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THE interdependence of the wholesale and retail trades is a patent and well-recognized fact. This interdependence has been regulated by a well-understood code of ethics which both wholesaler and retailer must carefully guard, and to which each must

conform his conduct. The wholesale merchant has a sphere into which the retailer must not intrude, and just as this is true, so is the the converse true. The retail merchant has certain rights which the wholesale merchant must recognize, or he will, by curtailing the chances for profit among the retailers, destroy the latter's power to carry on the retail business at all. At the present time there seems to have been a trespassing on this ethical code by both retailers and wholesalers in the book trade, resulting in a certain amount of friction, and a considerable loss of mutual confidence. In the last issue of BOOKS AND NOTIONS, some of the grievances of the retail trade were set forth. But the list was by no means exhausted, nor is this list a one-sided one.

One cause of numerous complaints on the part of retailers is the concessions to Sunday schools, of large discounts on libraries of miscellaneous books. The discount is not uniform among the wholesalers, and this is occasioned by their growing anxiety to secure as much as possible of this lucrative branch of the trade. There is a tacit understanding that a discount of 25 per cent. shall be given to Sunday school committees, who order direct from the wholesale houses. But some of the city houses in their anxiety for trade have gone further than this, and in a number of cases have offered a much larger discount. This might be excusable in a par-

ticular case where there has been very strong competition, but a larger discount than 25 per cent. is being regularly offered by some of these houses. This is entirely wrong. It is a wrong to other wholesale dealers, because it is placing the discount at a higher rate than can profitably be maintained, and it is a wrong to the retailer because he cannot be expected to carry a large stock of miscellaneous books for the sake of two or three large sales each year, when he has to give so ruinous a discount. The retailer is trying to make an honest living, and in order to carry on his business he must have a reasonable profit, and when the wholesaler steps in and advertises a huge discount for the sake of obtaining this trade which rightfully belongs to the wholesale merchant, the latter must necessarily succumb. Thus the wholesaler must be shortsighted who cannot see that by his own greed he is ruining his best customers.

Further, it may be reasonably asked, Why should Sunday schools procure a discount from the wholesale merchants at all? If they cannot procure the books from their retail merchant they will send to the city for them, and the wholesale merchant is creating no extra trade by his tempting offers. No wholesale hardware merchant would think of sending a stove to a Sunday school and allowing twenty-five per cent. discount, or a discount nearly equal to what he allows his regular customers. Nor does there seem any valid reason why the wholesale book merchant should do this. The twenty-five per cent. discount just means that much less profit to both the wholesale and the retail merchant on each and every sale either one of them makes. If the discount is to exist, there should be a uniform rate, certainly not greater than twenty-five per cent., but there seems to be no good reason why the discount should exist under any circumstances.

But the grievances are not all to be found on the side of the retailer. The wholesale merchants often find causes of complaint as to the conduct of the retail trade in business dealings. The retail merchant must remember to act well his part, to bear carefully in mind his duty with regard to the observance of the ethical code, if he wishes to receive favors from the wholesale trade. A certain book house in the city received a large order for a library from a purchasing committee in an Ontario town. The order and information concerning it were sent to the chief customer of the house in that particular town, to be used by him as he saw fit, and the committee was informed by the house that they did only a wholesale business and was referred to the merchant to whom the order was sent. The merchant secured the order and displayed his business magnanimity by transmitting the order to a different book house from the one which had tried to give him an opportunity for making a good sale. Another instance: A certain Toronto stationery house received an order from a business man in a small town for several thousand envelopes. The order was filled and shipped to the merchant, and he was told to pay a certain merchant in his town. The invoice, with the ordinary discount deducted, was sent by this house to their customer in the town, and he was informed of the order and the shipment, and allowed to collect the full price and secure a good profit on a sale in which he had taken no part. Presumably he did so, but he neglected to even thank the wholesale house for their kindness and fair dealing. Instances such as these show that some retailers have somewhat to learn in regard to just business treatment. Most wholesale houses are anxious to treat their customers fairly and to give them all the advantages which they can in regard to a profit on orders to which they are justly entitled.

The retailers have, to a considerable extent, the remedy in their own hands. They must be looking for business. The business man who folds his hands and waits for Fortune to pour her bounty from the capacious end of the horn into his lap, is going to find himself sadly in want before his business career is ended. The retailer must be ever on the alert for trade, and no order shoul-