

Omaha Men Who Change Occupations and Make Good



HOW many men strike their true business gait on the first trial? In other words, how many stick to their first choice of a life work and make a success of it?

Some professions, like that of newspaper work, have an attraction that holds men from youth to old age, in spite of possibly tempting offers to engage in other pursuits. Railroad work, too, seems to have attractions that appeal to a very large percentage of those who engage in it, and perhaps no other calling numbers so many workers who have grown old in it, except school teaching. Yet it is true that many men who began as school teachers have drifted into other professions, especially the law.

Naturally, the permanence of the meal ticket is the main consideration with every sensible person who has passed the first flush of youth. Then the fatness of the feeding may not be quite satisfying, and a richer billet is sought.

There may be blacksmiths that a student of human nature could pick out in a crowd without looking at their hands, but a good many people are inclined to doubt that anyone can tell a man's business just by sizing up his physical characteristics. It is undeniably true that many a peaceful business man would be put in the prize fighter class on a cursory view. Jewell may be a lusty worker at the anvil, but Hammer is, likely as not, a suppressed man with a scholarly stoop. Look around right here in Omaha and you will see this exemplified by your friends on every side.

Black and Pickens "Changed Holds"

"Hattie" Black, for instance, wouldn't be happy unless he could be fusing with the types. He used to handle them artistically when, as a boy at Freeport, Ill., he started to practice the art preservative of all other arts, and Brother Ben says Charley wasn't happy unless he came home with printer's ink all over his phiz. Today he arranges catchy combination of type faces and then drags a black cat across them as his own particular sign and seal. Mr. Black is almost handsome enough to be a printer or newspaper man; but on the street he has a good deal of the carriage and appearance of an athlete, and behind his favorite horse he could easily pass for an actor with no matinee on the card.

The man who presides over the Ak-Sar-Ben board, Charles H. Pickens of the Paxton-Gallagher company, would fit admirably as one of a crowd of fire chiefs. He has the air of reserve and self-confidence—the promise of initiative and quick action—one associates with that role. And perhaps it comes natural, for Mr. Pickens has all his life had a fondness for "running with the machine." In his youth he liked nothing better than to drive a fire wagon, which he did right here in Omaha; and might have been in the department today if some switch of fate hadn't thrown him into commercial pursuits, where he has won a chiefship, a fortune and a fine reputation as an executive.

Handsome Is That Wins Out

It has been said of Arthur Brandeis that his personal attributes would have enabled him to be a successful actor, and if "Chanticleer" had been written before Mr. Brandeis settled down to the business of a merchant prince possibly he would have taken to the stage. He likes animals, and would rather raise prize eggs and cultivate succulent broilers than to hear the plaudits of admiring audiences. Hence it comes that he is more used to handling money and business problems than stage situations. At that he is part owner of two fine playhouses, and enjoys a good show.

Speaking of the stage, Mayor Dahlman came mighty near going into the spotlight at one time, with Buffalo Bill, but his bashfulness prevented. Of course, that was before he began acting as a leader of political dances. But who that does not know his history in Nebraska would be likely to pick out the mayor of Omaha as a cowboy? Not

one in a thousand. He is an easy moving, soft-spoken person who dresses in modest good taste, and might be picked for anything else than a wild riding, tough-fibered prairie man. Still, the mayor takes some pride in his reputation among the cattle men of the west, and in his new line of business has not entirely lost touch with the old game.

Two Plumbers in Politics

His principal political side partner, "Tom" Flynn, used to tote a kit of tools and a furnace as a journeyman plumber for a good many years before the young democrats of his section sent him to the city council some years ago. Then he went to work and wiped a good many joints before going back into politics, and he has today all the earmarks of a sturdy craftsman rather than a manipulator of politics—"which I am not," says Flynn, "and I can prove it by Bob Smith."

County Commissioner Lynch is a Thanksgiving type of man, a good many inches around the vest pocket, good natured about twenty-three and a half hours a day. He also used to work at the plumbing trade, and was a good man at his specialty; but no one would pick him out of a crowd as a plumber. He looks more like a hotel keeper of the old English type, but he is a descendant of the Irish kings. Lynch is some worker at the political game when he wants to take a hand, and has a backing in his home ward that no other fellow can trifle with. As the lone republican on the present county board Commissioner Lynch has kept laughingly busy putting tacks under the four democrats, and hasn't overlooked a chance for fun at any meeting.

Shifted Jobs for the Better

City Clerk Dan Butler used to be a bookkeeper, before that a foot ball player, and alleged he could play base ball. He writes a nice hand and is the boss Elk in the local herd at this time.

From cutting marble when he was a husky young man, W. H. Thomas has found his forte as a cutter of coupons, and likes the job, which he abandons occasionally to deal in real estate and put up buildings.

Judge William D. McHugh when a boy in Galena, Ill., developed a notion that he would like to build shoes and thus aid everybody to keep up with the procession, but to keep his brain busy was more trouble than to keep his hands at work. So he took to the law, filled his system with its mysteries, and mastered it to that extent it serves him for all purposes today.

Among men who have learned a trade ambition is always alive and, having the ambition, if the man is made of the right stuff, he sails in to achieve it. Of the present Omaha School board, for instance, S. P. Bostwick formerly followed the trade of carpenter, and Dr. Grant Williams was a boss barber before he studied dentistry. Another dentist who began at something else is James P. Connolly, who used to be a contractor and politician. Rev. W. W. Stambaugh was a carpenter, thus in two callings following the Master.

Dr. Michael J. Ford, the well known surgeon, was working as a switchman when he determined to go to college and become a physician. Another former railroad man is Theodore W. McCullough of The Bee, who used to fire an engine, absorb fire and eat smoke with robustness and abandon. He also learned to set type and incidentally delighted in ink baths.

Sextette Who Grew Into Big Things

W. S. Wright of the Wright & Wilhelm company, started his workaday life as a tinner. From that he graduated most naturally into the handling of hardware, and one day he found the key to open the door of opportunity. Once in, he stuck and has proved old Ben Franklin was right when he said, "Take care of thy shop and thy shop will take care of thee."

City Building Inspector Withnell was a good bricklayer in his younger days and has helped to



erect many Omaha buildings. He proved a master hand at his work, became a master bricklayer, and now bosses all the other craftsmen in town in a supervisory capacity.

Rome Miller, Herman Peters, "Tom" O'Brien and Fred Castle constitute a quartette of hotel-keepers who were not dedicated to that calling, as were the Kitchen boys. Miller congratulates himself today that he had to "peddle" papers and hustle like sixty from a very early age, and O'Brien, Peters and Castle had the same experience, but in other fields. All three passed through a good many lanes

"Doorstep Kindness" ∴ By the Gentlewoman

DR. JOHNSON, asked on one occasion why he was not more frequently invited out, replied, "Because great lords and ladies do not like to have their mouths stopped." In other words, the eminent lexicographer objected to "doorstep kindness" to hospitality which limited his freedom of speech. The phrase was used by the bishop of London at the Church congress recently to describe the general attitude of the church and the upper classes to the lower. In an earnest and eloquent speech he made a plea for the demolition of the barrier that exists between the upper classes and the toiling millions. "Not till we realize," he said, "that the young workman is as proud and sensitive as our own young brother who has come home from the University of Sandhurst; not till we realize that he does not want charity or pity, or being preached at any more than the other * * * not till then have we given him sympathy."

Perhaps there is no feeling more subtle, more elusive and more difficult to eradicate from human nature than this sense of "superiority." In a hundred different ways it manifests itself, and no class of society seems free from it. The professional man's wife "condescends" to the draper's wife, the clerk's wife patronizes the mechanic's wife, the

of effort before they struck the high road leading to success and to the smile counter at the bank.

Paving Princes and Train Boys

Hugh Murphy and Colonel Charles E. Fanning, the paving contractors, evolved into that business without any particular planning. Murphy laid brick in some of the first sewers built in Omaha, at \$8 per day, and Fanning also had some experience in sewer building before he became the right hand man for Murphy after the latter became a contractor.

Frank Dewey's father established the first saw-

mill and cabinet factory in Cedar Rapids, Ia., but Frank didn't like the buzzing of the saws as well as he did the rattle of the wheels. So he became newboy on the railroad, but always remained a "home boy," and his mother's good training has stood as his best asset to this day, when he is county clerk-elect of Douglas county, with a comfortable home, some extra lots and a household of boys. Dewey's brother-in-law, William I. Kierstead, now a solid citizen and owner of much fine property, also had a whirl at selling lurid literature on trains when a youngster.

More Who Have Accepted Office

"Bob" Smith, clerk of courts, was a boy laborer, then went into the grocery business, studied steadily and became an accountant before he followed the good old Irish profession of politics. Frank Bandle, the register of deeds, was a railroad clerk, then a professional base ball player, and finally started a cigar store where all conversation was barred except that relating to "plays" on the diamond. Sheriff Bralley was a husky farmer boy before he came to the city. He became an undertaker's assistant, then went into business for himself, accepted the office of coroner to please the people, joined many societies, and was elected sheriff in a walk.

Charles O. Lebeck was one of the original insurgents, surged from the republican to the democratic ranks, and thence into office. He has followed that trade ever since. But he used to make his living as a drummer for several years after coming to Omaha, and packing sample cases for Lee, Fried & Co., gave him a grip he has been using ever since.

Before he began being a candidate for United States senator, Al Sorenson was first a typesetter and then a newspaper reporter, and he still insists that writing pieces pleases him better than his other pastimes of gazing on the senatorial halo above his desk and flirting through the streets in a fashionable motor. Sorenson has consecrated the balance of his life to throwing scares into candidates for the United States senate.

