

Toast  
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Business Men's Association,  
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Subject  
Is Integrity in business essential  
to success?<sup>2</sup>



Boat  
at  
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IS MORALITY IN BUSINESS ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESS?

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1st, What is business ?

At West Point we had a cadet, when I was there, called Billy L. who was being examined on practical engineering. Prof. Mahan had before him in the large examination room, Billy L. somewhat disturbed by the august presence of the great Academic Board. The Professor said Abruptly :

"Mr. L., What is a brick ? "

Billy looked to the right, and he looked to the left, and then up to the ceiling, and with a very flushed face he stammered :

"Brick ? brick ? Sir. "

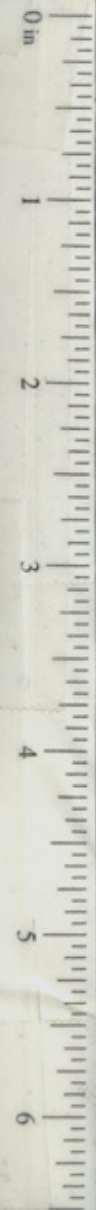
The Professor said, Yes, Mr. L. What is a brick ?

"Well, I know well enough; a brick is a brick ! !"

Now, Billy was not far out of the way. For, in business when a commercial traveller, for example, who has nicknacks and novelties to dispose of, catches a vulnerable buyer off his guard, he probably first treats him to oysters, or to something else - particularly to something palatable ; and when the buyer becomes warm and happy, the traveller leans over the little table standing between them, and says with deep significance : "Now, Mr. Weakman, understand me 'Business is business

The traveller begins by this lucid definition, and while Mr. Weakman is digesting that, he makes an offer and closes with a bribe.







Our old friend, Noah Webster, though he often sits on a fence and makes you afraid of a straddle, is, nevertheless, honest. He does not say "Business is business," but that business is "any particular occupation; employment, or profession; or transaction." Now, I would say to a boy of mine: "If you choose an occupation, be sure that you select that occupation which is intrinsically right." Let the same principle of rightness extend to all the transactions involved in the occupation. An occupation has, indeed, a moral character; - smuggling, for example, is an occupation. Smuggling is always illegal and often involves in its transactions every species of crime from petit theft to horrid murder.

Journalism is an occupation. It is lawful; it is right, and may be highly honorable. But when journalism descends to libellous writing, it becomes dishonorable; when it deliberately and purposely poisons the minds of men and women for gain, it is intolerable; it is a nuisance.

Take any other occupation, for instance shoe dealing. Shoe dealing is intrinsically right. It furnishes us with necessities; but conscience and the community demand in this particular trade a quid pro quo. It would be wrong to deal unfairly with any people, but especially with those who are ignorant and palm off upon them shams for shoes, while dealing fairly with sharper folk.

Mr. Seward, here in a church, in a lecture the other night said: "Business men are in a constant warfare - a warfare



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with each other. Why is this ? It is because of the principle of competition, is it not ? Business men declare that no man who goes into any legitimate business can avoid sharp competition, if he dreams of making a living for himself and his family. Granting this for the argument, what, pray, is the moral quality of competition. My present answer is : Competition restrained by the laws of commercial comity and agreement is not necessarily wrong. But competition, like that of a great New York silk merchant, who, resting in his millions, one day marked down his silk goods so as to cause nine-tenths of the other silk merchants of New York to fail, is plainly wrong; it is robbery.

Going a step further: your son has an occupation; it is a right occupation - it is an honorable business. He uses the methods of competition which are regulated by commercial comity, will not, then, an abundant success for him still be very problematical ? No, I think not. His apparent success will depend largely upon his capital and his ability to handle it. I say apparent success for his real success is quite another thing. A bridge built with rotten foundations is good for nothing; however imposing the structure, it will fall when put to heavy strain .

A man who has accumulated a large fortune, but who has a rotten character, may flourish for a day, for a year, for a decade ! But, you look again, and he has vanished, like a







Tweed, like a Holmes.

A sweet, godly home, full of unselfishness, is a success. No falseness, no fraud, no trampling upon other rivals, however much the apparent gain, can ever bring and preserve to a man such a home. There is, I believe, a principle which was the essence of our great Master's teaching, which will put bona fide generosity into competition, and will animate it as a generous spirit animates a human being. It is this : viz: Reciprocity. I studied a Jewish firm in Sacramento that had established a general merchandise house, running in its operations from Alaska to Arizona and back to Wyoming. In all its internal arrangements, it has been working for some years upon the principle of reciprocity. Every employee has an interest in the business over and above his pay. There is, too, an external reciprocity, as yet limited, of course, to those who have agreed to co-operation. The firm had had when I was last in Sacramento an extraordinary outlook. My answer then to the full question before us, namely, is morality in business essential to success ? ~~is~~ : "Yes, always, when success is properly defined, for; true success reaches beyond business. It is in character, which no millions of money can buy. Character, God-sifted, is eternal.



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