

FOOLING THE PUBLIC

TRICKS OF THE TRAVELING RETAIL GROCERY AGENTS.

GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR

The Price May Be Small, But the Goods Are Expensive Even at That and Net Big Profits.

You may know something about the modus operandi of the traveling grocer, and how the house after paying him 25 per cent. commission still makes a princely profit. There may be some things, inside affairs that it is well that the people in general may know. It will be found on close investigation that the average Mercantile Supply company, Buyers' association or whatever name is used to gull the unsuspecting farmer, consists of one or two schemers, who have a small office room in some large city, and a back room in the near neighborhood where the "stores" are stored and the re-packing and the mixing done. The re-packing and the mixing are two important parts of the work of the "company." When the "representative" sells John Jones 100 pounds of sugar for \$4.69; five cases of canned goods at \$2.40 a case; three boxes of dried fruits at ten cents a pound, a few gallons of extract at a bargain and ten or 15 pounds of spices at a profit of 200 per cent., the order is sent to the "home office." There it is recorded. The boy is sent down to the wholesale grocery house which generally stands in with the concern, brings back a lot of ordinary bulk dried fruits, the cases of seconds or thirds, in canned goods, and the average run of poor spices. In the packing room the dried fruits are overhauled, washed up if possible as in the case of prunes, and packed in boxes, supposed to contain full 25 pounds, but only run from 18 to 22; branded with some fictitious mark and shipped out with the other supplies. The spices are dumped out, and again run through a mill with a lot of ground nut-shells, bark or other matter, and perhaps some bran or other cheap material is added. The extracts are of the cheapest class, synthetic, and the pure fruit flavors are products of coal-tar, doctored up with coloring matter to look good. The label is the only pure thing about it aside from the glass in the bottle containing it.

In fact, the tricks of the box-car outfits are legion. The teas sold are never up to the samples shown. In one case a schemer traveled over the country carrying with him samples of Ceylon teas that were worth 45 cents a pound wholesale. He agreed to supply this tea at 50 cents. He received large orders. Every order was filled with teas that cost only 20 cents a pound, and the funny thing about it was that there was no kicking, because the farmers knew nothing about teas, and were satisfied as long as they thought that they had a fine Ceylon article. The same way with coffees. If there is anything that even coffee experts know little about it is coffee. It is a wise merchant who knows the classes of coffees he is handling. The box-car man generally shows up a cheap big-berry, tells all about it being a great mountain Mocha and sells three pounds for a dollar, and buys it at 16 or 17 cents a pound. Should the local grocer try to sell the same grade to his customers at such a price, there would go up a roar that would raise the roof of the store. Still the farmer continues to bite at such baits, and doesn't squeal.

Rather Mixed.
"What verdict did that coroner's jury bring in?"
"Death from wounds inflicted with suicidal intent by parties unknown."
—Baltimore American.

The Drinking Orchid.
One of the most remarkable plants known to horticulturists is the drinking orchid, which is found in South America. This orchid takes a drink whenever it feels thirsty, by means of a tube which it lets down into the water. The tube when not in use is coiled upon the top of the plant. The formation of the orchid is different from others of its species, having sharp leaves, lancehead-shaped, growing round the root and radiating from it. From the center of the plant hangs the tube, about one-eighth of an inch thick and one-fourth of an inch wide. When touched it gradually contracts and rolls itself up in a spiral-like coil. As a rule these orchids are to be found growing directly over the water, or where water has been, and in the latter case it is almost pathetic to see how the tube will work its way over the ground to a pool or river.

Where the Fool Irritates.
The most irritating thing about a fool is that he seems to be enjoying himself so.

NOT A GOOD SYSTEM.

How the Mail Order Business Injures the Agricultural Sections.

We must admit that the mail order system is a legitimate business if it is carried on legitimately. It is a great American privilege to carry on trade in this way. Yet the principle from an American standpoint or any other standpoint that is consistent with equal rights for all is entirely wrong. Through the mail order system the merchants suffer a direct loss. To them it is an unfair competition. It diverts trade from established channels. The loss of the merchants in the local town means a loss to the town itself, to every resident of the town and the surrounding community. It is the business of the city or town that makes it a live place or a dead one. Dependent upon the activity of a town is to a great extent the value of all farm lands in its trade territory. Thus is the farmer affected by any system that causes a deterioration in his home town. Yet the farmers are the main supporters of the catalogue houses. They assist in feeding the snake that is stealing their eggs and they little realize it. They are as vitally interested in the upbuilding of their home town as the merchant. It is for their benefit as well as for all in the community that the town is there. There is a more vital phase of the question that few farmers realize. That is the evils resulting from the vast capital that is concentrated in the large financial centers. It is this surplus of money that makes it easy to build up trusts and combinations. These trusts affect the affairs and the prosperity of the farmer. He does not stop to think that when he sends his money to the distant concern that he is doing just so much to help along the trusts.

HELPS FOR TOWN BUILDERS.

Some years ago on bill boards and street cars and in the pages of the magazines were run a series of advertising cards the prominent feature of which was "Spotless Town." There can be little doubt as to the wholesome lessons taught by this unique advertisement. The town that is not kept in good condition, its walks in good repair, its streets well graded, and all neat and clean, is a reflection upon the residents of the place, and is evidence that the town is already dead or fast dying. Should you make a good impression upon strangers, keep streets clean, business places attractive, and don't forget that the front yards and the general conditions of the residences indicate the character of the people who reside in them.

Residents of agricultural sections who a few years ago looked upon the automobile as a nuisance, are beginning to realize that it is a great factor in road improvement, and has brought about renewed interest in country roads and their betterment, with a corresponding benefit to the farmers. It is as much to the interest of the people of a town that there be good roads leading to it, as it is to the farmers who must use them in hauling their goods to market.

There is a vast difference in the farmers of to-day and the farmers of a quarter of a century ago. It is wonderful how the improvements brought into existence in a single generation will change conditions. Every innovation that makes life in the towns more desirable, also finds a way of conferring a benefit upon the farmers. No longer need for the resident of the farm district to not have all the up-to-date things that can be found in the finest city homes. The telephone and the rural delivery has brought him within a "stone throw" of the city.

Not Necessary.

Hewitt—Are you going away this summer?
Jewett—I may not have to; my wife may go.—N. Y. Press.

Where the Money is.

More than 40 per cent. of the population of the United States proper lives in less than a dozen eastern states. These states are known as manufacturing states. In the banks of one, New York state, is contained nearly 40 per cent. of the money of the country. New York city alone has in its banks 25 per cent. of the money in circulation. This has been made possible by the conditions that enable the large cities to draw trade from all sections of the country. In fact, great cities must have support of a large territory. But one of the great evils and which injures the masses who are residents of agricultural district is the system of drawing support from local towns and communities to the cities. This system takes from the rural districts the surplus wealth that should be retained to build them up.

"A man may smile and smile, and be a villain still," quoted Uncle Allen Sparks; "but I've known crooked men that could keep their faces just as straight as anybody else."—Chicago Tribune.

DROPPED OUT OF EXISTENCE.

Why a Resident of Australia Was Reported as a Suicide.

"Three times I have been a 'suicide' and each time I have lived to tell the tale," declared John T. Bidleman, a produce merchant of Melbourne, Australia, at the Arlington, according to the Washington Post. Mr. Bidleman is about 50 years of age and has a face that reveals much individuality.

"No, I did not take poison nor drown myself nor do any of those things that people ordinarily do when they take their own lives," he went on. "I simply dropped out of existence each time, forgetting the old surroundings and living again in new ones. I have come to believe that the best remedy for despondency is a new environment, to be gained at whatever the cost.

"I was born at Bangor, Me. My father was a carpenter and I grew up into the life of the town about as the ordinary boy would. When I was about 17 years old I developed an insatiable desire to travel, had wanderlust, as the Germans call it. I wanted to go somewhere, but how I did not know. Everything seemed commonplace and dreary to me and for two years I became more and more depressed until my folks despaired of my health. One night, more than 30 years ago, I accidentally discovered my father's pistol and thought it was the solution of the difficulty.

"I thought that no existence at all would be better than the one I was living. My mother was dead, my father and I were fighting it out alone. But it occurred to me that it was the environment that did not suit me, and that I might better find a new life somewhere else. So I worked my way to New York and earned my way to Liverpool on a sailing packet. From there I tried to London. I tried to forget the old life, and lived in the new. I entered a mercantile establishment, worked my way up slowly until I earned a fair salary. I married there and was quite contented. But after seven years my wife died, and soon I became despondent again. I knew London well. Things did not interest me. I felt that I must go somewhere. The loss of my wife at one time made me think of actual suicide again, but not for long, and, taking my savings, I sailed away to Australia, where I drifted into the produce business and have lived there ever since. But 13 years is a long time for me to remain in one place. For a year past I have had the suicide mania, and now I am going to find some city in the United States to live in the rest of my days."

GRAFT IN TRANSFERS.

The Office Boy Knows How to Utilize Them.

"Why do you suppose they print all this stuff on them?" asked the society woman wearily, as she gazed at her transfer ticket. "Of course nobody ever reads one of them."

"Oh, don't they?" exclaimed the business woman. "If you want to know the meaning of every letter on a transfer ticket just ask some boy. Our office boy can unravel the mysteries of a transfer ticket in a way to make a college professor pale with envy. He never lets one get away from him, either. He begins to collect them each morning on his way to the office, begging them from passengers, picking them up on the street—sometimes I half fear he takes them away from the rightful holders—and he can tell you exactly where you can go on each ticket, the exact minute at which its usefulness will expire and everything else you may wish to know.

"By keeping his collection complete he saves for himself a nickel the office manager allows him for carfare, and he tells me that he can, by ingenious splicing of transfers, get himself far out into the country for his Saturday afternoons off without spending a cent."

To Calculate Longevity.

"Bacon took a deep interest in longevity and its earmarks," said a physician, "and Bacon's signs of long life and of short life are as true to-day as they ever were.

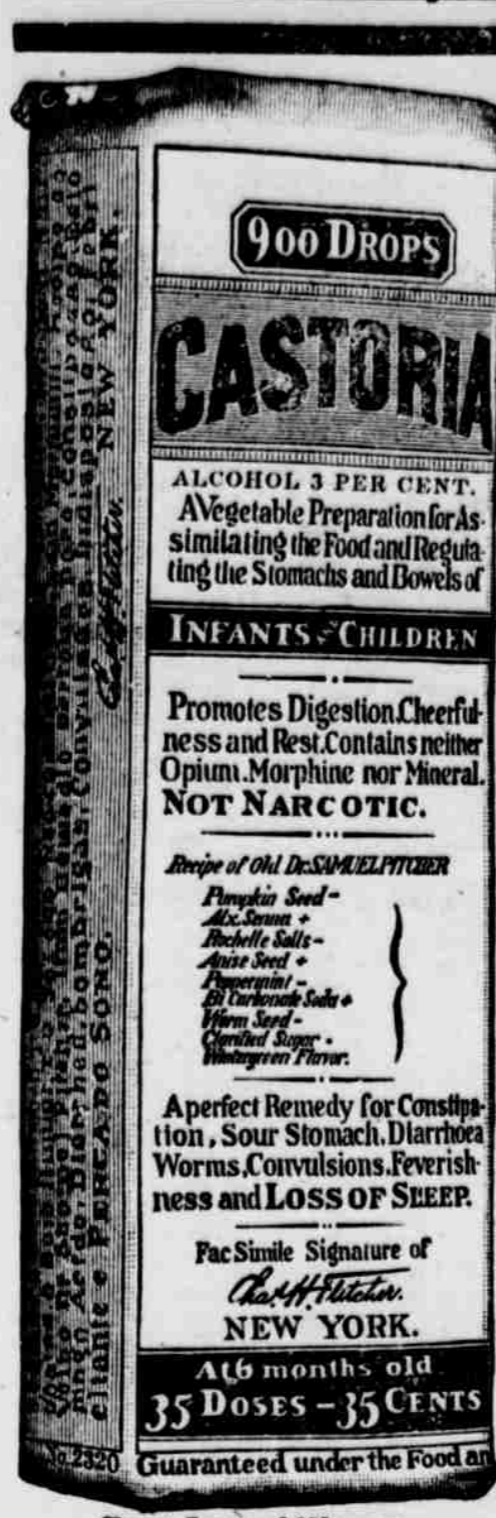
"You won't live long, Bacon pointed out, if you have soft, fine hair, a fine skin, quick growth, large head, early corpulence, short neck, small mouth, brittle and separated teeth and fat ears.

"Your life, barring accidents, will be very lengthy if you have slow growth, coarse hair, a rough skin, deep wrinkles in the forehead, firm flesh, a large mouth, wide nostrils, strong teeth set close together and a hard, gristly ear."

A certain man, having become possessed of untold wealth, and, in the natural order, grown tired of it, was now chiefly anxious to die.

Two honorable courses lay open to him. Which of them should he choose?

"Shall I kill myself by being a thoroughly good fellow, or shall I become a philanthropist and get myself peppered to death?" quoth he, and found it really a delicate matter to decide.



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One Point of View.

It was the desire of a teacher in a negro school to impress upon the minds of the youths the benefits derived at Tuskegee and other seats of learning for the ambitious negro. One day, in closing a brilliant discourse on this subject, in which Booker T. Washington was set forth as a criterion, she said to one little boy who had evidently heard not a word of her talk: "Now Rastus, give the name of the greatest negro?"

The answer was surprisingly forthcoming—"Joe Gans!"

Were He a Bird.

With an ugly sneer he tossed aside the bread which she had made with her own hands.

"If I were only an ostrich—" he began.

But the young woman cut him short. "Yes, if you only were," she snapped, "then I might get at least a few decent feathers for that old hat I've worn since my wedding day."

Defiance Starch—Never sticks to the iron—no blotches—no blisters, makes ironing easy and does not injure the goods.

Effective.

The Missus (crossly)—O, I do wish I could be alone for a while, now and then!

The Mister (brutally)—Why don't you play the piano when you feel that way?—Cleveland Leader.

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Every twenty-five cent family package of

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contains either a cup and saucer, a plate, a bowl, etc., of fine American china.

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