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THE STORE SALESMAN.

Selling goods is an art that many strive for and few attain; there are salesmen and salesmen, some born with the gift, others trained to the work, and still again others forced into it by pure necessity. A man is likely to have the idea that, if he cannot make a success at bookkeeping, clerking or invoicing, that he can sell goods. Oh yes! anyone can sell goods in a store where a person comes in with his mind all made up as to what he wants; a very simple job to take his order; anyone can sell goods in the store.

The person who allows himself to be carried away with this idea makes a large and ragged-edged error. In this age of close business competition the average customer has not made up his mind as to what he wants; the buyer of to-day expects to have the merits of the goods, in a certain line, brought out lucidly, he expects the salesman to be able to explain mechanical details, advantages in using a certain make or brand of goods, and to clinch the whole matter by convincing him that the article offered is just the thing he requires. The customer of to-day goes out with the idea in his head that he requires such and such goods and he expects the salesman to decide the quality and grade that is most suitable for his especial case. Why is this so? Because the many people engaged in any particular line of business must make a living, the living must be made—generally speaking—by the art of persuasion, and only the man who has the peculiar faculties for the persuasiveness and intelligent descriptive qualities can ever hope to be successful behind the counter.

The necessary qualities in a man to be able to make a success in this line are these: Capability to judge human nature, tenacity and politeness, and with these abilities he must combine a thorough knowledge of the goods he is selling. By this is meant not merely a superficial acquaintance with the goods, but a detailed knowledge of construction, application and comparative merits. Take, for instance, a man as a customer who comes into your store after a lock. He states that he requires a lock for a closet door; as to the style, quality, make and price, he expects the salesman to be able to settle these points, and so he should be. The embryo salesman has the superficial knowledge, which by the aid of the catalogue he applies to the case in question, and in all probability will be able to take the order; he may go so far as to persuade the buyer to purchase a mortice instead of a rim lock, and the customer goes away pleased. It will be rather unpleasant for that salesman if he happens to be in when the customer returns and informs the proprietor that the lock he has purchased is $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick and that the door is also $\frac{3}{4}$ inch. What is the trouble? The inexperienced salesman, in his anxiety to sell a more expensive lock, has forgotten, or perhaps never knew, that there are a number of details in reference to lock application, such as hand, thickness, level, etc., that are very necessary in selling this description of goods. This might, and in fact does, occur in various other lines connected with the hardware business. A very

common fault coming under this head is to show the cheapest grade of goods first. It is easier to fall than it is to rise.

If a buyer wants a barb wire fence and is looking for the wire, it is poor policy, on account of eagerness, to show the cheapest grade, simply for the sake of selling him a bill. Show the best goods, prove your ability to sell goods by clearly showing the customer wherein he will be benefited by expending a little more and receiving a proportionately better result. Be enthusiastic, it is a necessity to be able to enthuse over your goods. The man who has not the ability to show an interest in his goods surely cannot expect interest to arise spontaneously in the purchaser. In fact most customers enter a store with an antagonistic feeling, and they expect to be "pulled up to the point." The proprietor who hires a man to sell his goods and hires him because he can be had at a low figure per week, does himself and his business an injury. There is an art in selling goods. Few possess it. Get the man that has it if you have to pay double. It will pay in the end.—*Hardware.*

KEEP ON TIME.

An exchange is of the opinion that if all the money lost through delays in giving orders could be gotten together in one pile, the aggregate would make a good round sum. We all know full well that tardiness in purchasing stock has cost us much money, and yet, somehow or other, we never manage to keep on time in this respect.

Travelling salesmen say it is an everyday occurrence to find some of their customers so nearly out of a certain article that it is impossible to get a fresh supply in on time to meet the requirements of the consumers. A salesman tells of an instance that aptly illustrates this point. "My customer," said the salesman, "had quite a run on a certain brand of goods. I never called upon him when his stock was full. I urged upon him to always send in his order when he saw he was running short, and even went to the trouble of writing out blank orders. It did no good. His customers would call only to be disappointed, and would therefore go some place else for the next desirable brand. The last time I called there he complained bitterly about the loss of some of his best trade."

There is more in this than may appear at first sight. Buyers are sensitive, and when they think that the dealer is ignoring them they hasten to some other store. The dealer himself would not long patronize a house that did not look after his interests. A little promptness always saves trouble, even if it don't retain a customer. Every dealer understands that it is not always possible to fill an unusual order the day it is received, yet some of them seem to work upon the plan that to keep a customer waiting several days would indicate to him that they are doing a rushing business. The customer don't regard it in that light, however. It works against the interest of both wholesaler and retailer to keep a customer waiting when it is possible to be prompt. Only the houses that are regular in their methods do a large business for any length of time.