

gards discount, and we have books—those so far authorized—that have come to stay. We are assured, too, that no petty changes will be made in the future.

How different this is to what it was! Order has come out of chaos. The dealer knows just what to buy; he can lay in a stock without fear of loss, and knows, too, that he must get the full price if he is going to make money. For this state of affairs we recognize the fact that they are due to the Minister of Education who through the Association and its official organ gives the trade of Ontario the information needed, and a uniform standard of books that is, at least from a trade standpoint, for with that only we have to do, quite satisfactory.

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WORKING FOR NOTHING.

"I VILL sell you mine goods very sheap, so sheap as nothings you ever bought before;" then, with a rasping whisper in the ear, "I buys 'em but don't pay for 'em, you gets 'em dirt sheap."

Second hand clothing is not the only commodity that is sold at a sacrifice, though, in truth, the dirty Queen street dealer gets his full 200 per cent. profit, but the mania has got hold of many a stationer for selling goods very, very cheap. He has not the same good reason as the old clothes man, for he has to pay a dollar for a dollar's worth of goods. The cutter and slasher in stationery gives away his profit, seemingly doing business for the glory of it, and for the sake of doing a larger trade than his neighbour. This is notable in different lines, none more so, however, than in envelopes and note paper.

Take cities like Montreal and Toronto, and the great bulk of such articles sold should be of the finer quality. Some dealers, in fact, have been educating up their customers to buy better goods, but the man who does this has the mortification of knowing that another is doing all he can to counteract his efforts.

We are satisfied, and some wholesale dealers frankly admit, that they are the cause of close shaving in prices. They set the example. Is it any wonder that the retailer, if he has not had great experience, follows the lead?

We heard a little while ago of a house, in a desperate strait to do business, offering paper at a price hitherto unknown for cheapness.

It was poor stuff, but of course some dealers would buy, and to have "a leader," as the wholesaler had, would put the price at such a margin as would leave practically no profit, but would enable him to boast he sold the cheapest paper in town. This is no imaginary sketch—it is only too true. As in this, so in many other things, and, when pay-day comes round, the dealer finds that, notwithstanding the fact that

he had done a large business, bills were very hard to meet.

A case in point is one that is a sore subject to many a newsdealer in this city.

In Toronto and other places the *Young Ladies' Journal* found a ready sale at 30 cents a copy. The profit, it is true, was large in proportion to other periodicals, but it was good value for the money.

How is it to-day? A drop of a cent a copy in the wholesale price tempted a dealer here and there to reduce the price to 25 cents, and the consequence is it is almost impossible for anyone to get more than that figure. A cent less is paid for the magazine, sold for 5 cents less. Was ever folly more glaring?

There is no doubt of it, unfortunately, that this throwing away of profit is almost, if not entirely, due to the reduction of the wholesale price.

A case of giving away profits was brought under our notice the other day. An office file that retails for \$2.25, was ordered, in a small quantity, from the manufacturer by a business man, not a stationer, in a town in the Eastern Townships. The files were billed at the regular price. By return mail the manufacturer got a letter protesting against the charge, as the local stationer had furnished the same article at \$1.75. The discount allowed the dealer was 25 per cent., so that he gave the customer 50 cents out of the 56½ cents profit, and allowed nothing for freight and other charges. Comment is unnecessary.

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DUTY ON BOOKS.

WITH the view of making literature as readily obtainable as possible, there was no duty charged on books imported that had been printed over seven years. Unprincipled men, taking advantage of the law, conceived the plan of having printed and inserted false title pages, dating the edition back prior to the seven years of limit. We believe but few acts of this kind took place: certainly the great bulk of books were honestly imported.

To punish the many for the offence of the few a duty of 15% has been put upon all books, no matter what the date of publication. Surely some other means could have been adopted to check the fraud. As it is it places the importer and seller of rare old books at a considerable disadvantage.

There are, we believe, but three dealers in Canada who import old books to any great extent, one in Montreal and two in Toronto, but these have been, as the wealth and taste of the people improve, greatly enlarging their business.

Rare books have not only been sold largely in Canada, but the market in the United States has been to some extent supported from this country.