

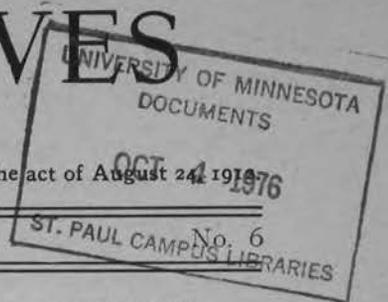
AMONG OURSELVES

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

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Vol. II

ST. PAUL, MINN., May, 1924



FEATURE STORY, A BUSINESS BUILDER

"Readers of country newspapers are interested in feature stories, and we find their use a great aid in increasing the circulation," writes J. Harold Curtis of the St. James Plaindealer. "Stories of experiences of farmers in the early days, which a birthday will suggest; stories of the work of the boys' and girls' clubs and of the special activities of the individual members are especially attractive. Pictures are also 'drawing cards.' Members of our staff have sent pictures to farm papers and borrowed the cuts for use in the newspaper in connection with features about club members.

"Interviews are another feature which creates interest in the paper. The opportunity to interview a farmer comes when he drops in to pay a subscription. The Plaindealer has, also, a reporter who spends one day a week in the country when the weather is good, getting interviews from farmers and stories about their farms and plans for the future. These stories enable the editor to find out what the farmers are talking about, to get their views on many questions of the day, and give material for the writing of helpful editorials. Often farmers, the farm bureau, or a photographer has pictures of farm buildings for use in illustrating such stories.

"The editor of the Plaindealer gives the feature story credit for increasing the circulation of the paper more than two hundred net since October, 1923. The feature story has enabled the paper to increase its advertising rate 5 cents an inch and at the same time keep the good will of the merchants. The features give distinction to the paper and make it a more welcome visitor every week in the homes of its subscribers."

The Mail-Order House Ad

Among Ourselves has more than once had something to say about writing newspaper ads after the manner of mail-order house ads. L. J. Jellison of the Dubuque Times-Journal advocates the same thing. In a recent issue of Editor & Publisher, he says:

Mail-order houses continue to get a growing amount of business from the rural population. . . . They do this because their advertising tells the farmer exactly what he wishes to know about the merchandise he can use. . . . This proved a good tip to an Iowa paper.

Here's a Hot One

The Kiron News, of Iowa, according to the Publisher's Review, put on a coffee afternoon one Saturday. About 150 partook of the coffee and cookies offered by the news. The publisher "set 'em up" just for the sake of creating good will, and he says the plan worked entirely to his satisfaction.

HIGH LIGHTS OF EDITORS' COURSE

The special features of the Editors' Short Course at University Farm, May 8-10 are listed below. The sessions will begin Thursday, May 8, at 2:30 and close Saturday, May 10, at 11:45. Every feature of the program will be worth while. Here is the list of speakers and features.

SPEAKERS

Norman T. A. Munder, Baltimore, Maryland, one of America's best printers.



J. W. Fisk, merchandising counsel, Milwaukee Journal.

L. D. Coffman, president, University of Minnesota.

Justin Miller, Law School, University of Minnesota.

Louis Burgess, Minneapolis Tribune. Rudolph Lee, Long Prairie Leader.

H. G. Myser, Frizzell Advertising Agency, St. Paul.

J. L. O'Hara, School of Business, University of Minnesota.

Gustav A. Lundquist Department of Sociology, University of Minnesota.

W. S. Cooper, Department of Botany, University of Minnesota.

M. W. DePuy, manager, Printing Department, University of Minnesota.

Dr. Raphael Zon, Head of the Lake States Forest Experiment Station.

FEATURES

Visit to the University's new printing plant; supper and smoker, Minnesota Union, Main Campus, University of Minnesota, with music, an illustrated trip to Alaska, and a discussion of American forestry problems.

Annual dinner, Dining Hall, University Farm, St. Paul; printers supply men of Minneapolis and St. Paul, hosts; addresses by Mr. Munder and President Coffman, and selections from that old favorite among operas, "Pirates of Penzance," by university "talent."

Awarding of prizes in editorial column contest for best statement of reasons for maintaining a department

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EDITORS IN SEVENTH HOLD NOVEL SESSION

A novel editorial conference was that held by about a score of editors of the Seventh District Editorial association at Benson, Minnesota, April 11. It was such a conference as the editorial and business staffs of a big daily might hold for the discussion of pressing problems. There were no set speeches or formal addresses; merely friendly discussions.

Theodore Christianson of the Dawson Sentinel, president of the association, was in the chair. At the outset, M. J. McGowan of the Appleton Press, secretary, outlined in detail the plan to test the services of a field secretary, as announced in the April number of Among Ourselves. W. P. Kirkwood of the University Department of Agriculture, who will co-operate in the test, supplemented Mr. McGowan's remarks with some suggestions as to the assistance which a field secretary might give. One suggestion which met with special favor was that of giving in different communities illustrated talks on effective advertising for the benefit of local merchants. E. J. Bahe of the Hallock Record said that one of the great needs among local merchants was a better knowledge of what constitutes effective advertising, and he believed that illustrated talks by an outsider, representing such an institution as the university, would be of great educational value.

Monthly Sales Days

The value of monthly sales days to the weekly newspaper as well as to the entire business community was questioned, and the methods of advertising sales for such days were placed under review. The publication of a special advertising sheet for such sales days was reported to be working satisfactorily in some communities but not in others. E. E. Barsness of the Pope County Tribune, Glenwood, said that the Glenwood sales day advertising sheet had not proved a success. As a result, the business men and the two Glenwood publishers got together and arrangements were made by which the advertisements were placed in the regular issues of the two papers, the merchants making yearly contracts for such ads, and the papers being sent only to bona fide subscribers. The results of this system, Mr. Barsness said, had proved very satisfactory.

A somewhat similar plan was reported for Willmar, though Willmar was not represented among the editors present. In Willmar the advertisers are also signed up for yearly contracts. C. R. C. Baker, the manager of the Republican Press of Willmar, once a month assembles ads for a special edition to be sent to a merchants' mailing list.

In the course of the discussion it was reported that monthly sales days had

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AMONG OURSELVES

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MISUNDERSTOOD

The announcement in the March issue of *Among Ourselves*, to the effect that the editor was to aid the officers of the Minnesota Editorial association in trying out the field-secretaryship plan, giving a small part of his time from his present duties to such work, has been misunderstood.

The editor of *Among Ourselves* does not become field secretary of the state association; he merely undertakes to aid the officers of the state association in an effort to find out some of the things which a field secretary could do for the editors of Minnesota. In other words, he intends to do some experimenting only, with the aid of the officers of the association and editors who are willing to co-operate.

SPECIALIZE

For nearly ten years the editor of *Among Ourselves* has been preaching to young men and young women the advisability of specializing if they are going to enter the profession of journalism. He, therefore, derives much satisfaction from the fact that a publication of such importance in the field of journalism as *Editor & Publisher* is now advocating, both editorially and by special article, the wisdom of specializing. Extracts from an editorial in the April 12 number of *Editor & Publisher* will be found elsewhere in this issue of *Among Ourselves*. They are printed here because they contain sound suggestions, which need to be given wide publicity.

HOW MANY READERS HAVE YOU?

Probably every country weekly publisher in Minnesota has been asked the question, "How many readers has your paper?" In answer, probably every editor who is asked this question thinks of his mailing list, multiplies by five, and takes it for granted that he has made a fairly close approximation.

Ludwig I. Roe of the *Montevideo News*, in a private conversation with some seventh district editors at Benson, recently expressed the opinion that the multiple five was not large enough.

Wouldn't it be interesting to find out just how many readers a paper has? To get the answer to this question ought not to be difficult. This might be obtained possibly by publishing a request that subscribers report how many persons read their copies. Some inducement might be made to encourage the making of such reports, possibly in the form of a prize to the subscriber submitting proof of the largest number of

regular readers. If such a plan proved ineffective a questionnaire could be sent to a representative list of subscribers enclosing a return postcard. Again, a good deal of valuable information could be obtained through personal inquiry.

Among Ourselves would be glad to have the results of such inquiries. The information could be made of real value to Minnesota publishers.

WHERE TO GET APPRENTICES

Among the most serious problems confronting the American printing industry is that of the training of apprentices says the *Printers' Album*, published by the Challenge Machinery Company, Grand Haven, Michigan. The *Album* has misstated the problem. The problem is where to get apprentices to train.

The editor of *Among Ourselves* believes that there would be no serious lack of apprentices if publishers were filled with a genuine enthusiasm for their business—if they actually felt something of a thrill of pride when they spoke of, or heard someone else speak of, "the art preservative of all arts." Enthusiasm of that kind is contagious. A publisher who has it cannot help passing it along, and there are not very many bright boys who would be immune from the contagion.

Every publisher ought to have in his library some fine specimens of printing as the art preservative. To these he could go from time to time when his business seemed to pall upon him—just as any business does—in order to be reinfected. The publisher who has enthusiasm and keeps it alive and active will make an effort to interest and draw young men or young women to his art. Without such effort few are going to be interested, and apprentices will be lacking. With such effort, however, the number of apprentices should increase.

One reason why the university has arranged to bring Norman T. A. Munder from Baltimore to address the editors attending the *Editors' Short Course*, May 8-10, is that Mr. Munder is a "complete enthusiast" when it comes to printing.

ADS PLUS SALESMANSHIP

Good advertising—no matter how good—will not do the whole job of selling. Good salesmanship must back good advertising. An ad may bring a customer, or a lot of potential customers, to a merchant's place of business, but if his salesmen don't know their business they won't sell by any means as much as the ad has prepared the way for.

Every clerk in a store ought to know about every ad published by his employer. We know of one merchant who gets advance proofs of his ads and places them in the hands of his clerks, and then sees that they know all about the things advertised. The idea is worth a thorough try-out.

There is no doubt about the printer's needing education in salesmanship, but where he needs it most is not in how to get more customers and more jobs, but in how to get more profit out of the same jobs he is now doing.—Carl A. Jettinger in *The Inland Printer*.

GETTING BUSINESS

We have been saying something about direct-by-mail advertising as a good thing for the local merchant. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. If direct-by-mail advertising is a good thing for the local merchant, it ought to be a good thing for the local printer. In other words, the local print shop ought to be able to increase its business through the use of direct-by-mail advertising if the local merchant can increase his business by the use of the same medium.

All right, then, why not go after the local merchant's printing business with direct-by-mail advertising of the printing service you have to offer?

We are moved to this suggestion by an article by Edwin H. Stuart in the April number of *The Inland Printer*. Mr. Stuart says that in March 1920 he organized a typographic service, occupying a floor space six feet wide and eighteen feet long, and employing in addition to himself only an errand boy. Today his enterprise occupies three thousand feet of floor space and employs twenty-two persons. Direct-by-mail advertising did it.

It may be trite to say it, but "a constant dropping wears away stone." *Among Ourselves* believes that if a country publisher would try to build up his job-printing business by frequent presentations of his service in effective form to the merchants and others of his territory it would not be long before he would begin to see results.

The first thing is to equip one's place to give high-level service, and the next is to convince one's potential market that the service is worthy of its attention. To do this second thing, there is no more helpful agency than frequent direct-by-mail advertising which in its attractive qualities is proof of the worth of the medium. If you can't do this kind of thing for yourself, can you do it for others?

One of the best ways to develop direct-by-mail advertising among your possible clients is to show your faith in it.

STUDENTS LOOKING FOR PLACES

Among Ourselves for April 1 announced the fact that a student of some experience in newspaper work was looking for a summer position with some live Minnesota newspaper. Services of the young man in question are still available, also those of another young man looking for a permanent place. The latter has had the advantages of training in the University Department of Agriculture, and of some experience in writing for the *Minnesota Daily* and the *Twin City newspapers*. Both of these young men are capable and should give good service.

DID YOU EVER THINK?

With costs remaining the same, the printer who would increase his yearly sales by 5 per cent because of having raised his prices 5 per cent on the average, would probably show as much gain in profits as the one who had increased his sales 50 per cent by getting more orders at the old price.

**TIME FOR N. E. A.
MEETING IS NEAR**

Interest in the annual meeting of the National Editorial association increases as the time for the meeting approaches, according to H. C. Hotaling of The Blue Earth County Enterprise, executive secretary of the association.

Announcement of the various features include a wild west show at 101 ranch near Ponca City, preceding by a few days the formal opening of the convention at Oklahoma City, May 22; a visit to the University of Oklahoma at Norman, a visit to the Publishers' Club at Medicine Park, a visit to Fort Sill, the nation's heavy artillery center, where a big sham battle will be staged, and then the flight into Mexico. All are stirring up interest among editors and their families.

Interest is also increasing in the various contests connected with the meeting. Among the valued prizes to be given will be the president's cup, the gift of Wallace Odell for the best editorial page; the American Printer's cup, the gift of past President John Clyde Oswald for the best first-page make-up, and the Editor and Publisher cup, the gift of John Wright Brown for the best community service rendered by a weekly newspaper. It is felt that awards of prizes like these are centering attention on newspaper standards and helping to advance them.

Persons in the Minnesota party will leave St. Paul the night of May 16 by way of the Chicago Great Western. They will join representatives from other states in Kansas City, Sunday, May 18, and will there be guests at a dinner at the Meulbach Hotel. Sunday night at 10:30 they will leave for Oklahoma.

**SPECIALIZE! "NEW"
IDEA IN JOURNALISM**

Specialization in journalism is being urged by Editor & Publisher. In the April 12 number of that publication appears an article on W. T. Ellis, a newspaper man who specialized in the field of religious subjects and made a success of it; also an editorial advocating specialization.

The editorial referred to suggests that specialization on the part of staff members would be a good thing for newspapers, because it would serve to remove criticism of superficiality. On the other hand it would be a good thing for members of the staff because it would give greater security in their positions and more joy in their work. Here is what the editorial says, in part:

The day will come when a city editor, employing a new man will ask: "What is your specialty? We need a man who can write intelligently and authoritatively on agriculture, or religion, or transportation, or specified industry, or aesthetics; you will have general assignments, but we shall expect you to develop your specialty in our columns."

If every general-minded man employed on every newspaper in this country would start today to take on a specialty as his own, passionately cultivate it as a study, and when ripe pour it out in the columns of his

newspaper, he would find his situation in life not only more secure but vastly brightened.

This is sound. It applies to men in the city field, chiefly, but it will apply more and more in the country field as country newspapers develop their fields and establish themselves on a footing which will permit the employment of specialists, as in the field of agriculture. Indeed, country journalism in itself is specialty, and treated as such should offer inducements to the man considering the profession of journalism.

But the sound thing to do is to specialize; make an intimate and intensive study of some subject of importance to men and then learn to write about it in terms that the average man on the street or in the field can understand.

**HITS AND MISSES OF
THE COUNTRY PRESS**

In an article on "The Changing Country Press" in Scribner's Magazine for April, Charles Moreau Harger of the Abilene (Kans.) Reflector gives country editors things to think about. He says some things that are soothing to the country editorial mind, but he says others that are not so soothing. Here are two extracts offered by way of contrast:

To the family in the country town or on the farmstead the weekly visit of the village paper is an event; in the city home, the coming of the damp sheet is an incident.

* * * * *

Whether or not he realizes it, the influence of the local editor's utterances are measured largely by the success with which he conducts his own business. He can with poor grace point out financial paths when he is a living example of inefficiency.

One of the changes to which Mr. Harger points is indicated in this, which, by the way, some editors still need to take to heart:

The modern country editor does not take merchandise from the dry-goods merchant or the shoemaker in exchange for advertising; he does not receive potatoes and sausage on subscription. If his paper is anything more than a patent medicine repository, he does business on a business basis, with a cost-accounting system that enables him to receive for his services a legitimate and living wage.

On the other hand, Mr. Harger sees, or thinks he sees, a growing indifference to the place of the editorial column in the country weekly. He asks the question: "Is definite political leadership in the country paper effective?" He seems disposed to answer this in the negative. He holds that the country editor in his column of editorial opinion is inclined to deal with matters too trivial, and implies that on this account the country editor is losing ground which is being occupied by farm journals. Among Ourselves is inclined to believe that this does not apply, in a large way at least, to the country press of Minnesota, though it may apply in some quarters. But Mr. Harger's contention is right, the country press ought to deal intelligently with public problems—both local and national. To do so—to make one's readers think—

is not only to gain and hold readers but it is to establish one's influence and hold one's place with the local retail merchants.

A paper which does the kind of thing just indicated, in Mr. Harger's opinion, has weight beyond the confines of its immediate territory. It is this kind of paper Mr. Harger has in mind, doubtless, when he says:

The country paper that prints a well digested, timely editorial, discussing earnestly public matters, secures a reaction. The congressman reads it and "sits up and takes notice." The publicity departments of the corporations and utilities gather from it what the people are thinking. A half-dozen editorials from country papers in a state will have more effect than all the heavy utterances of a city journal.

The country paper today is seldom the "organ" of any institution or faction.

Mr. Harger closes with this:

The period of readjustment through which the rural press is passing will in the end make it more powerful than ever in its history.

That is comforting, but it should be a spur to greater effort; not a soporific. The achievement of a place of power is to be gained, not by complacency but by zealous effort.

HELPFUL HINTS

The farm and the community club have become established institutions in Minnesota. Many of these clubs have done things worth while. Why not a series of historical sketches of such clubs in your territory?

How is the hair-bobbing industry getting on in your town? It is "going strong" in the Twin Cities. As it means something of a revolution in what used to be called "the customs and manners" of the people, its local development ought to be worth a story.

This is the time of year for a "clean-up" story, not only to get individuals to clean up but to get the town council to lend a hand.

No Magic in It

Advertising isn't magic. There is no element of the black art about it. In its best and highest form it is plain talk, sane talk, selling talk.

Its results are in proportion to the merit of the subject advertised and the ability with which the advertising is done.

—Herbert Kaufman.

Of Course He Did

The Country Publisher recently heard of a printer who made \$600 last year by mailing direct advertising for business men. Of course his profits did not stop at the mailing alone, as it involved many orders for printing as well.

C. O. Nelson of the Bowlus Advance is a candidate for judge of probate in Morrison county.

The name of the Herald at Detroit has been changed to News-Tribune by Nels Jahren who recently purchased the plant.

GETTING BUSINESS IN A TOWN OF 200

A jump from a business of \$1,700 to a business of \$6,000 a year "right off the bat" is a considerable jump for a publisher in a town of 200 to make. C. H. Willson of the Alden Advance, Alden, Minnesota, near Albert Lea, reports just such a gain.

Mr. Willson says that he took the Advance September 1, 1919. Before that time it had never done a business of more than \$1,700. Now it is doing an average business of \$6,000 a year. His subscription list is double that of the Advance when he became proprietor and, true to the name of the paper, is paid in advance.

Mr. Willson reports that the bulk of his advertising as well as of his job-printing comes from Albert Lea. His assistants in the office are Mrs. Willson and a young man who finished a four-year course in the Alden high school in 1920. Since taking over the paper Mr. Willson has installed a linotype, a jobber, and more recently a Whitlock four-page press. He is planning the purchase of additional equipment.

He believes firmly that a man can make profitable a paper published in a village of 200 near a much larger center.

SUGGESTION WITH REAL VALUE IN IT

Whenever possible encourage merchants to advertise nationally advertised goods. You will find this policy very helpful in making merchants' announcements productive. To be sure of getting the best results go to the post office in your territory and find out just what publications are being read by the people you serve. In some districts farm papers have the largest circulation. Where this obtains make a list of them and of the advertising they carry. Go to the dealers handling those lines with good copy in which the different nationally advertised lines they carry are featured, or better still, set up and take proofs of good ads to submit to them—and do not forget to make your rate cover this service. It is a real service to the retailer and he does not expect you to work for nothing, even though he may try to leave you with the impression that your price is too high. He is human and wants to buy for as little as possible, but he is business man enough to know that it costs money to give good service, and he is quite prepared to pay, once he becomes convinced of your sincerity.—The Country Publisher.

The Headlight Herald of Tracy shines brighter and brighter as the years pass. It recently started Volume 43. Another good type of newspaper, the Shakopee Tribune has entered upon its 29th year.

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of editorial opinion in the country weekly, and in front page make-up contest. (Editorial column contest closes May 1, front page make-up contest closes May 5.

This short course promises to be one of the most profitable yet offered by the university.

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proved successful in certain of the towns which had adopted the plan, whereas in others it had been distinctly detrimental to the regular methods of merchandising and to the development of a stable advertising business.

Credit Ads Prove Popular

J. C. McGowan of the Swift County Monitor, Benson, reported that the publication of credit ads had won favor among the merchants of Benson. By credit ads Mr. McGowan meant statements in display, advertising the prompt payment of bills to merchants. He said that little difficulty was experienced in placing orders for merchants' advertisements along with such credit ads. The country merchant, said J. C. Morrison of the Morris Tribune, is tremendously interested in the subject of credit, and is ready to lend a hand in any movement which gives promise of the more prompt payment of bills.

Free Movie Days

Mr. Bahe of Hancock reported with a good deal of enthusiasm on Hancock's "free movie day." He said the merchants and others had tried out the project through the winter with great success, once a week giving a movie free not only for the country people, but for the town people—as many as cared to come. While the free movie drew many to town and no doubt stimulated trade, the prime object, said Mr. Bahe, was not commercial but social. It was intended as a means of bringing the people of the town and country together to get acquainted and to create good will. The cost was about \$25 a week. Of course, the man in charge of the movie theater co-operated in the plan. Each merchant or citizen interested contributed a dollar a week to provide for expenses.

Danger in Drawings

The danger to newspapers of losing their second-class postal privileges through mention of drawings of any kind in connection with community sales days was pointed out. One editor reported that drawings of Holstein calves on the monthly sales day in his community had been a regular feature. He was warned that the mention of such drawings was looked upon with suspicion by federal agents and might lead to serious trouble.

Several other suggestions were discussed. The editors agreed that the meeting had been a great success and voted to hold one or more such meetings every year, in addition to the annual winter meeting and the summer outing.

Commencement Day Near

The days of high school commencements are almost here. Dad and mother are trying to think what to give son or daughter for a commencement present. The editor ought to list a lot of things which would be suitable for such gifts, and then go after the merchants who deal in the articles listed for advertising.

"There is nothing like helping a person to solve a buying problem, as a means of getting him to buy from you." Tell that to your merchants.

R. P. Barbour of Gaylord has purchased the Morton Enterprise. Homer B. Anson, the retiring editor, will edit the Kerkhoven Banner.

PI A LA MODE

It is said that if congress approves the proposed \$150,000,000 increase of postal employees' pay, second class rates will have to go up along with rates for third and fourth class matter.

Walter Grinols has quit the newspaper field as city editor of the Hibbing News for the automobile business.

G. S. Allen, editor and publisher of the Spring Grove Herald, will have to add to his salary or dividends. He was married recently to Miss Nancy Newhouse, and despite contrary opinions two can not live on as little as one.

Norman J. Radder, formerly of the journalism department of the University of Minnesota, now in the journalism department of Indiana university, is the author of "Newspaper Make-up and Headlines" published by the McGraw-Hill Book company.

Milwaukee is advertising extensively a big graphic arts exhibit to be held August 18-23. Advanced reports say that the Milwaukee Club of Printing House Craftsmen will succeed in presenting every possible detail of the great printing and publishing business.

A. T. Archer of the Kerkhoven Banner was in the twin cities recently to make a deal with the C. I. Johnson Manufacturing company for the installation of a modern newspaper press and folder in the Banner office. New material is needed to keep up with the requirements of business, says the editor. The Banner is a fine country newspaper and should now be better than ever.

McKinley Grimes, son of M. W. Grimes, who died recently, will continue to publish the paper which his father edited so long and so successfully.

Another change has been made in the personnel of the Mower County News, F. R. Preston, manager for the last two years, having sold his interest to A. R. Buckingham, the editor. The latter will conduct the paper in co-operation with Herman Roe, publisher of the Northfield News.

E. W. Nobbs, whose health has been undermined by too much indoor employment, has leased his paper, the Bellingham Times, to C. H. De France. Mr. Nobbs plans to search for better health in California.

Showers for Brides

May is the month of showers—for June brides.

What's the "Big idea?"

Simple this, that the month of showers for June brides ought to open up certain lines of advertising; advertising of the kind of things that are showered on the prospective brides.

Editorials as Crane Sees 'Em

Dr. Frank Crane, known and read of all men—or, at least, of many,—in Editor & Publisher of March 22 gives four rules for writing editorials. They are, in condensed form:

Make 'em reasonably short.

Print 'em in attractive form.

Break 'em up into short paragraphs.

Write 'em in the language of the people.