

March 22 2/1845 Commerce Masses Lesson

MODEL BOOKSELLER.—'Can't you take a little less?' How often is this question asked by the purchaser, when told the price of an article. People seem to suppose that a merchant is not in earnest when naming the price of his wares. Jockeying in trade is now looked upon as a matter-of-course transaction. Few 'one priced' shops exist in theory, less in practice. Shopkeepers have had as much to do in bringing about this state of things, of asking one price, and taking another, as the people themselves; in truth, many mark their goods with reference to this fact. We have read an old anecdote of an old bookseller, whom we consider a model in his way, and therefore give it for the benefit of our readers.

One fine morning, many years ago, a middle-aged man might have been seen in a store, busily engaged in preparing his newspaper for the press, when a lounger stepped into his store (connected with the office) and commenced looking over the books, &c. After spending half an hour in this manner, he finally selected one, and asked the boy the price.

'One dollar' was the answer.

'One dollar' said the lounger; 'can't you take less than that?'

'No, indeed; one dollar is the price.'

Another half hour had nearly passed, when the stranger inquired—

'Is Mr. ———, at home?'

'Yes, he is in the Printing office.'

'I want to see him,' said the lounger.

The boy informed Mr. ———, a gentleman was in the store waiting to see him. Mr. ——— was soon behind the counter, when the lounger with book in hand, addressed him thus:—

'Mr. ———, what is the lowest you can take for this book?'

'One dollar and a quarter,' was the reply.

'One dollar and a quarter? why, your young man asked only a dollar.'

'True, sir,' said Mr. ———, 'and I could have better afforded to have taken a dollar then, than to have been taken out of the office.'

The lounger seemed surprised, and wishing to end the parley of his own making, said—

'Come, now, Mr. ———, tell me the very lowest you can take for it?'

'One dollar and a half.'

'A dollar and a half! why you just offered it yourself for a dollar and a quarter.'

'True, and I had better taken that price then, than a dollar and a half now.'

The lounger paid down the price for the book, and went about his business—if he had any.—He had learned a lesson, which he did not soon forget.

The name of the bookseller was Benjamin Franklin.—*Am. Union.*

