

## THOUGHTS FOR BUSINESS MEN.

There are relations in life, points out an exchange which, while not being absolutely wrong from a moral standpoint, are, to say the least, objectionable on business grounds. A good illustration of this proposition is found in the practice indulged by many city salesmen of expending considerable sums of money in entertaining their country customers when visiting the city. If this display of hospitality were simply a token of personal friendship it would be less open to criticism, but every one knows that the practice is kept up for the purpose of influencing trade. As a business investment, perhaps the money expended in hacks, theater tickets and hotel bills yields a good interest. Doubtless in many cases it does. The party most to blame in the transaction is the customer. If he is endowed with any power of observation he must know that the salesman does not lavish money on him for nothing; that some duty is expected of him in return for all the courtesies he is the recipient of. We speak now in general terms. There are obvious exceptions to the rules laid down. Cases are not unknown where warm personal friendship has grown up between salesman and purchaser where the friendly acts of courtesy shown by the former to the latter are inspired by the truest promptings of personal regard. But these instances are rare. The majority of cases to which we allude are solely the efforts of shrewd salesmen to ingratiate themselves into the good graces of their customers, hoping thereby to sell them larger bills and have stronger hold upon their patronage.

A customer, after having allowed the salesman to expend money and time for the former's benefit, cannot very well refuse to bestow a share, at least, of his patronage on him. It would be an act of selfishness, and even rudeness, to do otherwise.

Most men say to themselves, "Well, I am no loser, any way. I might as well buy my goods of one as of another." But this is not true. There is a great difference in the position of a purchaser who is "foot loose," so to speak, and one who is held to the salesman by a bond of personal obligation. Often in the outcome the purchaser has to pay dear for his wine, oysters, rides and entertainments. Were there no questions as to the price, at which the customer could buy his

goods, he still must feel constrained to purchase many things which he would not otherwise. Thus, if he is selecting certain class of goods, he may wish some special brand not kept by the salesman's concern. Not desiring to offend the salesman, he will take another brand or style, rather than leave him to go to a competitor. He may wish to purchase a well-known brand of tin plates not kept in stock at the store where he is trading, but he is likely, under the circumstances, to lend a willing ear to the persuasions of the salesman, and take a substituted brand, all because of the peculiar relation existing between them; and thus, insensibly, in one way or another does he allow himself to be influenced.

A true feeling of independence and even self-respect incline the merchant to refuse too lavish attentions on the part of those wishing to sell him goods. If the dealer desires to see the sights and be entertained, let him pay the bills. Some traders accept the courtesies of the salesmen rather than offend them by refusing their invitations, but they always manage to get to the ticket office first, or to get hold of the supper checks, so that the salesmen lose nothing by their friendliness except their time.

But all the attention bestowed on out-of-town traders are not voluntary. Some salesmen pay these special attentions for fear that the customer will be offended if they do not, and in some instances they do so by reason of gentle hints thrown out by the customer. Many suppose that the houses foot the bills, and that if a salesman spends five or six dollars of an evening he charges the expenditure to the house. Such, however, is rarely the case. A few years ago this was, to some extent, the practice, but it is not now. At least the houses are exceedingly few that make regular allowances for such expenditures.

There is another side to this question, a side in which the family of the salesman, if he has one, is interested. It is selfish and wrong for business men to take up the time of the salesman which belongs to the latter's family and the social circle in which he moves. However pleasant it may be for the merchant to have some one to take him to places of amusement, it is not fair to permit it, when knowing that, by so doing, the wife and family are deprived of the society to which they are entitled. Besides, many salesmen have lost their health, and their morals too, by

keeping such late and unusual hours as these engagements imply. The man of business needs rest and repose. Of all men he should be the last who should wish to forego the pleasure of the family circle for the giddy rounds of amusement which the business courtesies of which we speak involve.

An eastern salesman had the right idea about this matter. He was a young man of somewhat domestic tastes. He hired a suite of rooms near the business part of the city, and here he cordially invited all his customers. The rooms were richly furnished. A piano and plenty of books were at the disposal of his friends. They were at liberty to come and go as they pleased. In those rooms men met as strangers and parted friends. It is needless to say that the salesman made a great success in life. By saving both reputation and money he not only remained true to himself, but also was doubly true to his patrons.

Business men as a general thing do not willingly trespass upon the good graces of the salesman. In a majority of cases we believe they would prefer to seek their amusements alone, but they do not wish to appear rude by refusing invitations given them. Others accept thoughtlessly not thinking for the time being that they are impliedly pledging their patronage for a very small consideration. It would be well for merchants to refuse these attentions except from those with whom they are very intimately acquainted, and where they know that the courtesies are extended on other than purely business grounds.

---

THE Rev. Stylman Herring, Vicar of St Paul's, Clerkenwell, England, who is well-known to many here, through his visits to this country, and the deep interest he has taken in the cause of emigration to Canada, says in a letter to the *London Globe*, that since his return home he has received an immense number of applications for advice and assistance

---

from persons desirous of finding a new home in the North-west. The class of immigrants proposed to be sent out by Mr. Herring are better than the ordinary run, and will be welcomed to our shores.

---

Montreal is having its share of financial trouble this winter. Scarcely a day passes but some heavy failure is reported from that city.