

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. V.

TORONTO, DECEMBER 4, 1891.

No. 49

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: 116 St. Francois Xavier St.
G. Hector Clemes, Manager.

NEW YORK OFFICE: Room 105, Times Building,
Roy V. Somerville, 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.

THE CANADIAN GROCER has a bona fide combined circulation among grocers and general merchants double that of any trade journal in Canada.

A common criticism of corporations is that they have no soul. This may be either a detriment or a reproach to corporations, but in whichever way they are looked at the underlying basis of the quotation is always the same—lack of personality. That is an unsatisfactory fault. People regard a Concern as incapable of feeling. They cannot flatter it or wound its sensibilities, and it can never glow with kindly feeling towards them. It is of course served by persons, but these are all officials or employes, not the Concern itself. The central and dominant thing itself is intangible, is of the stuff that dreams are made of, and therefore does not excite the same interest as if it were an individual human being. This fact ought to have some suggestiveness for business men.

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It means that in business where there is a personality it ought to be brought out as

strongly, and of course agreeably, as possible. There are many traders who affect to believe, and probably do believe, that the Business is the thing to keep the people acquainted with, and hold themselves always in the background. This does not satisfy the public. They want to be made something of by the principals, and if they are not they prefer to trade with some more cordial dealer. The egotism in men, women and children alike is usually very great. Each individual is apt to think himself rather a special mortal, in whose visits the chief ought to take particular pleasure, and most people will not think much of the chief unless he does. A veiled prophet in business is rarely a success, unless it happens that he is well-known to be of a rather savage disposition, when a meek and lowly substitute is preferred.

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The customer who calls least frequently seems to yearn most to come in contact with the ruling spirit of the store. It is also true that an intending buyer's self-importance is usually in direct proportion to the extent of his outlay. If he means to buy but a few cents' worth, or probably a dollar's worth of goods, he can better brook the indignity of being received or waited on by a subordinate than he can if he proposes to spend several dollars. It is interesting to note the look of dissatisfaction that comes over the face of some men who have driven five or six miles to spend twelve or fifteen dollars, and find themselves obliged to accept the attentions of a small boy. Their visit they look upon as an event, and they like to feel that the proprietor is at least aware that they came and spent so much money. The boy who waits on them may have fully delegated power from his employer, but he cannot represent the latter's

personality, which the customer wants to make an impression upon. He wants to gratify the principal, or he wants to get a little advantage that a subordinate would not be induced to grant in the absence of his principal.

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The personality of a salesman is often a big factor in drawing customers. In stores where this is the case the salesman is a fully trusted man, in whose judgment and tact, as well as in whose honesty, his employer has the strongest confidence. Such a man is supposed to know when and to what extent to make concessions, always having an object in his perspective that he considers to outweigh the temporary sacrifice, and always being able to keep such motive out of his customer's sight. Finesse is of value in the salesman as in the principal, and it is well that both should be affable men. The great trouble about some people's ideas of affability is that too confined a view is taken of it. A trader may have had an unfavorable experience of human nature and be prone to regard a little geniality of manner as meaningless and hypocritical, or he may be an icicle himself. He will in either case be incapable of appreciating a cordial and sympathetic manner from other people's standpoint. He forgets to note that different people have different views of the same thing, and the amiability he despises may be just the one thing needful to draw customers to his store. Nobody likes a forbidding manner, not even people of forbidding manners themselves. The trader who can take his customer by the hand, make a few kindly inquiries about his family or his crops, and listen with interest to the details such inquiries are likely to elicit, will not fail to please. Personality is a force that can be made a good deal of in business.