

Illustrated Subscription Works:

—BY—
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FORDS, HOWARD, & HULBERT,
PUBLISHERS,

SUBSCRIPTION DEPARTMENT,

No. 30 LAFAYETTE PLACE (BELOW ASTOR LIBRARY),

New York, April 21, 1892

Dictated.

Hon. A. W. Tourgee,

Dear Judge:-

We have got out the "Eastman" in paper covers and are already running against the obstacle which we are beginning to believe is the reason why we have never made paper books go, and that is; - that, in the first place, instead of printing a special edition for paper covers, on cheaper paper, we have been binding up the sheets of the book printed for cloth covers; and in the second place, the same proportion of royalty put on paper as on cloth handicaps it so that we are unable to give the large discounts that are absolutely necessary. For instance, yesterday we had a visit from an enterprising California firm who were willing to take our series of paper books and drive them, provided we would give them a discount of 60%, covering their freight and such charges, and leaving them some margin of profit after they had "jobbed" the books out. We can do it on all the books except "Eastman", but that has a very large number of pages, is printed on good paper, and has an unusually high copyright; so that we cannot do better by them on that than we do by other people, and give them 50% discount. Moreover, the high cost of these books prevents our being willing to take the risk of sending them out on sale, left-over copies

being returnable; because when returned they are usually good for nothing, although some of them can be recovered, trimmed down and sent out again.

Now on your \$1.50 book we get 81¢, but on the same book at 50¢ we get only 25¢, and if we should attempt to give this man 60% off, that would bring our net returns from it down to 20¢; and the book actually costs for manufacture and copyright 21¢, so that the more we sold the worse off we should be. Naturally we cannot do anything on that line. We should like to submit to your judgment a proposition to take 5% upon the retail price of what we sell in paper, - that is to say, specifically, 2 1-2¢ royalty per copy sold. This will give us margin to do something in the way of pushing the book and enabling other people to push it, which now, as you see, is utterly lacking. It will give the book by just so much the better circulation, advertising the cloth copy and your other books, and -- but your own knowledge of books and book selling will suggest as many arguments as we could bring to bear. You know just as much about it as we do.

We shall send this to Mayville with the understanding that it will be forwarded to you at your present address, wherever that may have temporarily landed you, but should be glad to know as early as may be, your decision. We hope you are having a restful and helpful time, and that change of scene and of interest will bring, to you all, refreshment of body and strength of spirit.

Faithfully yours,

Wm. Howard Ballou