

Father's Advice to a Son

Chicago, March 1, 189—
Dear Pierrepoint—When I saw you start off yesterday I was just a little uneasy; for you looked so blamed important and chesty that I am inclined to think you will tell the first customer who says he doesn't like our sausage that he knows what he can do about it. Rapartee makes reading lively, but business dull. And what the house needs is more orders.

Sausage is the one subject of all others that a fellow in the packing business ought to treat solemnly. Half the people in the world take a joke seriously from the start, and the other half if you repeat it often enough. Only last week the head of our sausage department started to put out a tin-tag brand of frankfurts, but I made him take it off the market quicker than lightning, because I knew that the first fool who saw the tin-tag would ask if that was the license. And, though people would grin a little at first, they'd begin to look serious after a while; and whenever the butcher tried to sell them our brand they'd imagine they heard the bark, and ask for "that real country sausage" at twice as much a pound.

He laughs best who doesn't laugh at all when he's dealing with the public. It has been my experience that even when a man has a sense of humor, it really only carries him to the point where he will join in a laugh at the expense of the other fellow. There is nothing in the world sicker looking than the grin of the fellow who's trying to join in heartily when the laugh is on him, and to pretend that he likes it.

Speaking of sausage with a registered pedigree recalls to mind a little experience that I had last year. A fellow came into the office here with a shriveled-up tan spaniel, one of those curly, hairy little fellows that a woman will kiss and then grumble because a fellow's moustache tickles. Said he wanted to sell him. I was not really disposed to add a dog to my troubles, but on general principles I asked him what he wanted for the little cuss.

The fellow haved and choked and wiped away a tear. Finally he fetched out that he loved the dog like a son, and that it broke his heart to think of parting with him; that he wouldn't dare look Dandy in the face after he had named the price he was asking for him, and that it was the record-breaking, marked-down sacrifice sale of the year on dogs; that it wasn't really money he was after but a good home for the little chap. Said that I had a rather pleasant face and that he could trust me to treat Dandy kindly, so—as a gift—he would let me have him for five hundred.

"Cents?" says I.
"Dollars," says he without blinking.

"It ought to be a mastiff at that price," says I.

"If you thought more of quality," says he, in a tone of sort of dignified reproof, "and less of quantity, you would enjoy a better reputation."

I was pretty hot, I can tell you, but I had laid myself open, so I just said: "The sausage business is too poor to warrant our paying any such price for light-weights. Bring around a bigger dog and then we'll talk," but the fellow only shook his head sadly, whistled to Dandy, and walked off.

I simply mention this little incident as an example of the fact that when a man cracks a joke in the middle Ages he is apt to affect the sausage market in the Nineteenth century and to lay open an honest butcher to the jeers of every dog-stealer in the street. There's such a thing as carrying a joke too far, and the fellow who keeps on pretending that he's paying for pork and getting dog is pretty apt to get dog in the end.

But all that aside, I want you to get it firmly fixed in your mind right at the start that this trip is only an experiment, and that I am not at all sure that you were cut out by the lord to be a drummer. But you can figure on one thing—that you will never become the pride of the pond by starting out to cut figure eights before you are firm on your skates.

A real salesman is one part talk and nine parts judgment to tell when to use the one part of talk. Goods ain't sold under Marquess of Queensberry rules any more, and you will find that knowing how many rounds the Old 'Un can last against the Boiler-Maker won't really help to land up the junior partner with our corn-fed brand hams.

A good many salesmen have an idea that buyers are only interested in baseball and funny stories, and Tom Lipton, and that business is a side line with them; but as a matter of fact mighty few men work up to

the position of buyer through giving up their office hours to listening to anecdotes. I never saw one that liked a drummer's joke more than an eighth of a cent a pound on a tierce of lard. What the house really sends you out for is orders.

Of course, you want to be nice and mellow with the trade, but always remember that mellowness carried too far becomes rottenness. You can buy some fellows with a cheap cigar and some with a cheap compliment, and there's no objection to giving a man what he likes, though I never knew smoking to do anything good except a ham, or flattery to help anyone except to make a fool of himself.

Real buyers ain't interested in much besides your goods and your prices. Never run down your competitor's brand to them, and never let them run down yours. Don't get on your knees for business, but don't hold your nose so high in the air that an order can travel under it without your seeing it. You'll meet a good many people on the road that you won't like, but the house needs their business.

Some fellows will tell you that we lay the hose on our dry salt meat before we ship it and that is shrinkin' it in transit like a Baxter street Jew's all-wool suits in a rainstorm; that they wonder how we manage to pack solid gristle in two-pound cans without leaving a little meat hanging to it; and that the last car of lard was so strong that it came back of its own accord from every retailer they shipped it to. The first fellow will be lying, and the second will be exaggerating, and the third may be telling the truth. With him you must settle on the spot; but always remember that a man who's making a claim never underestimates his case and that you can generally compromise for something less than the first figure. With the second you must sympathize, and say that the matter will be reported to headquarters, and the boss of the canning room called up on the carpet and made to promise that it will never happen again. With the first you needn't bother. There's no use feeding expensive "hen-food" to an old Dominick that sucks eggs. The chances are that the car weighed out more than it was billed, and that the fellow played the hose on it himself and added a thousand pounds of cheap salt before he jobbed it out to his trade.

Where you're going to slip up at first is in knowing which is which, but if you don't learn pretty quick you'll not travel very far for the house. For your own satisfaction I will say right here that you may know you are in a fair way of becoming a good drummer by three things:

First—When you send us orders.
Second—More orders.
Third—Big orders.

If you do this you won't have a great time to write long letters, and we won't have a great deal of time to read them, for we'll be very, very busy here making up and shipping the goods. We aren't specially interested in orders that the other fellow gets, or in knowing how it happened after it has happened. If you like life on the road you simply won't let it happen. So just send us your address every day and your orders. They will tell us all that we want to know about "the situation."

I was cured of sending information to the house when I was very, very young—in fact, on the first trip I made on the road. I was traveling out of Chicago for Hammer & Hawkins, wholesale dry goods; gents' furnishings and notions. They started me out to round up trade in the river towns down Egypt ways, near Cairo.

I hadn't more than made my first town and sized up the population before I began to feel happy, because I saw that business ought to be very good there. It appeared as if everybody in the town needed something in my line. The clerk of the hotel where I registered wore a dicky and his cuffs were tied to his neck by pieces of string run up his sleeves, and most of the merchants on the main street were in their shirt-sleeves—at least those who had shirts were—and so far as I could judge there wasn't a whole pair of galluses among them. Some were using wire, some a little rope, and others just faith—buckled extra tight. Pride of the Prairie XXX flour sacks seemed to be the nobby thing in boy's suitings there. Take it by and large, if ever there was a town which looked as if it had a big, short line of dry goods, gents' furnishings and notions to cover it was that one.

But when I caught the proprietor of the general store during a lull in the demand for navy plug, he would not even look at my samples, and

when I hinted that the people were pretty ornery dressers he reckoned that he "would paste me one if I were not so young." Wanted to know what I meant by coming swilling around in song-and-dance clothes and getting funny at the expense of people who made their living honestly. Intimated that when it came to a humorous get-up my clothes were the original end-man's gag.

I noticed on the way back to the hotel that every fellow holding up a hitching-post was laughing, and I began to look up and down the street for the joke, not understanding at first that the reason why I couldn't see it because I was it. Right there I began to learn that, while the Prince of Wales may wear the right thing in hats, it's safer when you're out of his sphere of influence to follow the styles that the hotel clerk sets; that the place to sell clothes is in the city, where everyone seems to have plenty of them; and the place to sell mess pork is in the country, where everyone keeps hogs. That is why when a fellow comes to me for advice about moving to a new country, where there are more opportunities, I advise him—if he is built right—to go to an old city where there is money.

I wrote in to the house pretty often on that trip, explaining how it was, going over the whole situation very carefully, and telling what our competitors were doing, wherever I could find that they were doing anything.

I gave old Hammer credit for more curiosity than he possessed, because when I reached Cairo I found a telegram from him reading: "Know what our competitors are doing; they are getting all the trade. But what are you doing?" I saw then the time for explaining was gone and that the moment for resignation had arrived; so I just naturally sent in my resignation. That is what we will expect from you—or orders.

Your affectionate father,
JOHN GRAHAM.

Vanderbilts Reduction.

New York, March 6. — George W. Vanderbilt has appeared before Commissioner Gillespie of the department of taxes and assessments, and obtained a reduction of his personal assessment from \$2,000,000, which was fixed by the last board, to \$10,000.

In applying for this reduction, Mr. Vanderbilt introduced something of

an innovation. Instead of pleading non-residence, he told Commissioner Gillespie that, while he was worth all that the assessment called for, his wealth principally is in real estate and in securities, which were either non-taxable or else are taxed by the state. Without particularizing, he indicated that most of his holdings were in trust companies and kindred corporations, over which the local authorities have no control.

Pugilist Dying.

Chicago, March 6.—Samuel Uphouser, known in pugilistic circles as the "Brighton slasher," is dying at his home at 817 West Twenty-second street, as the result of a knock-out blow he received in a fight at the Bricklayers' Hall Sunday night. The police are searching for his opponent in this battle, but can only learn that he is known as "Young Choyanski," and no one knows where he can be found.

It was in the fourth round of the fight that Uphouser received injuries likely to prove fatal. He had received terrible punishment in the second and third and in the fourth was sent to the floor. His head struck the floor sharply and he was carried from the ring unconscious and later taken to his home. Since then his condition has been serious, and this morning he was reported to be dying.

Sportsmen's Show Opens.

New York, March 5.—The eighth annual sportsmen's show, under the auspices of the National Sportsmen's Association, opened auspiciously today in Madison Square Garden and will continue during the next two weeks. Those in charge of the affair have outdone themselves in preparing attractive features. The huge arena has been converted into a veritable sportsmen's paradise with all the attractions and picturesque features afforded by wood and stream. During the exhibition there will be carried out an attractive program of aquatic sports, shooting contests, fly and bait casting competitions and other contests of sport.

American League Meeting.

Detroit, Mich., March 5.—Today the eyes of the baseball world are turned to Detroit where the magnates of the American League have gathered for a meeting which promises to have important results for the future of the national game. While the meeting is ostensibly the

regular spring meeting for the ratification of the schedule and the transaction of other business relating to the coming season; there are several matters other than routine to receive attention. It is the general belief that before adjourning the meeting will have definitely decided to put a club in New York city, thus bringing the warfare against the older league to a climax. With Chicago, St. Louis, New York and Boston in the circuit the American League will be in a position to contest the supremacy with the National League and with a good chance of emerging from the struggle on top.

"Can I get this note shaved?" he timidly asked the money lender. "Gracious," exclaimed the broker as he glanced at the date, "It's old enough to need it!"—Atlanta Constitution.

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