

Home and Farm Magazine Section Editorial Page

Suggestions From Our Associate Editors, Allowing For an Interchange of Views, Written by Men of Experience on Topics With Which They Are Fully Acquainted—Hints Along Lines of Progressive Farm Thought.

CHEER UP THE TRAVELING MEN.

THE past three months of business conditions have probably tried the courage and optimism of the traveling men more than at any time since the soup kitchen period of 1895. There are many reasons for this. First, the abnormal money stringency. The general inclination of banks to curtail loans or call them in, and a more pertinent factor, the widespread tendency to buy from hand to mouth. While orders were hard to obtain, they also averaged small.

As one traveling man put it, "It's like trying to squeeze sap out of a brick to sell anything."

And it takes a lot of courage and indomitable will power to keep out and keep up during such times. We feel assured, also, that few of the bosses, the firms whose men are out, realized how much "sand" it took for them to face these dull times and keep on. How hard a tax it was on their courage and nervous energy.

No blue and discouraged salesman can sell goods. He positively must keep cheerful and courageous or it's all off with him. And none know this better than the boys themselves. But it was a case of just had too, or get left. A woodchuck situation in fact.

And the bosses have not always been as considerate as they might be. We recall meeting one traveling man during the past winter in the dining room of a popular hotel and while we both waited the serving of our orders, he was reading a two-page letter from his firm, as he soon divulged.

"Do you know," he said, with a meat-ax look on his face and folding the letter, also apparently anxious to unburden himself upon some one, "that I'd like to go into our office and kick seventeen kinds of stuffing out of our business manager? He was never on the road a day. Has no more conception of how hard it is to get business than a blind fool, yet writes me a call down that has horns and teeth in it."

"I've done fairly. Small orders, of course, just patch up in my line, gents' woolens, but what with inventory time, bad weather and the cussed tariff, they have been thin. He doesn't think of these things, however. Doesn't think of anything only to slam me if orders are small. And I never worked harder."

"Why not tell him so?" we ventured smilingly. "Tell the kid a few facts he evidently hasn't grasped."

"And make an enemy of him," rejoined the irate drummer. "No, what's the use. You can't tell such young nincompoops anything. They know it all already. And in the position he is he could make it unpleasant for me, so I've just got to grin and bear it."

But such vexations are not all the boys have to endure during dull periods in business. They, one and all know, when they are or are not paying expenses and some over. And not one worth the name of traveling man but what feels the same and not satisfied unless he is making good. And so when they strike such hard sledding as the past three months, yes, almost a year, it is one long hard struggle to keep up courage and act cheerful when they cannot feel so.

But we predict the end of this dull spell is within sight. Stocks of every name and nature are low. Nobody has full shelves or stock rooms. All are down to the lowest mark. And while we expect that in some lines competition will be keen, we still have faith in American brains and shrewdness and that they will win in the trade battle we must wage.

It's time to cheer up the traveling men.

Give them some big orders.

A GREAT LETTER WRITER.

LETTER-WRITING is an art that anyone can learn.

Not all can become great letter-writers, but all can make their letters clear and easily understood.

Before a letter is written an analysis of the subject should be prepared. Almost any proposition you attempt to prove has a number of sub-divisions. Some are important, some unimportant. A common fault is emphasis on non-essentials. It is worth while in thinking out a letter to choose the important or essential phases, and run lightly over or ignore the others.

As evidence on this point the following letter is given—one from Abraham Lincoln to General McClellan about the proper plan for the movement of the Army of the Potomac. It is short enough to quote in full and clear enough to show the advisability of piling on four or five essentials to the avoidance of all other elements in the case.

Abraham Lincoln was one of the greatest masters of letter writing as well as speech making that the world has ever seen. A careful study of his letters would be as good a text-book for any man of an analytical turn of mind as the best treatise which could be written. The letter is as follows:

Executive Mansion, Washington,
February 3, 1862.

Major-General McClellan:

My Dear Sir: You and I have distinct and different plans for a movement of the Army of the Potomac—yours to be down the Chesapeake, up the Rappahannock to Urbana, and across land to the terminus of the railroad on the York River; mine to move directly to a point on the railroad southwest of Manassas.

If you will give me satisfactory answers to the following questions, I shall gladly yield my plan to yours.

First—Does not your plan involve a greatly longer expenditure of time and money than mine?

Second—Wherein is a victory more certain by your plan than mine?

Third—Wherein is a victory more valuable by your plan than mine?

Fourth—In fact, would it not be less valuable in this: That it would break no great line of enemy's communications, while mine would?

Fifth—In case of disaster, would not a retreat be more difficult by your plan than mine?

Yours truly,

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Major-General McClellan.

GASOLINE VS. ICE CREAM.

THERE are approximately 1,000,000 automobiles in use in America alone. It is estimated that they will average 5,000 miles per year, making a total of 5,000,000,000 miles traveled by motor cars in America per year, which is equal to going around the world approximately 200,000 times.

Figuring the average miles gotten out of a gallon of gasoline for all sizes of cars at ten miles per gallon, it will take 500,000,000 gallons of gasoline per year to run the motor cars of America, which on the basis of 20c per gallon means \$100,000,000, America's gasoline bill for motor cars in a year.

These look like startling figures until we consider what we spend for other things; for example, our ice cream bill alone in America is said to be \$200,000,000 per year. It will surprise some to note that our gasoline bill for running all these motor cars 200,000 times around the world is only one-half of the ice cream bill, and yet they are both large figures.

Motor cars have come into such general and practical use that this fuel bill is being considered as quite an item and there is little wonder that so much interest is shown in the amount of gasoline the motor car is consuming.

The motor car has already reached a stage of perfection where there are a great many of the well-regarded staple cars, the repair and maintenance expense of which has gotten to be of so little consequence it is hardly worth considering, so that engineers have naturally turned their attention to the saving of fuel as the next job to be tackled.

THE WONDER OF RADIUM.

WITH RADIUM selling at \$180,000 a gram, and one gram the largest quantity for which an order can be taken, it will not require many freight cars to transport the entire output of the plant at Sellersville, Pa., to the market; yet it is interesting to know that there is an establishment which is engaged in giving to the world the inscrutable substance that seems destined to play an all-important part in the materia medica of the future.

A pound of radium would be worth \$52,000,000. Dr. Kelley has estimated that there are now from 15 to 20 grams in the entire world. A thousand tons of ore in the Paradox valley (Col.) mines of the new "Radium institute" yield seven grams. Though the life of radium is approximately 2,000 years, the enormous number of victims of cancer makes it imperative to increase the meager available supply, if there is any hope of using it on a large scale as a therapeutic agent. Philadelphia's death rate from this cause is 87.2 per 100,000, as compared with 111.2 for Boston and 122.8 for Albany. The average rate for the whole country is 75 per 100,000. In other words the deaths due to this dread malady number about 47,000 a year.

With the organization of the \$1,000,000 corporation by Mr. DuPont, Pennsylvania is becoming the center of the world's radium industry. This important development is in conformity with the tradition which in the early days of our country established Philadelphia's pre-eminence in medical science, maintained to the present day.

THE BIG MAN.

THE bigger the man—the less he tries to impress the general public with his bigness.

We know the president of a large manufacturing concern; some people think he steps over five dollar bills to pick up nickels—because he can be found now and then talking to some \$60 a month clerk in one of his various departments.

But how much bigger this man really is than the man who hides in an office labeled "President," and refuses to see any one. We mean the man who surrounds himself with a bunch of understudies that have not the power to say "yes" or "no." This is the man who is stepping over the \$5 bills. He is not in close enough touch with the different things his company's money is spent for to get a full dollar's return for every dollar spent.

A REAL INVENTOR.

FOUR traveling men of different nationalities were exchanging experiences down at a hotel the other day. The talk drifted to the great contributions which have been made of recent years to science. One man warmly praised Marconi for his marvelous invention and another contended that Edison had no equal among living men of science. "I cast my vote for the late Wilbur Wright," declared a third member of the party. "What do you say, Abe?" he queried, addressing a little man who had been sitting silently in the corner during the discussion. "Well," said the little man, "the man who invented interest was no slouch."

TO ADVERTISERS.

Advertisers in this locality who wish to fully cover all sections of Oregon and Washington and a portion of Idaho will apply to local publishers for rates.

General advertisers may address C. L. Burton, Advertising Manager, 411 Panama Building, Portland, Oregon, for rates and information.

The publishers will accept business from no advertiser whose reliability can be questioned.

Of Course.

MOTHER," said a little boy, returning from Sunday school, "I can't understand the text we had to study this morning: It is more blessed to give than to receive.' What does it mean?"

"Mother would rather you thought the matter out for yourself, dear. Think about it awhile; then, if you can't understand, come to me."

Half an hour later mother inquired: "Do you understand what 'It is more blessed to give than to receive' means now, dear?"

"Yes, mother, I think so. The Bible must be speaking of castor oil."

Fired on Suspicion.

A husky young Irishman secured his first great freight handling contract after serving some years as one of the "gang."

Promptly at 7 o'clock that morning he called 500 of the burly "dock wallopers" to order and shouted:

"Now, yez are all to wurruk for me, and I want ivery one of yez to understand me right now that I kin lick any man in the gang."

Four hundred and ninety-nine swallowed the challenge, but one large giant built warrior moved uneasily, and, stepping from the line, he said: "You can't lick me, Mike Hennessy."

"Oh, I can't, can't I!" yelled Hennessy.

"No, you can't," was the determined answer.

"Well, then, go to the office an' get your money," said Hennessy. "I'll have no man in me gang that I can't lick."

The Embittered Editor.

Your aristocratic American millionaire will often make a mesalliance and marry a chorus girl or a parlor maid. But I notice that your aristocratic American millionairess, always keeping her head, makes a good match."

The speaker was Mme. Montessori, the Italian educator. She continued:

"On my way hither on the boat there was a beautiful American heiress, to whom a young magazine writer from the West paid assiduous court. But he, on account of the low rates of the magazines, was as poor as a church mouse, and so the heiress would not consider him seriously.

"As they leaned side by side over the rail one afternoon the heiress, looking out over the rolling blue waters, sighed and said:

"I love the sea."

"The impoverished and embittered magazine writer retorted, with a sneer:

"I don't see why. It hasn't got any money."

She Couldn't Have It.

A small boy who was sitting next to a very naughty woman in a crowded car kept sniffing in a most annoying manner. At last the lady could bear it no longer and turned to the lad.

"Boy, have you got a handkerchief?" she demanded.

The small boy looked at her for a few seconds and then, in a dignified tone, came the answer:

"Yes, I have, but I don't lend it to strangers."

Hardly Enough.

Applicant for Position—"I have here a letter of recommendation from my minister.

Head of Firm—"That's very good as far as it goes, but we won't need your services on Sundays. Have you any references from anybody who knows you the other six days of the week?"

Not Taxable.

A member of the Pacific Union Club San Francisco, owns a handsome place up in Marine county in which he takes great pride. A few days ago he was boasting that he made \$6000 off it last year.

"Did you include the earnings of the farm when you made your income tax return?" asked an irreverent son of Benicia.

"I did not. Why should I?"

"Why, you said you made \$6000 from it."

"Oh, that wasn't actually cash; \$5000 of it was personal gratification."