

IMPORTANT ANNUAL MEETINGS.

During the past month there were held by jewelers, in the City of Toronto, two annual meetings, each of which were of the utmost importance to the members of the trade in general. The meetings referred to were the first annual gatherings of the "Jeweler's Security Alliance of Canada," and the "Canadian Association of Jobbers in American Watches," full reports of both of which will be found elsewhere in this issue. We are glad to see such meetings take place in our midst, for they indicate very plainly that the day of individual trade isolation is past, and that more good fellowship and feeling is bound to be found amongst our jewelers in future. Isolation begets selfishness and distrust, while organization and communication, on the contrary, usually brings out what is best in people. The more we mingle with our opponents, the more we should find in common with them, and although trade is a perpetual warfare, in which the weakest is always forced to go to the wall, such conflicts are better to be carried on good humoredly, and with a due appreciation of the good as well as the bad points of our opponents. How often do we find, when we come to know our opponents better, that they are not such bad hearted fellows after all, and that if they were in any other line of trade, we might positively take a liking to them. For such reasons, as well as for the fact that the organizations whose meetings are above alluded to, are of almost incalculable benefit to the jewelry trade, we are pleased to chronicle the prosperity and progress of these Associations. All the more do we congratulate them, on account of the sneers and cavils with which some members of the craft heralded their inception. While neither of them have yet reached maturity, they both exhibit a vigorous and healthy vitality, which should keep them alive and working in the best interests of the trade for many years to come. They should both have the cordial support and best wishes of every member of the jewelry trade in this country.

SELF PROTECTION.

In one of our editorials last month we ventured the assertion that the present demoralization of the retail jewelry trade was beyond the reach of any remedy that the jobbers could offer, and that if the business was to be put upon a healthy and paying basis the retailers would have to depend mainly upon themselves to accomplish it. In the outset we may say we are firmly of the opinion that the greater part of the causes which tend to make the jewelry business depressed and unremunerative are to be traced directly to the unbusiness-like methods employed by retailers themselves. The most of these abuses are inspired by a desire to get ahead of competitors in the race for business, but many of them can be traced to an utter ignorance of the first principles of business.

For example: while excessive competition may induce a man to sell goods at or about cost, the same thing does not force him to take the general public into his confidence and tell them what his goods cost, who he buys them from, and all the other things about his business that a level-headed business man usually keeps to himself. Yet these things are told to the public every day with the idea that by posting them they can get their confidence and induce sales. Can any retail jeweler tell us what earthly reason there is for initiating the public into what should be the secrets of the trade; why they

should explain to the intending purchaser of a watch that the movement they offer him has a patent pinion, expansion balance, breguet hair spring, four pairs of jewels, why the 18k. gold case should be worth so much per dwt. for the gold, so much for making, so much extra for stem wind and engraving. Is there any reason why the retailer should quote the public gold chain by the dwt., or silver spoons by the ounce? We know of no earthly reason why they should do so, but we can find twenty against such a suicidal course. The information that is thus so glibly shot off by many of our jewelers is part of their capital. They did not acquire all this knowledge by intuition; in most cases it took them years to learn it thoroughly, and cost them money in addition. They might better give away part of their stock than this knowledge, which, while it is of practical value to themselves, only serves to make the customer more independent of them by posting him about prices. For example, to take a very common instance, a man goes into a jeweler to purchase a gold vest chain. The retailer shows him a lot, and although they are all as different as can possibly be in pattern, quotes him say one dollar per dwt. for them. "All 10k. chains cost alike," he tells his customer, "and we buy and sell them entirely by weight, just as the grocer does his sugar." The purchaser after inspection leaves, and promises to call again, but he is now posted about gold chains. He knows that no matter what the pattern is it should not make any difference to the price, that 10k. is worth one dollar per dwt., 15k. one fifty per dwt., and so on, according to the quality. Now all that he has got to carry in his head is the price per penny-weight, instead of the price and pattern, weight and size of each individual chain in the jeweler's stock. He can talk business to the second jeweler he visits sure. When he called on the first jeweler he was green at the business, now he is thoroughly posted. He now asks what is the quality of these chains; what do you charge per dwt. for them? If he is any good at driving a bargain, and the seller is not gifted with plenty of back-bone, he very soon makes him feel that if he is going to sell him a chain must be cut mighty fine, and, therefore, down goes the price five or ten cents per dwt. If he has half-a-dozen stores to go to, and can set the one quotation against another's, he usually gets the chain so near cost that the jeweler who sells it to him at that price, *rather than be undersold*, has little or nothing left for himself out of the transaction.

Now what is true of gold chains is equally true of the sale of watch movements, silver spoons, clocks, and a dozen other staples of the trade that everyone knows are cut down so close to the quick that there is not a living profit in them. The fault is not with the business, for the jewelry trade is a profitable one if properly conducted, nor yet with the purchaser, for he would be indeed a foolish man were he to refuse this gratuitous information, by which he can easily save from ten to twenty per cent. on his purchase. As we said at first, the fault rests entirely with the jewelers themselves. When they sell goods in this way they violate every principle of business, and yet they are surprised that they are compelled to cut goods so fine to make sales. A watch movement should be sold as a movement and priced accordingly; a watch case by the piece, and not so much for the gold in it and so much for the making and other extras. A gold albert, guard, or necklet should be sold just the same as a locket or a brooch: so much each, and nothing whatever said about weight or price per pennyweight. Silver