

Canadian Druggist

WILLIAM J. DYAS, Editor and Publisher.

OCTOBER 15TH, 1895.

Transient Traders.

A correspondent from one of our smaller towns gives expression in our columns this month to a grievance from which dealers in all places suffer more or less. The travelling patent medicine vendor, with or without the accompanying band of "high-class musical artists," is a well-known figure in the majority of towns, and the injury done to the drug trade in the locality in which he holds forth can only be reckoned by a close observer of his business.

There is a law on the statute book of Ontario—whether that same law prevails in the other provinces we are not in a position at present to say—which empowers every municipality to impose a tax on all transient traders; that is, on all persons doing business in a locality where they are not residents, or do not come under the Assessment Act rendering them liable for a proportionate share of taxes of that municipality. In a large number of towns, by-laws have been passed naming a tax of from five to ten dollars per day—in the majority of cases the ten dollars is charged—on all such transient traders, but it is very often a dead letter, as "what is everybody's business is nobody's business," and the by-law remains unenforced. As our correspondent very correctly says, "the fault is our own," and it is the duty of every one engaged in business to see that his rights are protected, and that in every case this law should be enforced wherever the necessary by-law has been passed, and, where it has not, it should be seen to at once that the councils of their respective municipalities take action and pass such a by-law and see it strictly observed. It certainly is a hardship that men who have large interests at stake, and are contributors to the revenues necessary for the general requirements of their municipality, should have their business rights infringed upon in such a manner.

And this does not only apply to the vendor of so-called patent medicines, but to others who are equally liable under the Act. For instance, there is the peripatetic "optician," who, if he is not a house-to-house visitor or a market-square vendor, is probably one who carries a stock of spectacles and persuades some guileless

druggist or jeweler to allow him the use of his store for the purpose of disposing of his own wares, allowing the occupant a small percentage for the use of his name and his store, in many cases leaving him "a sadder but a wiser man" when the "patients" return with a demand for refund of money as the glasses "did not suit." This matter is one that directly concerns a large majority of our readers, and one that united action by druggists can remedy, if they will but act in it.

A Questionable Experiment.

Some business men are, apparently, very short-sighted, as evidenced by the way in which they endeavor to draw trade.

One of the most prevailing instances of this is the endeavor, by cutting into regular prices, to undersell others, and to induce, if possible, their customers to transfer their patronage. It is quite unreasonable to imagine that any man will sit quietly by and see his business cut into in this manner, and he will, in every instance, meet the "cutter" on his own ground, and, the chances are, undersell him. Thus the man who commences the cutting, instead of drawing from his competitors, is only lessening the profits of the competitor, and runs the risk, and an extremely likely one, of causing a feeling of distrust amongst those whom he has tried to entice to his place of business, for every druggist well knows that a feeling of distrust has sprung up and is permeating the masses, that the "cutter" is one who is not above the baneful habit of substitution, or who would sell an inferior article. To have the public confidence shaken as to your business methods means a loss of trade and consequent loss of profits, and it, therefore, appears to us a very questionable experiment for any druggist; and we regret to see that, in one of our western cities, a druggist, in commencing a new business, has used the "cut-rate" as his "drawing card," in hopes, evidently, of securing a share of the trade. It has already led to a general reduction in prices, and a feeling of anything but good will towards the offender. The venture is anything but a creditable one, and the result means loss for many, while the public will not think one whit the more of the originator of it.

In the treatment of bunions, phosphorized oil is claimed to be very well adapted. It is rubbed gently over the part twice a day, and acts by causing absorption.

The Care of Stock—Forgotten Corners.

Every pharmacist too often finds, while searching for some article called for, that he has made a discovery. Not such a wonderful one, perhaps, but one that is new to him—some article, yes, often many articles, stowed away in a forgotten corner are found. May be half a dozen of some nostrum to be sold on commission, or, what is worse, a fraction of a gross of a worthless patent medicine which has been foisted on the druggist by some salesman eloquent in his own interest. It has always been a source of surprise to the writer how a druggist, possessing the least grain of business ability, would take quantities of some untried, unsaleable, and unknown remedy, just because he receives a premium in the shape of advertising cards, a thermometer that won't work, or a show card with a name branded on the frame—(we confess, however, to advertising firms, that donations of good unbranded picture frames, such as the druggist can utilize at home, are always acceptable). Back to our subject again. If you have any money to spare, pay it on account; or if that is all right, which we sincerely hope it is, these hard times, put it into some standard paying stock. Never take up a side line suddenly, and without thought, that involves much of an expenditure, but rather increase some part of the business that shows hopeful signs. What the writer means to convey is this—that a business man is speculating with the odds of the game against him when he purchases quantities of some article, whose sale is doubtful, instead of investing in standard goods that are sure to leave the house with a profit before the year is over. It is a very nice feeling, when dull times come, for the pharmacist to find that he has some saleable goods to draw from. The fact must not be forgotten that we open our doors in the morning to sell goods, and not to make the store a dumping ground for somebody else's unsaleable rubbish. You must continually add new goods, however, for your customers get tired of the same old toilet articles, perfumes, and other wares. You have to sacrifice the old, faded things—and people dearly love a bargain—for you must get rid of them. The public appreciate new things, and a few well-chosen and well-bought articles not only add to the good stock, but freshen up the old, that has been stored away for so long in one of the forgotten corners.—*Frank T. Green, in Pacific Druggist.*

SALINE LIQUOR ERGOTÆ.—Bernegau and Burkhardt suggest the addition of common salt to liquor ergotæ, whereby a preparation less alcoholic than usual may be obtained. Five per cent. of common salt is added to the powdered ergot, and the menstruum is a mixture of one part of S. V. R. and four parts of water—the liquor to be made by the usual percolation process.