

# BOOKS AND NOTIONS

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OUR MONTREAL OFFICE IS LOCATED AT 115 ST. FRANCOIS XAVIER ST. OUR REPRESENTATIVE, MR. HUGH C. McLEAN, WILL BE PLEASED TO HAVE SUBSCRIBERS AND ADVERTISERS CALL UPON HIM THERE. HE WILL ALSO PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO GATHERING BUSINESS ITEMS AND ATTENDING GENERALLY TO THE INTERESTS OF THIS PAPER.

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CHRISTMAS is over for another year and we all have a little time to rest and think over the past year, with its pleasures and pains, losses and gains, and what is better lay our plans to do better next year - better for ourselves, better for our neighbors. The man who works for himself alone loses all the pleasures of life; it is the utterly selfish man who is most perfectly miserable.

This leads me up to my first point. The best way to start off the year in our business is to shake

hands with our competitors, come to some friendly arrangement with them whereby the snarling and quarreling, the cutting and slashing of prices, the competition in expenses, may be done away with for the new year. In a village or a small town this will be a very easy and a profitable course. Everybody in the trade knows quite well that there is just so much business to be done and that cutting the prices or increasing expenses does not enlarge the business but sadly reduces the profits.

Mind you I do not advocate any combine for the purpose of extortion, far from it. I merely ask you to enter into a defence league to protect yourselves against the community, who with one voice and one will are continually trying to break down your rates, and whose most effective weapon against you is always the story that your competitor is doing so and so.

Do not credit the tale bearer. He is an interested party and is seeking for a bargain for himself. Go straight to the accused dealer,

and with sugar-coated words talk it over with him. Ten to one he will be able to show you that he did not do anything out of the way, and that you would have been utterly wrong and foolish in attempting a retaliatory policy. Be on good terms, be friendly with every one who is in the same business as yourself. You cannot possibly lose anything by such a course and you are bound to be a gainer in the long run.

Now is the time to organize your local association. If there are only three of you in the business, that is enough. Let the best natured of the trio ask the others up to his house to tea. Talk over trade prospects, come to an agreement as to prices, discounts, credits, dead beats. Then having arranged a *modus vivendi*, live up to it and do not always be imagining that some one else is going to break the agreement. Watch yourself closely, you know how tricky you are, and after you have caught yourself two or three times in the act of doing as you do not wish to be done by, you will have a good deal more patience and forbearance with your neighbor.

In the town or city the course is not quite so easy. A large number is more difficult to handle and there is more danger of utterly black sheep that cannot be controlled. Never mind, do your best, get the trade together and talk it all over. Just as likely as not the man you thought unruly will be the best fellow of the lot and will take hold heartily and be a tower of strength to the association. Bear in mind that many general meetings are not necessary. A couple of good officers, and in larger places a good executive committee can handle all the work of the year.

When you can afford it, have an annual dinner. Eating and drinking together is conducive to good fellowship, and a hard heart is sometimes best reached through the stomach. An annual meeting of some sort is necessary; after that leave the work to the officers; they should be men of tact, who will not act upon impulse but upon judgment, who will be conciliatory in their course and will do their best to heal up dissensions.

When your association is formed you must recognize it as an authority. When complaints reach your ears, forward them to the secretary and don't worry yourself over them. If you are complained of and the executive committee has to pay you a visit, receive them as people having authority, explain your actions; if they think you were right, accept their dictum with thanks; if they say you were wrong, apologize and turn over a new leaf.

A subscriber asks me to give him a design for a checking book or periodicals - one of the latest designs. I know of no later design than the one I used long ago, in which on an oblong page one line was devoted to each name. The name came first, then the address, after that if the periodical was a monthly there were twelve columns in which to check off each delivery. A weekly had 52 columns; for dailies we did not use a book at all.

I remember some books had special ruling for payments but I did not consider them necessary as I kept each individual account in the ledger. Of course separate pages were devoted to each periodical. I think there should be a column to show date of starting order and date for stopping.

Suppose, between us, we get up a new periodical checking book. All of you who have special books send me one of the pages and if you have ideas write them out, or better still, draw them. Between the whole of us we should be able to get up just the right article, and then, after we have thoroughly ventilated it in BOOKS AND NOTIONS, I will induce our publisher to get out books for your benefit.

What do you say? Will you help?