

RETURNING GOODS.

A WHOLESALER'S VIEWS ON A VEXED QUESTION AND THE REMEDY.

THERE is not a jobbing or wholesale house anywhere that is not troubled to a greater or less extent by returned goods. It is undoubtedly true that as long as goods are sold goods will be returned. Of course, there are cases where such action is necessary, even desirable. But in the great majority of cases goods are returned for causes which should and can be overcome.

For instance, a salesman calls upon a customer and, while taking his order, says, "Here's something, Mr. —, that's an exceptionally good seller. I'll put you down for a few. I know you can use them." Nothing more is said, but when the customer receives his goods the extras are included. By that time he may have forgotten all about the conversation. He returns the goods and writes the house that "they were not ordered." There's one fault. Salesmen should not order goods forwarded unless the buyer actually orders them.

BE EXPLICIT IN ORDERING.

A customer orders goods by mail. He writes hurriedly. He knows what he wants, but never stops to think that his jobber may not. He is not explicit. Perhaps he leaves off a color or size, or some other essential. Then at the bottom he writes "Hurry." The jobber fills the order to the best of his knowledge and judgment. But back come the goods with the declaration that they are not as ordered. There's another fault. When orders are sent by mail they should be written explicitly, so much so that the jobber will know exactly what is wanted.

Or, perhaps, the retailer hesitates about ordering a certain article. The salesman urges him with the remark that "You can send them back if they don't sell. There's still another fault. Goods should never be ordered unless it is intended to keep them. Such action fosters carelessness in ordering and is sure to be productive of no end of trouble.

NOT ALL THE RETAILER'S FAULT.

On the other hand there is more or less fault on the part of the wholesaler. His clerks who fill the orders are not as careful as they ought to be. They frequently take too much for granted. They fill a doubtful order without consultation, when, if they referred it to headquarters such information would be quickly obtained as would have resulted in filling it correctly.

Then, too, store salesmen are careless in instructing order clerks. They call out their requests away across the store, a color or some other essential is misunderstood, and away go the goods,

only to be returned. These are a few of the reasons why goods are returned. There are faults on both sides. But if each would do its part at correction the trouble would be reduced to a minimum.

MUTUAL ACTION WANTED.

The following action has been suggested: When a wholesaler finds that the habit of returning goods is growing on a customer, he should write him to that effect. Let him state the case in a business-like manner, say that it must be annoying to both, and they desire to obviate it. Ask where the trouble lies; if with us, we will take steps to overcome it; if with you, we trust that you will do the same. Most retailers would receive such a letter in the right spirit, and many cases might thus be easily adjusted.

A SUMMING UP.

In summing up the matter we would say that if dealers would use more care in ordering, if salesmen and clerks would use greater care in transmitting and filling orders, if troublesome cases were met in a straightforward, business-like manner, 90 per cent. of this trouble might be overcome. The least a retailer can and should do, when returning goods, is to return them promptly, carefully packed, and send a letter plainly stating why he has sent them back.—Dry Goods Economist.



Mr. John McKergow, President Montreal Board of Trade.

UNDERVALUATION HURTS IMPORTERS.

Some people may have inadvertently supposed that the manufacturers are the only sufferers by the unfair competition involved in the undervaluation of duty-bearing imports. How wide of the mark that supposition is may be judged by reading a statement made to the United Cotton Spinners' Association by one of its agents. The fact is, that the honest importers are the most directly and irreparably injured class. They can be ruinously undersold by the firms that save half the duty. The success of such schemes must tempt the victim to wonder whether the maxim that "Honesty is the best policy" is not an iridescent dream. One happy result of the prevalence of undervaluation is the practical unanimity with which both honest importers and manufacturers are seeking to so shape the new law as to make the way of the transgressor both difficult and unprofitable hereafter.

FAVORING THE LITTLE ONES.

The proprietor of a country store once excused himself, when waiting upon a customer, to attend to the two children who had just entered. As their order was small he filled it immediately, and, upon returning, explained himself in this way: "I always make it a point to give the preference to children, as I fully understand the anxiety of parents when children are away."