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SILENT WORKER

"The foundation of every State is the education of its youth."—Dionysius.

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THE DEAF IN BUSINESS—Oscar H. Regensburg, Printer.



PART OF MAIN OFFICE.



CORNER OF PRIVATE OFFICE.

Engraved in the office of the *Silent Worker*.

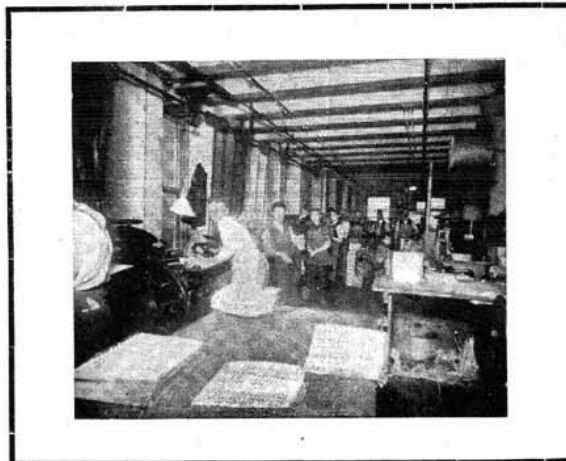


ONE of the central figures in that galaxy of deaf men who represent Chicago, is Oscar H. Regensburg, or "Reggy" as he is familiarly known there. He came into national prominence through his press contributions several years ago under the *nom de plume* of "Rasco," and later, as publisher of the *National Exponent*, and his rise in the business world has placed him in the front ranks of the successful deaf.

Owing to his connection with newspaper work and the fact that he is a frequent attendant at conventions, he is probably better known and has a wider personal acquaintance among the deaf at large, than any of them. "Did you meet 'Reggy'?" is asked of every one returned from Chicago, and not to have met him was to have seen "Hamlet with Hamlet left out." It is to "Reggy" that the stranger addresses inquiries or writes for information. It is "Reggy's" office that is made the rendezvous of all deaf visitors to the city and, in fact, "Reggy" has come to be a quasi-consul, to whom deaf travellers instinctively turn when they land in the western metropolis and get lost in the whirl of Chicago hustle.

For the past twelve years, Mr. Regensburg has been closely identified with the club, social and literary life of the Chicago deaf. He is a charter

member of the Pas-a-Pas club, was at one time its president, and is now serving his fifth term as its secretary. And the club probably owes more

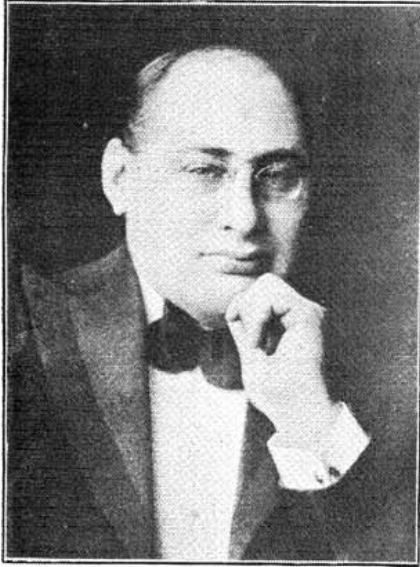


PART OF PRESS ROOM.

to him than to any other single individual for its coherent strength and for its national prominence in the deaf world.

He is also president of the Literary Circle which he helped to found. He was a member of the local committee of the World's Congress Auxiliary of the deaf in 1893 and chairman of the committee on entertainments. He was largely instrumental in bringing about reforms in the Chicago day schools and was selected at a mass meeting of the deaf, as one of a committee of two to lobby at Springfield against certain bills in the Illinois Legislature obnoxious to them. He has carried thru many local affairs with uniform success, and has labored unselfishly and unremittingly in the interests of his fellow deaf. Being thoroughly democratic in his associations, he is popular with all classes. But it is chiefly Mr. Regensburg's success in the business world that gives him greater claim to distinction, and the degree of this success should be cause for pride among the deaf and to others who are interested in their welfare. It is the more remarkable and creditable because it has been due entirely to his own efforts and without pecuniary or other assistance from his father or relatives.

After his graduation from College in 1890 Mr. Regensburg entered his father's wholesale grocery establishment as bookkeeper and rose to have entire charge of the credit department. In the meantime, he helped found the *National Exponent*, which he subsequently bought out and conducted successfully for three years. In this way



MR. OSCAR H. REGENSBURG.

his attention was turned to printing as a business and he resolved to quit book-keeping, which was little to his taste, and start out on his own hook. In spite of his father's advice to the contrary and the latter's prediction that he would soon be playing the role of "the prodigal son," he went ahead. That was seven years ago.

His capital consisted of 58 cents in cash, one second hand foot press, valued at \$15, a good education and the business instinct of his Hebrew ancestry. To these he also added "strenuousness." His office rental was \$5.00 per month. His knowledge of printing was gained thru a short, desultory apprenticeship at the school in Jacksonville, and subsequently during his experience with the *Exponent*. Thus equipped young Regensburg launched his enterprise amidst the thousands of similar competitive establishments in a city of over a million inhabitants.

The first few years were years of struggle and hard work, when fortune and success seemed far off, but pride and the dread of that "I told you so," of his father, determined him to persevere and to frequently go dinnerless rather than seek the aid he might easily have obtained from members of his family. After a while fortune relented and began to smile upon the persevering young man. He took a hearing partner and the facilities of the office were considerably increased. The partnership continued for four years, and was then dissolved, his hearing associate desiring to engage in other business offering better inducements. So much had the business grown in these years that Regensburg paid the retiring member for his half interest, just five times what the latter had originally put into it. Thereafter and until last November, Mr. Regensburg "went it alone," and then took as partner the young man who had been his book-keeper, and later the "outside man." The firm name is now "Regensburg and Hamburger." The business in its development outgrew several successive quarters and last January 1st the new firm rented the entire second floor of the Enterprise building at 79-81 Fifth avenue for which they pay an annual rental of \$7,000.

To give some idea of the growth and present size of the business, it is only necessary to give some notion of the office equipment and what the firm is now doing. The employees number ten the year round and occasional extra help is called in. They have a Campbell cylinder press, a special size Universal and six Gordon and Jobbers, and two cutters. In type there are fourteen double stands and four cabinets containing 215 cases of job and 25 cases of newspaper type—in all nearly 1000 fonts.

They do the work now for Marshall Field & Co., the Hide and Leather Trust, several banking companies and corporations and many leading wholesale houses.

Their speciality is commercial printing but they also do embossing, high grade label work, and three color printing besides catalogue work and society engraving, and die-stamping. In fact, their establishment is considered one of the best equipped and model plants of its size in Chicago.

The firm also does a mail order business and as a side line controls the American rights of the "Hamberger Automatic Gaslighter Company," whose factory and head offices are in Germany.

As showing the quality of work done by the firm it may be interesting to mention the verdict of *The Printer and Bookman* of New York. An anonymous correspondent (unknown to Mr. Regensburg) submitted two specimens of advertisement printing to that journal and asked it to say which was the better trade winner. One of the specimens was from the Campbell Company of New York, and the other was a monthly calendar blotter designed and printed by the Regensburg firm. The decision was to settle a bet between the correspondent and some one else and was given in favor of the Regensburg blotter.

Mr. Regensburg was three years old when Mrs. Leary's cow kicked over the historic lamp and set Chicago on fire. His father was burned out of home and business and while the ashes were cooling, his family camped out on the prairies. His father came back and once more embarked in the grocery business which he has conducted for forty-eight years.

In a few years, Oscar was sent to the public school. Among his neighbors and play-fellows was a deaf boy and one of the pastimes of Oscar and his companions was teasing and making fun of this luckless lad. But one day young Regensburg had a fall against a curb-stone while playing leap-frog, which brought on spinal-meningitis and master Oscar pulled through an almost fatal illness to find himself deaf at the age of 13 years, and with a weakened constitution. A year or so later, after a trip to Europe and other vain attempts to restore his hearing, he was sent to the school at Jacksonville and found himself in the same boat with his former play-fellow. He spent only two years there, graduating as valedictorian in 1885. He then took a course at Gallaudet College. Here the regular habits enforced by the college rules, the gymnastic and athletic training, and (not the least) "college grub" changed him from a sickly youth into a robust athlete and laid the foundation for the avoirdupois he has since built up.

He was one of the founders of the Saturday Night Dramatic Club and was a leading spirit among the undergraduates. He played on the foot-ball team and proved his literary ability by graduating as valedictorian, with the degree of B. A. In 1899 he took his Master's degree, the subject of his thesis on this occasion being, "Art in Business."

Mr. Regensburg has been shown more than local recognition by his fellow deaf. He is secretary of the Illinois Gallaudet Union, Treasurer of the Gallaudet College Alumni Association, member of the executive committee of the National Association of the Deaf, and is in each case serving his second term. He is also secretary of the National Association, president of the Chicago Chapter of the Gallaudet College Alumni, and in 1888 was sent as one of the delegates of the Illinois Association to represent it at Paris.

Mr. Regensburg has not confined his affiliations with societies of the deaf, though he naturally prefers to associate with those of his own class. He was a member of the Phoenix Club during its existence and also of the Chicago Press Club. In the latter case he was proposed for membership by Opie Read and Stanley Waterloo. At present he belongs to the "Young Men's Hebrew Association."

Mr. Regensburg is a good natured, whole souled fellow, generous to his friends and one who enjoys a joke even on himself, and many are the tales told at his expense while at college and

since. But after smiling at the pranks his friends occasionally have played on him, we turn to his serious side and instantly recognize that there is sterling worth, and a depth of feeling and sentiment underlying his outward appearance of carelessness. He is a man of broad views, fertile resources, and executive ability. He is the motive force and not merely the nominal head of the business firm. He is quick to seize any opportunity to extend his business and gathers in all orders that come within hailing distance.

He is fond of driving and horseback riding and in the summer plays tennis when he can spare Saturday afternoon from his work. The late craze for bowling has also attacked him to some extent but he modestly (or discreetly) declines to say what his usual score is.

He reads considerable of current literature and is well informed on both political and business matters. While he would probably not admit that he had done anything worth mentioning, it is known among his intimate friends that his private charities are considerable and the Ladies' Aid Society of Chicago is indebted to him for substantial assistance.

He talks with ease and is a fairly good lip-reader, making his way readily in all ordinary intercourse without recourse to tablet and pencil. He goes much into society of both the deaf and hearing.

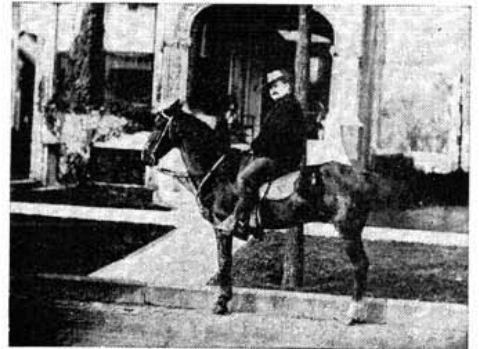
Mr. Regensburg is still unmarried, for, as he says, he is "wedded to his business." But as he has not yet reached his 35th milestone, there is still hope for him, as well as for marriageable maidens who have an ambition to be the wife of a successful and well-to-do business man with unlimited prospects for increasing his bank account.

J. S. L.

AN EMBARRASSING EPISODE.

We heard a good story recently about a young man, a teacher of the deaf, who accompanied a deaf friend to hear a noted lecturer. The two secured seats toward the front in the center of the auditorium and directly in front of the speaker, who is one of the foremost platform orators of the day. All went well as the young man was interpreting to his companion and both were enjoying the lecture with such keen interest that they failed to notice that the speaker was very much bothered from some cause or other. Finally he stopped short in the midst of a glowing burst of eloquence and looking at the two said, in great anger: "Young man, you will either stop that or leave the house at once." The young man, much embarrassed, stopped interpreting and his companion had to sit the lecture out content with what his eyes could see. The next morning the matter was explained to the lecturer who said he had no idea but that the young man was mimicking him.—*New Era*.

Lag not now, though rough the way,
Fortune's mood brooks no delay;
Grasp the boon that's spread before ye,
Monarch's power, and conqueror's glory!
—*Bridal of Trieman*.



MR. REGENSBURG'S FAVORITE EXERCISE.