

THE CANADIAN GROCER

& GENERAL STOREKEEPER

PUBLISHED WEEKLY.
\$200 PER YEAR

Published in the interest of Grocers, Packers, Produce and Provision Dealers
and General Storekeepers.

Vol. VI.

TORONTO, APRIL 29, 1892.

No. 18

J. B. McLEAN,
President.HUGH C. McLEAN,
Sec.-Treas.

THE J. B. McLEAN PUBLISHING COMPANY,
FINE MAGAZINE PRINTERS
AND
TRADE JOURNAL PUBLISHERS.

HEAD OFFICE: 6 Wellington West, Toronto.

MONTREAL OFFICE: 115 St. Francois Xavier St.
A. J. Ritchie, Manager.NEW YORK OFFICE: Room 105, Times Building,
Roy V. Somerville, Manager.EUROPEAN BRANCH:
Canadian Government Offices,
17 Victoria St., London, S.W.
R. Hargreaves, Manager.

SPECIAL TO OUR READERS.

As the design of THE CANADIAN GROCER is to benefit mutually all interested in the business, we would request all parties ordering goods or making purchases of any description from houses advertising with us to mention in their letter that such advertisement was noticed in THE CANADIAN GROCER.

THIS WEEK'S MOTTO:

All may do what has by man
been done.

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin, and one touch of organization equally makes a whole trade kin. But the kindred in either case must not be depended on for too much. No doubt there is a common chord among grocers of the same association that will respond much more sympathetically to an insider than to an outsider, but it is impossible and undesirable to sink the individual completely in the corporate association. Those who join an association with the expectation that every member will unbosom himself fully to his fellows will meet with disappointment. They might as well look for community of capital and community of material property of all kinds, as absolute community of experience, judgment, trade confidences and whatever special advantages individuals can have. If B joins an association in which A is a member, he need not hope to learn from A how

he manages to get such good bargains, how he retains his first class customers, how much money he makes in a year, how much he loses in bad debts, who is his backer in business, what his leading tea blends are, or any one of the thousand trade secrets that a sagacious grocer will acquire in the course of a business experience. These he is under no moral or social obligation to turn over to his fellows in organization.

* * *

It is well that there is so little of the community about a trade association. If there were more, there would be more truth in the charge that is sometimes made against associations that they extinguish business individuality. Business individuality is preserved, and if it were endangered by organization there would be no organization. Associations would be more numerous probably if mistrust that private affairs would have to be more or less disclosed did not exist. Traders organize, not for the purpose of establishing a common fund of experience, advantage, etc., but for the sake of the strength that lies in union. They can concentrate the force of opinion upon any injustice or irregularity that affects their trade, or they can come to a common understanding as to the nature of the competition they shall carry on against each other. The list of subjects coming within range of treatment is a long one, is liable to addition from time to time, and need never trench upon the domain of strictly private knowledge or practice. No doubt there are men who would join an association from the sole motive of learning all they could about the methods of competitors, if such information were freely vouchsafed. A case is in mind just now, but it is not furnished by the grocery trade, in which a leading importer withdrew from an association because he was expected to instruct his fellows in many matters in which he possessed special knowledge.

It was almost laid down as a doctrine that each member should impart everything he knew relative to the business whose interests this particular association cherished. This required the sacrifice of a big personal advantage of this importer, and he withdrew from the association, stronger in his isolation than in fellowship with the other members of his trade. His influence and support he was ready to place at the service of his fellows, but he was not disposed to be prodigal of advantages that sprang from special knowledge and favored connections.

* * *

The usefulness of associations is sometimes impaired by the tendency of their members to degenerate them into mutual admiration societies. There must be serious business intention on the part of those who belong to an association, and if there is that they will put in the time together more profitably than in wording compliments to each other, working off pleasantries and passing the hours in harmless and useless social intercourse. Social intercourse is a good thing, but it is not everything. And, while no member can be expected to submit all his private and special knowledge for the good of the association, none should be too reserved in relation to matters that cannot be classed as strictly private. It is a fact that reticence on the part of members is sometimes disloyalty to the association, and it occasionally happens that a man's silence is attributed to fear of the interests that are the objects of attack, or to a desire to make himself solid with those interests. Where the proceedings are to be published, it occasionally looks as if some men liked now and then to be put on record as being rather against a movement that their association was taking hold of. It is sometimes a case where grinding one's own axe is best done by taking an opposition or neutral course.