

**ALL ONE FAMILY**

The Mail Order problem is a troublesome one. One of the reasons why it is so is because of the methods that the houses pursue, their wide advertising, and the presentation of their side of the question by the hundreds and thousands of farm, religious, society, fashion and Mail Order papers that go to the homes of the masses, and which are mainly supported by the advertising of the Mail Order Concerns. Each locality has its peculiar local conditions. The agricultural classes are among the most intelligent, are readers and thinkers, but there are channels along which their thoughts flow. Close study demonstrates that as a general rule farmers labor under the impression that a low estimate is placed upon them by the people of the towns.

Then, owing to the impressions that are the result of continual reading of the advertisements of the catalogue houses, the farmer is led to believe that he unnecessarily pays higher prices for what goods he requires when he purchases them of the home merchant than he should. He believes that he is made a victim and that the profits that go to the merchant should not be so great.

Then there remains only the country press as the medium through which the people may be enlightened. But here is another problem. The average country editor is not by training equipped to carry on an intelligent campaign. He is likely to injure the cause by creating prejudices, by his too blunt attacks on the catalogue house system, and on their patrons. Any effort that he may make is looked upon by the farmers as emanating from the business interests of the town, and published solely with a selfish motive. Thus are excellent arguments deadened, and shafts that should be effective, act as a boomerang.

It has been the inclination of the merchants' associations to discuss the Mail Order House behind closed doors. In his small knowledge of association work the farmer is most likely to think that when business men of a town organize it is for the purpose of raising prices and working against the interests of the farmers in general. The way the associations have been conducted in many towns almost justified this belief on the part of the farmer. It must be understood by the merchants that any matter that affects the interests of merchants and farmers and laborers alike should be discussed openly. There is no reason why a lecturer on business economy should caution his hearers that only merchants should be present to hear him. If his proposition will not stand the criticisms of all whom it should interest, it is a poor one.

On close investigation it will be found that the farmer who is the most active worker against the trusts, and the laborer who cries loudest against the oppression of the employers, are the ones who by their shortsighted policy give the very systems that they complain about the greatest support. The evils of trade and commerce today are the offspring of capital concentration. For years vast sums have been diverted from all sections of the union to the great metropolitan centers. These vast sums must be employed in a way that will pay interest. Financiers devise means for investment. A dozen concerns are amalgamated, combined into one mammoth concern, and the money for the purpose is the money of the people of the country at large who send it to the large cities through different channels. Here we find a trust built up that works to the detriment of the farmer and the masses of the land, and operated by the dollars that were supplied by the very people oppressed by it.

There is one cure, and one cure only for capital concentration. That is a strict adherence to simple home trade principles. Keep in each community to the greatest extent all the earnings of the people of that community. The withdrawal of capital from a section impoverishes it just so much. It takes away the means of establishing new industries for the employment of the people. Thus are towns retarded in their upbuilding, and real estate values are kept from advancing. The home market for the farmers' products is destroyed, and every interest and every person in the community suffers from the effects.

Thus it can be seen how vital it is to the masses to understand that any system of business that draws from a community the surplus earnings of the people and takes away the legitimate profits that should go to its tradesmen, is a system worthy of condemnation. Cannot these questions be discussed openly before the farmers and the other laborers? Is there any argument that cannot be well sustained? Is there an intelligent farmer who would not do some substantial think-

ing when it is shown to him that he is working directly against his own financial interests when he patronizes other than home stores and home institutions?

**BLOOD STAINED BARGAINS**

The following are excerpts from a sermon preached by Rev. Cortland Meyer, of the Baptist Temple, New York city, on every-day topics. Among other things he said:

"I have seen in many stores the weights and measures which will stand the test of the judgment throne, but there are certain methods in vogue today in Mail Order Houses which are contrary to the welfare of society and in opposition to every sentence in the word of God. You will see in these places of business an altar to the false god of gold. Before this great god a large part of our population are lying with their faces in the dust. By this false God the rich are cursed and the poor are crushed.

"The bargains in these concerns are also part of this altar. I have seen blood marks upon it. From whence do bargains come? Do they drop from the skies to the counter? Ah, no! They come from the homes and the hands and the hearts of the poor. There was a time when the price was but one factor in the sale. It is now almost everything. This spirit of getting something for less than cost has permeated all commerce. Bargains are the lode stone of attractions. The starvation of the sewing women is the complement of the bargain counter.

There is nothing on earth so cheap as flesh and blood, because it never touches a limit of cost. This fact of

**HOW LONG CAN HE HOLD THE STRING?**



The "Man Behind the Plow" last year contributed a large portion of the vast number of millions which found their way into the coffers of the mail order houses. The smaller communities to which it belonged, and which were thus deprived of it, suffered accordingly.

but one thing—the amassing of great wealth. Love of money is predominating everywhere. If the love of money is for the good it can do, then suffering it can alleviate and the betterment of the world it can bring

If that wealth is to be used in helping the world, all right. We have no right to say to a man that he has no right to make money, or that his ability to make money is not God-given. But we have a right to condemn him for his method of getting it; he has no right to crush and throttle others and trample them under his feet and snatch their gains for himself.

**PROTECT YOUR TRADING POST**

Whether conditions that have been found practical and afford an equitable compensation to all engaged in trade are to be continued, or whether the tradesman known as the retailer is to be cut out of the game and the people supplied directly through the manufacturer and his direct representative is an important question. One of the systems that is far-reaching in its baneful effects is the Mail Order System. About 50 per cent of the people of the United States live in agricultural sections. It is from these agricultural districts that the Mail Order Houses draw the trade, not from the cities. The question is whether it is best for the masses that these mammoth houses in the large cities drive the small merchants out of business or not? Is it to the advantage of the manufacturers and the jobbers that the large houses continue to grow? The existence of these houses has nothing to do with the consuming power of the people. Their existence does not increase trade an iota. Why, then, should the people patronize them, and why should manufacturers and jobbers give them support by supplying them with

**THE WOMEN MUST HELP**

If a successful crusade is to be inaugurated against these evils, the aid of the women must be secured. Without their co-operation nothing can be done. Men may storm as much as they like where "my money" shall be spent, once the money is turned over to the wife the chances are she will spend it where she pleases. And why should she not? Is she not a partner in the firm? Why should she be called upon to give an account of her every action to him who is styled "lord of creation" any more than he to her? Too many men regard the money they pay to their wives as so much donated. The only legitimate expenses in their estimation outside of their business and the bare necessities for their families is what they spend for their own personal comfort. They seem to forget that matrimony means equal partnership. One-half of what a man earns belongs to his wife. When she receives this she is under no compulsion to give him an accounting beyond what one equal partner would give to another. We do not say that she shall not spend her part of the firm's earnings with a Mail Order House, but it is our mission to show her that it is not for the interest of the firm of which she is a member to do so. Then, if she is a good business woman the Mail Order House will lose a customer. If she will read carefully, she will at least find out not only what our opinions are, but very many actual facts bearing upon this subject as they occur. No hypothetical cases will be palmed off for facts. Every statement made can be relied upon.

We appeal to the women of this community to come to the rescue of their home town, to the rescue of their husbands, fathers, brothers, yea, to the rescue of their own homes. A danger menace, more deadly than war, pestilence or famine. Your home town is today struggling in the toils of a commercial anacard, and its very life is being squeezed out, its vitality absorbed and its future blighted. Compare your home town of today with your home town before the upbuilding of these mammoth concerns that have absorbed already one-third of your home stores. One by one, like the falling of autumn leaves, they went down before the encroachments of the hydra-headed commercial monstrosity known as the Mail Order House, leaving in their wake a mountain of debt, ruin and blighted hopes. Is there one member of the community that has not suffered because of this pernicious system? Not one.

**PICTURE GOODS**

"Do you remember the 'sight unseen' trade or 'swaps' of boyhood? One of the parties to the transaction usually got the worst of it, didn't he? And it wasn't usually the one who proposed the deal, was it? There's a lot of the same sort of 'sight unseen' trading going on today. Only nowadays it is called Buying By Mail.

The pictures in the advertisements of the Mail Order Houses look nice; the talk sounds nice, and sometimes the deal turns out all right. But even supposing that it does—whereas is the buyer any better off than if he had bought of a home merchant? Take any article you choose from the long list of things sold by mail and you can buy it just as cheaply and just as well here at home. The expense of selling it by mail is just as great as, if not greater, than the expense of selling it over the counter.

"Where we have rent, taxes and clerk hire to pay, the Mail Order dealer has all those—and rents and taxes are higher in the large cities than here—and in addition he has to pay a small army of bookkeepers, stenographers, shipping clerks and other employes besides the immense cost of advertising.

"Did you know that in many of what are called the Mail Order advertising mediums advertisements cost from \$42 to \$85 an inch in a single column? Is it true. Where does all the profit come from out of which to pay all this?

"We can do our business on a smaller margin of profit than the Mail Order dealer can; we know our people and their desires and we know that we have sold and will sell better goods for the money than the other fellow does. Next time you are attracted by an ad of some small Mail Order 'bargain' just bring it right to us and let us have a chance to beat it. That's only neighborly and fair and if we lose we won't say a word."



THE ROUTE OF THE "GOLD BRICK" DISTRIBUTORS.

suffering humanity is ringing the bell of justice; let the city hear its solemn tones. From garret and tenement and hovel and factory it rings above the mad rush for gold. It tells the sad story of thousands and tens of thousands in a single city in hunger and cold working their lives out at the machines or losing their blood by the piercings of the needle that the few might have more.

"Heart-breaking despair have I seen again and again in those lives and homes. As long as this gold god continues to be worshipped, the scorching days of summer and the marrow-piercing days of winter will hear the cry of the white-faced children starving for bread and shivering in rags. Cruel, unhuman, blood-thirsty idol—the cause of untold suffering and unblushing crime, the murderer of bodies, the shatterer of brains, the breaker of hearts, the destroyer of souls."

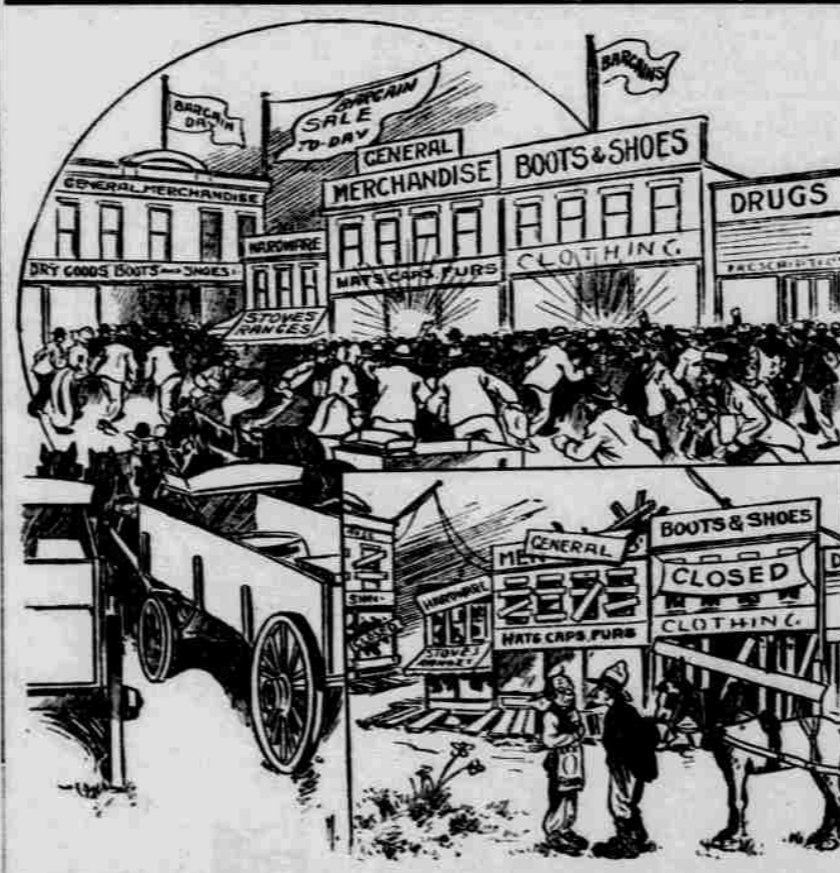
Rev. Dr. Mackey, of All Saints' Episcopal church, of Omaha, recently in an able sermon, said: "There are many problems arising today to confront men. Among these is the enormous increase of wealth and its evil effects. The trend of this problem is along lines which make it most alarming and which point to a future condition of affairs which should be opposed with every fibre of our being. The great trouble today is that we have divorced religion and the affairs of the world. The man of today comes to church Sunday after Sunday and calls himself and is called a religious man.

"Then he goes to his business on Monday and cuts out all of his religion. There is where the great mistake is made. We cannot separate religion and business. The tendency of today seems to be

about, then there is no wrong in loving it. But if the love for money is for the power it brings, the social position it gives, then it is wrong. It is appalling what the effects of the mad rush after wealth bring about today. We cannot take up a paper

great wealth by any and every means. "The men who pile up great wealth must be money mad. They make a little money and go mad with the lust of getting more. A bank president in New York says it is degrading to think of nothing but money getting.

**STUDY BOTH SIDES OF THIS PICTURE**



Give your town a chance by patronizing your local merchants and you may confidently expect its growth in business and population and a raise in real estate valuation. Send your money to the catalogue houses and you may look for the reverse. The picture tells the story of the possibilities.

goals? It may be that a charge of discrimination would be made against concerns that refused to sell. The Catalogue House should not have any advantage over the dealer in the small town, and soon the masses would discover that there was nothing to be gained by patronizing the distant houses.

**DOCTORED GROCERIES**

Farmers who have had their curiosity aroused over the pure food matter right profit by doing a little thinking. Some of the big Mail Order Houses are the greatest distributors of adulterated goods. In fact, the claim is made that the greatest amount of adulterated coffee and the like are sold through agents and the Mail Order concerns. Lately the state chemist of a western state has been devoting attention to the goods put out by Mail Order concerns. He secured samples of coffee and had them examined by one of the leading chemists. It was found that one of the chief "blends" which was sold for 35 cents a pound was composed of 55 per cent broken coffee, 14 per cent chicory and 31 per cent roasted oats. Oats are worth about 40 cents a bushel. It requires not much figuring to show how much the customers of this blend of coffee are paying for their "oats." There are dozens of concerns in the country who do a large business through women agents who work for premiums with the goods sold. There is barely a single one of these concerns who handles pure goods. There are efforts being made now to have the postal authorities forbid these concerns the use of the United States mails.