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THE MAIL ORDER HOUSES.

In another column of the Palladium today appears an article from Connerville, referring to a minister of that city who has recently furnished his house with furniture bought of a Chicago mail order house. As an instance of base ingratitude this minister affords a shining example. He obtains his salary through the liberality of his congregation, all Connerville people and some of them probably Connerville merchants, he is enabled on account of his calling to get cut rates on articles purchased of Connerville merchants, and then when he intends to furnish his house at a cost of maybe one hundred dollars or more he turns to the mail order houses, firms that in no way contribute to the upbuilding of his town or his church.

However, there is one thing that may be said for this Connerville clergyman and that is that this is probably his first experience with mail order houses and the glittering promises they hold out are but rarely if ever fulfilled. Richmond and Wayne county people have had plenty of experience with the big mail order houses and have found out to their own cost how little the goods of the mail order houses bear out their promises. There was a time when the mail order houses could boast of a total business in this county of not far from \$400,000. In fact these figures held good no longer than four or five years ago. Today, however, the mail order business in Wayne county has fallen to not more than \$100,000 to \$125,000 per annum, a shrinkage in business commensurate with the loss in confidence of the people in the mail order houses owing to their failure to live up to their promises.

We all know the promises the mail order houses have made and not lived up to. "Better goods for less money," etc. We all know the arguments they have used to prove that they really were giving better goods for less money. They say that the scope of their business is so large and enables them to buy in such large quantities, that they are able to sell their goods at jobbers' prices. And some standard lines the price and quality of which are well known, they do sell at jobbers' prices, but they make up for their loss in these lines by the profits they make in other lines where they are able to make use of their well known methods of substitution.

A visit to the local freight office most any day will convince you as nothing else short of personal experience, of how many mail order articles are returned under the return privilege owing to dissatisfaction with the goods; a fact that shows that discriminating buyers cannot be gulled by substituted articles. Personal experience has led most mail order house patrons to adopt the third part of the famous saying by Lincoln, "You can fool some of the people all the time; and all the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time."

Announcement that the Second National bank and the Richmond Trust company will erect a new building, having so decided after long consideration, will be welcome news in that it means that much more work for the men of Richmond, and that much more added to the prosperity that already prevails. Outlook for the building season is believed to be of the best, with two new structures at Earlham College in prospect, the Home Telephone company's building still under construction, the immense addition to the Hoosier Drill works under way and the prospect of a large addition to the Star piano works. In addition there will be many minor structures go up, so that there will be no excuse for any able bodied workman to be idle this season.

A meeting has been called at which those property owners who are interested in the matter of the freight line of the traction company passing along the streets on which they live, will be given a chance to be heard. It is right they should be heard and it is right that as far as is fair and consistent, their wishes in the matter should be given consideration. The question of hauling freight through the city by the traction line is an important one, which, when settled, prob-

ably will be settled for all time, and hence it is all the more important that it should be settled right.

Action by the quarterly conference of Grace Methodist church, in unanimously asking the return of the Rev. Wilbur M. Nelson, will meet with popular approval, as the Rev. Mr. Nelson has made an impression upon the people of Richmond as a Christian gentleman, devoted to his work and fully possessed of the spirit of the gospel which he is engaged in preaching. The resolutions passed by the quarterly conference were complimentary not only to the pastor, but to his faithful wife, as well.

Caution on the part of the county commissioners in granting a franchise for a traction line from Richmond to Hamilton, O., is the proper course, as there are two companies asking for such and the one most likely to bring tangible results should be preferred. By all means care should be taken not to grant a franchise to a company that cares for it only as a commodity that can be peddled about to the highest bidder.

FROM THE EXCHANGES.

Sleepy South and R. F. D.
Georgia and other Southern states bid fair to lose a goodly number of their rural free delivery mail routes unless there is an awakening of interest in the service to a point that will justify their retention. Orders have recently issued from the postoffice department abandoning several Georgia routes for no other reason than that the patrons, as a result of their amazing indifference, have made it not what you ordered.

But, but it is! The difference is between the way it actually looks and the way it sounds in the catalogue.

You explain that the goods you received is not what you ordered and ask for an accounting, and are told that it is you that is in error, that you got just what you ordered, and then if you are wise you buy of the

MAIL-ORDER WAYS

A BAD ADVERTISEMENT FOR CATALOGUE HOUSES.

AT SCHOOL OF EXPERIENCE

Sooner or Later It Teaches Every Mail Order Patron the Error of Sending His Money from Home.

The methods of the mail-order houses are their worst advertisement. Sooner or later there will come a time in the experience of every purchaser of their goods when he will wish "he hadn't done it," when he will wish he had spent his money with his home merchants. This is not only because he will see the ruin wrought in his own community by the nefarious practice of sending the money of the community to the city, but also because of the practices of the mail order concerns.

The story in the catalogue sounds well. It sounds like you would get the identical thing you wanted and at a much lower price than you had imagined it could be bought for, and you order it. The purchase arrives and when opened you feel that some mistake has been made, that the concern has sent you the wrong goods; it is not what you ordered.

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catalogue houses, I have found from bitter experiences, are tricky. If those who are dealing with them will watch their purchases, they will find it so sooner or later. Our last deal, had it occurred here at home, would have been straightened out in five minutes and without feeling, but with you it takes me all winter to get my money back when the goods are not satisfactory, and even then I get only a credit card which is lost through studied carelessness upon the part of someone in your concern so that I have nothing to show for my claim.

Every man should trade at home if conditions admit of purchasing a good article at reasonable prices. If not, then he had better trade at the next town or city that his money may go to build up the country around him. He sends it to Chicago that it may go into profits of some big mail-order house until there is enough sucker money to build and endow some great charitable institution as a monument to the greatness of the mail-order man and the gullibility of the easy public.

I have already asked that you adjust the matter of our last deal. I want my money returned without further

trouble.

The one sure method of curbing the mail-order giant is to bind him with the thongs of home patronage. Are you helping in this work? Are you spending your money at home and helping your town to grow, or are you sending it to the city to swell the fortunes of the mail-order man?

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The following letter, written by a Michigan farmer, explains in a clear and unmistakable way the danger of buying of mail-order concerns. It was addressed to one of the largest of this class of institution in this country:

Baldwin, Mich., Jan. 12, 1907.
Gentlemen:
I have your favor of recent date, and also your catalogues and accompanying circulars offering premiums for distribution of the same among my friends. I have no doubt that, as you say, I will thereby confer a great favor upon you, but I am compelled to take issue with you on the statement that I will also confer a favor upon my friends.

In my dealings with you, extending over some time past, I have received no favors from you—I paid for all I got, and the length of time I traded with you, instead of establishing friendly relations and gaining me additional favor as it would in a home store, gave you the opinion that, unlike a new customer, to whom you give your very best, so they will come again, I was a steady comer and any old thing would do for me.

Our last deal opened my eyes and convinced me of your policy. Your catalogues offer some apparently great bargains. But let us draw up our charts and see if there are not a few things very essential to the rural citizen that are not mentioned within its voluminous bulk.

For instance, there is no reference to paying cash or exchanging goods for wheat, oats, corn, beans, butter, eggs and hay.

How much will you pay for cattle, sheep and hogs, f. o. b., at Baldwin?

How much will you pay to support the Lake county schools and educate our children? How much for improving our roads and bridges? For supporting the poor? For the general public expense?

On what page do you offer to contribute money to the support of our churches?

What line of credit will you extend to me when my money is low because of sickness, or poor crops?

What do you provide in the way of entertainment for the public and in the way of providing those things that make a town desirable and thus keep up the value of my property?

As a matter of fact, do you do anything to help locally, or do you merely take the money out of a community, returning nothing whatever, beyond the value of the goods bought? Thinking it over carefully, I believe it is

better to call upon our local dealer and look over his stock where we can see the goods before buying. There are then no errors in charge or refunds to be haggled over across a 300-mile stretch.

Yes, it is better to trade at home. Our home merchant's guarantee upon an article means something, as he wants our good will. Keeping the money at home benefits home industries and thus, indirectly, us. We cannot expect to sell our products to the local merchant and do our trading in Chicago. It is all one-sided and some time we would have no local merchant to do our buying.

Catalogue houses, I have found from bitter experiences, are tricky. If those who are dealing with them will watch their purchases, they will find it so sooner or later. Our last deal, had it occurred here at home, would have been straightened out in five minutes and without feeling, but with you it takes me all winter to get my money back when the goods are not satisfactory, and even then I get only a credit card which is lost through studied carelessness upon the part of someone in your concern so that I have nothing to show for my claim.

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