth and merits as a man. We must see that each is given a square deal, because he is entitled

to no more and should receive no less. Finally, we must ever keep in mind that a republic such as ours can exist only by virtue of the orderly liberty which comes through the equal domination of the law over all men alike and through its administration in such resolute and fearless fashion as shall teach all that no man is above it and no man below it.

In our present advanced civilization we have to pay certain penalties for what we have obtained. Among the penalties is the fact that in very many occupations there is so little demand upon nerve, hardihood and endurance that there is a tendency to unhealthy softening of fibre and relaxation of fiber, and, such being the case, I think it is a fortunate thing for our people as a whole that there should be certain occupations, prominent among them railroading, in which the man has to show the very qualities of courage, of hardihood, of willingness to face danger, the cultivation of the power of instantaneous decision under difficulties and the other qualities which go to make up the virile side of a man's character. These qualities are all important, but they are not all sufficient. It is necessary absolutely to have them. No nation can rise to greatness without them. But by them alone no nation will ever become great. \* \* \* With the courage, with the hardihood, with the strength, must come the power of self restraint, the power of self mastery, the capacity to work for and with others as well as for oneself, the power of giving to others the love which each of us must bear for his neighbor, if we are to make our civilization great.

## The Nation's Non-Producers.

The census of 1900 placed the population of the United States at, in round numbers, 76,000 souls; of these 26,000,000 were children under 14 years old, and these are counted as wholly nonproductive. Then there were in benevolent institutions and asylums for the disabled classes 112,000. There were in the almshouses 73,000, while there were in the various prisons of the country 82,000. Here is a total, including:

Children . . . . .	26,000,000
In benevolent institutions . . . . .	112,000
In almshouses . . . . .	73,000
In prisons . . . . .	82,000

Total . . . . . 26,267,000  
When 26,267,000 nonproducers are subtracted from a grand aggregate population of 76,303,000, it is seen that the entire task of supporting and maintaining the helpless and nonproducing element, which constitutes more than one-third of the whole population, falls on the remainder.

## The French Ideal.

The old notion that military heroes held first place in the esteem of the French people must be dismissed from the mind. If the French ever worshipped the soldier they have been cured, and the proof seems to rest in the result of the plebiscite taken by the Petit Parisien on the pre-eminence of the great Frenchmen of the nineteenth century. As there were 15,000,000 answers to the paper's questions, a very fair expression of the opinion of the nation was secured. If the great soldier was still the idol of France, Napoleon should have received by far the most votes, yet he was only fourth in the contest. Pasteur, Victor Hugo and Gambetta each led the great genius of war—Pasteur with 1,338,428 votes, Hugo with 1,227,103 and Gambetta with 1,155,672. Napoleon was closely pressed by Thiers.

The foundation stone of friendship is Kindness, and its cement Truth.