

Taken from Edgar Allan Poe with some minor modifications

THE BUSINESS MAN

Method is the soul of business – Old Saying

I am a business man. I am a methodical man. Method is the thing, after all. But there are no people I more heartily despise than your eccentric fools who prate about method without understanding it, attending strictly to its letter, and violating its spirit. If there is any thing on earth I hate, it is a genius. Your geniuses are all arrant asses – the greater the genius the greater the ass – and to this rule there is no exception whatever.

Here I skipped a few paragraphs as they are rather boring.

I left at once this employment and set up in the Eye-Sore line by myself – one of the most lucrative, respectable, and independent of the ordinary occupations. Whenever a rich old hunk, or prodigal heir, or bankrupt corporation gets into the notion of putting up a palace, there is no such thing in the world as stopping either of them, and this every intelligent person knows. The fact in question is indeed the basis of the Eye-Sore trade. As soon, therefore, as a building project is fairly afoot by one of these parties, we merchants secure a nice corner of the lot in contemplation, or a prime little situation just adjoining, or right in front. This done we wait until the palace is halfway up, and then we pay some pasty architect to run us up an ornamental mud hovel, right against it; or a Down-East or Dutch pagoda, or a pig-sty, or an ingenious little bit of fancy work, either Esquimau, Kickapoo or Hottentot. Of course we can't afford to take these structures down under a bonus of five hundred percent upon the prime cost of our lot and plaster. Can we? It would be irrational to suppose that we can.

Poe goes on describing about seven different business activities the narrator has had so far. It's quite amusing but not to the point. I carry on with his eighth activity.

The newspaper business, into which I was now forced to adventure for a livelihood, was somewhat ill-adapted to the delicate nature of my constitution. The worst of this occupation is, that too many people take a fancy to it, and the competition is in consequence excessive. Every ignoramus of a fellow who finds that he hasn't brains in sufficient quantity ventures into this business. For this very reason I started to buy all newspapers in the district and quite soon most of the newspapers of the whole country and within a few years I owned all relevant newspapers of the planet. As any intelligent person is aware of, a newspaper thrives on advertising and to boost that you need hilarious reports and flashy news like crimes or wars. Corrupt politicians might do as well. Bank frauds will not help much. These are not individuals, but corporations; and corporations, it is very well known, have neither bodies to be kicked nor souls to be damned.

I helped creating specific universities to train future politicians to fit my scheme. Admission exams excluded the unsuitable applicants. But in spite of strict controls some of the students entered the University by simply cheating in the admission exam and I daresay, they were among the most successful ones in business life. One of the very successful students was to become what we call the pillar of my world business, my universe. Each of his acts or movements was so hilarious and horrendous that he filled my newspapers and my pockets as no

one before. Of course his insane behaviour had some collateral damage and often I felt sympathy for the many people affected.

It's an old saying, and a true one, however, that money is nothing in comparison with health. I am almost 90 years old now and consider myself a made man. Despite my strict integrity, economy, and rigorous business habits, I had to drop the very person that contributed lately most to my flourishing business and who has meanwhile reached the highest position in politics. By no means was he aware that he still was only one of the many puppets on strings. And all these strings end on my desk. Not quite unexpectedly I got a furious phone call. I was quite taken aback that he, whom I have made the very person he had become - that he should converse with me and tell me what I should do. It would be quite *outré*. Of course we could not follow his most illogical suggestions. Can we? It would be irrational to suppose that we can.

Here I had to stop my reading. Somehow it was like going to the fortune teller and screaming after five minutes: "No more, the present is horrible enough, I do not want to know the future."