

THE BOOKSELLER AND STATIONER

and Fancy Goods Review.

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BEWARE OF UNSCRUPULOUS FIRMS.

IN every business are engaged a greater or lesser number of unscrupulous persons who carry on a business which, when exposed, is seen to be what is popularly termed a skin game. The stationery trade is no exception to this general rule. Whether or not it be that there are special opportunities for those without a conscience to operate in this line remains to be seen. At any rate it is a sad fact that every month, every week, and sometimes for a period, every day shows up some fraudulent scheme. Merchants complain of being dishonestly dealt with by certain parties. In very few cases can anything be done to force these parties to make reparation to the one they have duped. The law cannot readily get at them so slippery are they. Seen in one city this month with some scheme which brings enormous profit to themselves and loss to the one taken in, the following month finds them in another centre with a new name and a new scheme. There seems to be no remedy for the evil. Experience is the only teacher to be relied upon. Unfortunately, too, many merchants go to school more than once—to their loss.

A cause of much learning at the school of experience is the too great eagerness of numberless merchants in snapping up what they believe to be a bargain. They receive from some obscure concern a very enticing letter, telling in glowing terms of something which the merchant cannot afford to miss. If this letter is not answered—usually it is, accompanied by an order—an

other missive along somewhat the same lines is sent. The second letter urges the point strongly, and appeals to the merchant as an experienced business man, asking if he can afford to pass such a bargain, with other complimentary remarks on his business sagacity. Those who have not learned, too often, are induced to order in this way. In a few days they receive their shipment, and when the goods are opened up the merchant finds he has been duped. He has dealt with an unreliable concern. But it does not stop here. The goods are sold eventually, but the sales result in dissatisfied customers, customers who may, perhaps, not come back. And all this comes of dealing with utterly unknown, unreliable and unscrupulous firms.

As stated before, there seems to be no remedy except the school of experience. If some merchants will persist in trading in "bargains" with unknown and unheard of firms, why they will have to suffer. But surely it were better to stick to some firms known to you through perhaps years of honest dealing than to skip from one house to another in a state of uncertainty as to whether you are being honestly dealt with or not.

CONSIDERABLE CAPITAL NECESSARY.

CONDITIONS of the present time make it difficult for young men, especially in the older provinces, to embark in business on their own account. A few years ago a little cash capital and great capacity for hustle constituted sufficient asset, and many large mercantile houses have been erected on that foundation. Now the merchant who would court success must carry a stock that runs into many thousands of dollars, and he must also be able to pay cash for it. Competition forces him into a much different system from that which used to answer his purpose. Department stores, perhaps, cut into his business to a greater or lesser extent, and he must fight them. His neighbor is able to sell for cash entirely, while he finds it necessary to extend a great deal of credit. His prices, however, must be no higher than the other fellow's, even though the latter has an advantage over him to the extent of the interest on money which he borrowed from the bank to secure cash discounts. There are many circumstances that might be enlarged, all tending to militate against the man who has not considerable capital behind him.

FALL PAPETERIES.

EACH season witnesses an increase in the number and excellence of Canadian-made papeteries, the 1906 showing surpassing anything yet seen. The Canadian manufacturers seem at last to have discovered how to meet the requirements of the market, and, from imitating foreign designs, they have now advanced to creating new conceptions themselves. Notwithstanding, there is still to be noticed a demand for the high-grade foreign product. Dealers seem to be prepared to accept Canadian papeteries for their medium and cheaper trade, but