



About Trade Marks.



Perhaps nothing in the whole category of mercantile pursuits has been more abused than the use of trade marks. A trade mark, to be of any value, must be a guarantee of quality, and is worth more to the manufacturer owning it than to any one else. If a manufacturer has a right to use a certain trade mark and the public learn that this mark is never put upon inferior goods and that they are quite safe in buying anything bearing it, such a trade mark very soon becomes a valuable property to the owner. On the other hand if a manufacturer does not care about his reputation and is willing to put his trade mark upon goods of debased quality he very soon finds out that people are not so gullable as he imagined, and that his goods are appraised at their real value. On account of the low price of "stamped up" goods they may sell for a while, but as soon as their inferiority is detected they have no market value, simply because no one has any confidence in them. The best and only guarantee that the consumer can have is the integrity of the manufacturer. If he is honest and conscientious in the use of his trade marks they very soon become a standing guarantee of quality, that give his goods a fixed standard of value. On the other hand nothing is more demoralizing to the trade than the "stamping up" policy so often resorted to by unscrupulous manufacturers and dealers. Such goods have no bottom price and every cut has simply to be met by a corresponding depreciation of quality. In no branch of manufacture is this practice more resorted to than in that of gold jewelry and watch cases.

A good story is told of an American (of course no Canadian would think of doing such a thing) retail dealer, more sharp than honest, who got an order from a customer for a watch, the case of which was to be 60 dwt. 18 kt. gold. This enterprising dealer conceived the idea that he could get it made 16 k and stamped 18 k, and thus make an extra profit on the transaction, and he therefore ordered a 16 stamped 18 k case from the wholesale men with whom he usually dealt. The wholesaler, however, was of the same mind as his customer as to the advantage in the way of extra profit that was to be obtained from the "stamping up" business, so he quietly ordered it from the manufacturer to be made of 14 k gold and stamped 18 k. Now the manufacturer from whom this case was ordered was more knave than fool, and although he was in the habit of making "stamped up" cases for the trade, such cases never bore his own trade mark. He therefore, seeing a chance for extra profit went them both one better, and the result was that the consumer, although he paid for good honest 18 k gold, got only a 12 k case stamped 18 k for his money. When he afterwards came to find out, as he very speedily did, that he had been victimized, he had the case tested, and the retail jeweler was forced to refund him his money. There was a kick all around. The customer suspected that the retailer was a rogue and refused to have anything more to do with him, although the latter swore by all the powers that he had ordered the case of full quality and trusted implicitly to the wholesaler of whom he usually dealt. The retailer then accused the wholesale merchant of deceit, who, like himself, denied the charge and saddled the entire blame on the poor manufacturer. The upshot of the whole concern was, that each party in the transaction thought the one of whom he had bought had cheated him and was therefore unworthy of future confidence or trade.

This incident illustrates very forcibly the danger of selling "stamped up" goods, even at a good profit. As a rule however, such goods are sold lower than standard goods and the seller is not able to make any larger percentage of profit than he could by handling honest goods at honest prices. Whether the profit be high or low, such a practice is bound eventually to ruin any respectable business.

For these and similar reasons, the American Watch Case Company, of Toronto, determined when they commenced business that they would make their trade mark, (as illustrated above) an absolute guarantee of quality, so that any customer could put as much reliance in gold cases bearing it as though stamped with the Hall mark of England. They therefore laid down the following rules for their guidance in this matter: (1). To manufacture no goods without their own trade marks. (2). To stamp no goods of higher quality than they really are. (3). To guarantee the quality of every case they made to be as stamped upon it.

These rules they have faithfully carried out, and dealers and the public can, therefore, buy goods of their manufacture with the full assurance that they are getting the quality represented and no other. This Company aims at making their trade mark the synonym of undeviating quality and stand always ready to fully carry out the terms of their guarantee. Although they sell no goods direct to the retail trade, they can be procured at catalogue prices from any of the leading jobbers in Canada.