

INTEGRITY AMONG BUSINESS MEN.

Is the standard of integrity among business men being lowered? It certainly looks that way. Scarcely a day passes but that in some part of the country there is a defalcation, an embezzlement, or a crooked transaction of some kind among business men. And the worst of it is that those who are guilty of wrong-doing seem to be just as well thought of in the business world as those who are honest in all their dealings, provided they keep out of the clutches of the law and avoid exposure in the public prints. If they escape exposure and punishment they act as if they were entitled to recognition and social courtesies from their acquaintances, and it is seldom that they receive a rebuff. Is this because there is not as high a regard for business probity as there ought to be?

It is certainly a very dangerous condition of affairs, to say the least of it. The condoning of a breach of trust in any community is pretty certain to be followed by other crimes of a like nature in that community. If the impression gets abroad that a man's relatives and friends will come to his assistance if he proves false to the trust reposed in him, and will shield him from exposure and punishment, there are likely to be many more crimes against property than if exposure were certain and punishment sure. But every time an offense is pardoned the standard of business morality is lowered in some degree. Men who place their honor above everything are not, of course, influenced by the condoning of crime; but the men who are likely to yield to temptation yield more readily when they are tempted, because they think that if their wrong-doing is discovered the chances are that they will not be exposed or punished. Those, therefore, who assist in condoning crimes, however commendable their motives may be, do society a positive injury. They are indirectly responsible for other crimes which are committed. They break down the barriers which help to keep men honest.

In perhaps every city in this country the excusing of young men who have robbed their employers is not an uncommon occurrence. In some instances those whose first offense is excused turn out well, but it is safe to say that the great majority of them come to a bad end. But the practice of condoning offences would not be so objectionable if the knowledge of the offenses were confined