

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CITY TRADE.

The coming convention of the teachers of the United States, which is to meet in this city early next month, is an opportunity that may be turned to very profitable account by the local book trade. There will be thousands of teachers in the city at that time, and as they will be delegates, or such others as are sufficiently interested to come so far from pure interest in educational matters, they may be considered the very cream of the teaching profession in the United States. Their numbers will be further swelled by teachers from all parts of Canada, as the meeting is of so exceptional importance that none zealous in the work of native education will miss the chance of attending it. The summer vacation will have opened before that time, so that every teacher who wishes may attend. It will be the greatest educational gathering that has so far ever assembled in Canada.

The fact that it is the live workers, not the drones, of the profession who will make up the convention, will make it all the more profitable to the retail traders. Not only will all the teachers be readers, but most of them will be interested students of our educational institutions, teaching methods, text-books, etc., and will have the curiosity of scientists in hunting up such information as they can get. They will want books, and will be apt to have a peculiar interest in buying books that are out of date. It is in these they will find material for studying the development and history of the teaching art in this country. Therefore, dealers should not keep their old, neglected books in the background. Bring them out and let the eyes of the casual shopper wander over them. The visitors are mainly outsiders, we must remember, and their interest in such books is not ruled by the present demand for the books. There will be an immense demand also for books that are at present in use in the schools. Teachers from Canadian provinces east and west of Ontario will likewise have to buy books, and will be led by their interest to buy many that are not now in use, the other provinces not having the same text-books as Ontario has.

Special occasions also occur for the sale of religious books. The meeting of the various church synods, assemblies, conferences, etc., afford these opportunities, and this summer Toronto has her share of such gatherings.

TRADE IN FANCY GOODS.

This year so far has been a somewhat troublesome one in the fancy goods trade both for wholesalers and retailers. There is no doubt but that the first to suffer in slack times are those who are dealing in luxuries—the "unnecessaries" of life. Those whose trade is confined to the "necessaries"—clothing, provisions, etc., no doubt feel a stringency in money, but only to a limited

extent in proportion to their friends in such trades as fancy goods, jewelry, etc. The first step in economy is to stop giving presents, and in presentation lies the stronghold of the fancy goods and notions trade. The first three months of the year were very quiet ones in the trade. April was a little more active, and made up somewhat for the ground lost in the previous months, but it will take a good harvest and an exceedingly good summer and fall trade to place a good many of the dealers on their feet again. From the present crop reports received from one end of the Dominion to the other, those in the trade anticipate a big boom in the business before the present year goes out. The chief cause of the recent dull spell was undoubtedly the Dominion elections, accompanied as they were with intense excitement throughout the country, from ocean to ocean, and by no means lessened by the fact that had the present Government been defeated the trade policy of the country was in great danger of being subverted, which made a depreciation in value of many thousands of stock upon which duty had been paid. It is impossible to calculate the loss sustained by a country during such disturbances, and if the figures could be shown with any degree of accuracy it would probably be better for trade generally if the life of each parliament was extended.

WHAT TO SAY IN AN ADVERTISEMENT.

The advertiser—I am referring to the general advertisers in the majority of local papers—fails to change his advertisement because he procrastinates. It seems to be one of those business chores that can be postponed. He decides to write a change of matter as soon as he reaches his desk. That good resolution lasts until his morning's mail gains his attention. Postpones the job until after dinner. In the afternoon business callers drop in, claim attention, and the day slips by. Next day is a repetition of the one before. If he had plenty of time in which to write advertisement copy, the chances are that he wouldn't advertise. Pushing for and getting his share of trade make him a busy man.

Carelessness is another factor. No tradesman will buy a bill of goods to the amount of \$100, place the goods on his shelves and make no further effort to sell them. But this is practically what many an advertiser will do with a \$100 space in his local paper; contract for the advertisement and let it run week after week without change of matter.

An almost daily inquiry is, "What shall I say in my space?" or "What's the best thing to say in my advertisement?" I invariably reply that the very best, the most sensible, the proper thing to put in the advertisement is exactly what is said over the counter to the customer.

And why? A business man who is selling goods puts his best foot foremost when he has his customer before him. It is his op-

portunity. He has the buyer's attention. The seller must—if ever—make his opportunity tell. If the buyer proves to be a non-buyer this time, he may ever afterward remain a non-buyer. The seller will say the best thing he can call to mind about his wares or of the article under inspection. He may explain its process of manufacture, its finish, its strength, or other points well to be mentioned. All these may help the customer to decide and the merchant to effect his sale. But the plague of it all seems to be that while he can talk fluently, sensibly and convincingly with, so to speak, his foot on his native heath, the moment he puts pen to paper to write his advertisement copy his facts and reasons seem to him poor, weak and out of place in print, and he falls back on the stereotype phrases of "Large Stock," "Big Bargains," etc.

Just there is where he makes his mistake. The facts he mentioned, the points he urged, the particular virtues held in commendation are the claims he should bring to the attention of so wide a field of readers—and buyers—as the paper will supply.

Then there is the fear of saying or doing something that may be considered "infra dig." "Our firm doesn't do that style of advertising," "We mustn't compromise the dignity of the firm," "It has too much the appearance of so-and-so's advertisement," etc. Just so long as the advertiser is afraid to cut adrift from the old strings, just so long will his advertisement remain prosy, dull and unattractive.

Often an advertiser remarks that he could sail right in and write easily and freely if he could only get a text—something to start out with for a catch word or heading. Very well. It isn't everyone that has the knack of bringing to mind a taking phrase. Look one up. The best place to look is right in the middle of some bright article in the best newspaper you can lay your hands on. It is surprising how easy it is to cull out a good heading after you have picked up the idea of how to do it. Run your eye down the column. Presently a group of words will strike the eye, and one can almost intuitively supply the matter to follow and the application of it to the business on hand. A few minutes' search will supply a dozen texts which allow of any amount of latitude if the writer can only grasp the opportunities afforded.

In writing advertisements as far as possible use everyday phraseology. Don't believe that you're compelled to write pure English—though the best English is none too good. Drop the "attention of readers is called to our stock," &c. The attention of buyers is what you need, and you'll have their attention the moment you succeed in convincing them that you will give, and continue to give, a bigger dollar's worth of a better article than your competitors. Don't try to be too familiar, if you're at all known in the community, and if you're a success as a business man you're bound to be well known, but talk in your advertisement just as you talk to your customer face to face. As far as writing advertisements goes, it will come a great deal easier than trying to pound your ideas and thoughts into a shape that you are not familiar with.—F. H. Dobbing, in Rowell's Advertisers' Manual.