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THE productiveness of human industry has been greatly increased by the division of labor. The division of trade has benefited commerce equally, and is moreover a necessary adjustment of trade to the specialism that obtains in all sorts of production. It is a reactionary movement to make trade conglomerate, and one that can be successfully resisted by the efforts of special trades to make their stocks attract, by the reputation, condition and appearance of them.

In 1890, booksellers, stationers, fancy goods and notion dealers were undoubtedly more hardly beset by competition outside of

their own trades than they ever were before. Their holiday trade, particularly, was but a remnant of what it should have been. The universal stores made worse havoc than ever in that season's trade in books, fancy goods and notions. It is true that no line of such goods, particularly of books, is long in the hands of the big general stores before it becomes rubbish. An edition of a book soon loses caste after it gets into those slaughter-houses of prices. This ought to open the eyes of publishers. Everybody knows too, that these stores lack a prestige that is useful to the goods sold in them as a circulator of advertising. Who ever owns up to it that any article of his or hers of pretensions to elegance was bought in one of these stores? What gift maker ever tells the recipient of his present—books, stationery, etc.—that the present was bought in one of these stores? And the recipient, if he suspects such a store to be the source of his present, usually is mean enough to look the gift-horse in the mouth.

The retail trader in books, stationery, etc., must make a liberal profit. It does not suffice that he get as much only as the grocer. The grocer's goods are turned over in a very short time, as they are necessities, and every person is by nature a consumer; while in the case of books and allied stock, consumers are made mostly by education. Illiterate people and people devoid of taste are endowed with an appetite, but not equipped with the digestive apparatus for,

which literature and art are suitable aliment. When we add to the number who are unfitted to appreciate books, etc., those who have not the means or the time, we have subtracted a big volume from the consumers who maintain the grocery trade. The bookseller has to carry his stock often a long time, he turns it very slowly, and must be tenacious of his profit. This profit he should not be tempted to sacrifice to the exigencies of the competition he is waging with either the local insider or the outsider. Let him make the most of his shop-keeping and his energy, before he begins to pare away his profits.

The competition of traders who carry books, stationery and fancy goods as mere subsidiary lines would no doubt be greatly diminished, and perhaps extinguished, if jobbers in these wares took a warmer interest in the men who ought to be their preferred customers. That interest practically shown would nourish a much sounder retail trade, and in that there is a better basis for the jobbers' own prosperity than in the affiliation of the book and connected trades with big dry-goods establishments and tea stores. By this alliance prices are forced down, and the solvency of the proper book and stationery trade as a whole is very much impaired. Hence the jobbers suffer loss that is the indirect effect of their countenancing the absorption of the distinct book and stationery trade, by concerns which keep such stock only to attract custom.

If more fraternal feeling existed between the wholesale and retail branches of the trade, a considerable volume of business would be done through the former, which is now done by retailers through direct importation. This we adverted to in a former number. Nothing could indicate the want of sympathetic cohesion between the two parts of the trade more clearly than these two facts: that the jobbers in many instances look to trades other than their own to take off a large part of their stock; and that the retailers, also in many instances, look to sources of supply other than their own wholesalers. There is an over-distant attitude on the part of the wholesalers, a lack of interest in the welfare of their correlative retailers, that affords a strong prop to both these anomalous facts.

A combined wholesale trade is generally thought to be odious to the corresponding retail trade, but a disunited wholesale trade is not apt to be much more popular with its customers if it shows itself indifferent to their interests, and studies to cultivate a substitute for their trade. One combining principle there ought to be, and that is the determination to protect legitimate customers. If the retail book trade in cities is drawn into the maelstrom of the bazaar, department or universal stores, as they are variously named, the jobbing book trade will be in danger of becoming a branch of the wholesale dry goods trade. This would make alien competition for the wholesale book men, an evil from which their customers are now suffering.

To whatever extent the encroachment of other trades is blamable for the fact, it is a fact at all events, that the stress of the conditions of last year's book, stationery and fancy goods trade was very severely felt by many who were engaged in it, and a large number of withdrawals are being reported, many of them owing to failure, others owing to voluntary retirement. This, although indicative of an unsatisfactory state of things, has its cheering side, as it shows that a thinning out process is at work, which may give a better chance to those who are left.

Manufacturers of nearly all other lines except those kept by booksellers, stationers and small and fancy goods dealers, protect the trade that engages in the sale of their and similar wares. Many of them have local resident agents at every large distributing centre, part of whose business it is to see that the regulations governing trade in their goods are strictly observed. The value of such a jealous maintenance of the rights of the manufacturer redounds to the advantage of the retailer, and at the same time upholds the reputation of the goods.