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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.

In an address read before the convention of the National Editorial Association, held recently in St. Paul, Minn., Mr. A. Frank Richardson drew the attention of the press and the public to the large business in substitute goods that is carried on by druggists. These traders are accused of using their influence as salesmen to foist upon purchasers unknown or inferior preparations, in lieu of goods that have risen through their own excellence and the enterprise of their proprietors to a commanding place in popular esteem. The demand for such well-known goods is ready-made and is an extensive one. Any cheaper substitute for one of them is sure to put money in the pocket of him who can invent it, and there accordingly plenty of compounders prepared to offer an equivalent for the articles in most common request. Even if there were any originality about those so-called equivalents, it is certain that very few of them would ever be submitted for sale, were it not for the existence of the articles they strive to displace. When a preparation has a world-wide or national name and has fully explored the resources of the demand, then imitators come to put their wares in the avenues opened up by

their forerunner. The imitators, having a demand created beforehand, require no enterprise to put their stuff on the market. They must not claim for it any original merit; otherwise they will have to make good their claim. All they do is to say the article is like some other that is in conspicuous demand. They do not presume to be the originators of any volume of demand, they aim to steal what has been originated.

This evil is not confined to the drug trade. There are counterfeiters who use the grocery trade for the circulation of their false or inferior wares. Such men do not invent anything that begets demand. They see some proprietary article receiving large attention, they wait till it has established its network of capillaries through the whole consuming body, and then they make something that is just the same according to their representations. They do not pretend that their article has any individuality. If they did it might probably have no rival, but it certainly would have no prototype. That is what such an invention wants. It requires to start under fraudulent auspices, and as it would be a criminal act to forge the brand of the prototype, the thing has to be represented as having the same qualities but not the same name. What merit and extensive advertising have done for the reputable article is sought to be turned to the advantage of the spurious article. The fraudulent brands under which certain domestic pickles were sold here, and to which THE GROCER referred some time ago, illustrate this. Liberal advertising, undoubted worth and long standing had made a certain brand a guarantee of sale nearly anywhere. This brand the domestic pickle makers in question made their model, and under a modified form of it and an untruthful statement upon the label, they sold where they would never have otherwise sold. There are vinegar-bottlers of whom the same fraud has been alleged.

And there are many lines that would not have been if the great success of some eminent predecessor had not called them into existence.

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The trade should be chary about lending itself to the purposes of adventurous imitators. The men who have the faith in their specialty to launch it out in quest of a demand which had never been offered the like before, deserve some protection. When their specialty becomes a staple it is sure to have many imitations clinging to its skirts which should be brushed off before being dragged into prominence. Wherever there is any attempt to float an article upon anything but its intrinsic merits or the enterprise of its promoters, the trade should refuse to be a party to it. The articles that are standard now in their respective spheres did not get into their prominence by virtue of unscrupulous attempts to seize the trade of something they were made after. Their individuality, not their likeness to something else, was what they were pushed upon. It is always a suspicious argument to say that some new thing is like some old one in its usefulness, and is usually a fair test upon which to decide the trader to let the thing alone.

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It is not always desirable that the trader should be neutral between the claims of two articles for the buyer's favor. The trader has the consideration of relative profit to bias him one way or the other, but he ought to take a broad view of that aspect of the matter, and compare the articles not by units but by the respective volumes sold of each in a year. By that means he will arrive at a true verdict as to which is the more profitable. Sometimes, too, the trader is driven to prefer the unworthier of two articles by the selfishness of the manufacturers or proprietors, who cut profits down too low on the retailer. The natural effect of this works against the proprietors' interests, and it is just that it should.