

WINDOW DRESSING.



FROM the catalogue of the Norwich Nickel and Brass Works we extract the following as to arrangement:—Simplicity in arrangement as well as in color is desirable. It is a safe rule not to display a great variety of articles in the same window, as a complicated arrangement usually appears confused.

The most effective windows are made by the use of designs which are not intricate, and which are easily understood at a glance. The easiest way to dress a window tastefully is to arrange a unit, composed of as many articles as the taste or ingenuity of the dresser may dictate: and to repeat this unit to fill one or more bars or the entire window.

Where the primary purpose is to display as many goods as possible without much regard to color effect or harmonious arrangement, it is advantageous to dress the window close up to the front, and fill it full enough to entirely cover the space. Where color and form are to be considered, fewer articles may be used, they may be more widely spaced, and should be placed further back. The window should then be at least two bars, and sometimes four bars deep; and from three to five tiers high. It may even be still higher, but great height is undesirable, as it makes the display disproportionate, and is rarely effective, besides requiring a great quantity of goods.

Curved bars are advantageous, as they aid materially in forming any design, may be satisfactorily dressed with a very small quantity of goods, and take the eye.

In dressing a window with the purpose of getting as much of a show as possible with a few goods, the surroundings should be carefully considered, that is, the background, the light, and the distance from the front. Concerning the latter, it may be said, as a rule, that a thinly dressed window should be arranged well back from the glass, and in that case it should have a strong background to bring it out boldly.

A window dressed entirely to the front has no effectiveness as a whole, but depends for its effect entirely upon separate details, for the reason that it has not the requisite distance to give the eye the proper focus; but when the display is withdrawn two or three feet within the glass, the proper focus is obtained, and the eye takes in the whole with pleasure. Moreover, the play of light and shade is much more varied and pleasing, the light being softened and diffused.

Small stands for the more prominent display of articles placed upon them add materially to the effect of a window.

Crowding should be carefully avoided in window dressing, especially in the case of articles in which form is an element of attractiveness. Drapery and similar articles may be effectively massed, provided, always, that color harmonies are carefully considered; but such articles as shoes, bonnets and the like must stand out clearly from the background. Otherwise the lines run together and the display becomes confused. For this reason separate stands or trees are by far preferable for articles in which form is more prominent than color, as shoes, hats, etc.

It is desirable not to encumber the bottom of a show window with too many small objects. The bottom should serve to a considerable extent as a foil or background against which the articles shown may be strongly relieved, and their value thus enhanced. This end is lost by crowding the ground; definiteness is sacrificed, and none of the articles shown are as effective as otherwise. Never forget that the use of a background is to sharpen and strongly define what is placed against it, and that too many articles too closely grouped nullify this purpose. The same loss of effect ensues from allowing one object to overlap another; the out-

lines are confused and each article loses in effectiveness. Therefore, don't crowd your windows, don't crowd your floors; be particular to have each article clearly defined against the background, and don't allow one article to overlap or stand partially in front of another of the same tone or color. If the colors contrast, the overlapping is not detrimental, because the contrast then serves the same purpose as a background, namely, it defines the form sharply.

Do not bring elaborate forms into contrast if it can be avoided. Everyone knows how an effect is "killed" by being brought close to some other effect, perhaps dissimilar in kind. Each article may be beautiful by itself, but becomes almost ugly when brought into comparison with others. "Comparisons are odious" in window dressing.

ALWAYS WRITE IT DOWN.

Doubtless many merchants, says an exchange, each lose hundreds of dollars annually through a defective memory. A failure to make a charge at once for goods is often likely to result in loss or an error, and a disputed account is something a good merchant invariably endeavors to avoid.

A merchant may think he can wait upon two or three customers at once, charge their accounts and keep everything straight, but it takes a wonderful head to do it.

If a storekeeper does not have time to go to his desk and charge up the goods sold to each customer, he should have a small memorandum book always on hand, in which to briefly make a note of the things purchased and price paid for them. It is not very much trouble for him to do this, and it will repay him many times the extra labor it imposes on him before the end of the year.

Another bad policy is to forget to deliver goods at the specified hour. Often, by trusting to his memory, the merchant or clerk overlooks the matter, and the customer is put to great annoyance and inconvenience because the goods fail to materialize. It taxes the patience of a housekeeper to be compelled to send twice for goods. A merchant or clerk should never promise to do anything at a given time unless he knows very well he can perform it, and when he agrees to perform any office of the character referred to he should not allow it, under any circumstances, to slip from his memory. Therefore, in writing out an order which is to be delivered, make a memorandum of the time of delivering and have the goods at their destination on or before the hour when they are expected.

Careful attention to the details of business like those enumerated above contribute a great deal to the success of the retail storekeeper. A neglect of these is often one of the causes of failure.

SHARKS OF TRADE.

Wholesale dry goods jobbers, says the St. Louis Dry Goods Reporter, are beginning to recognize the existence of a new class in this country, who systematically go to work to earn a credit by a record of prompt payments, then take advantage of it and swindle the creditor, either by settling for five cents on the dollar, burning up the property for the insurance, or quitting for parts unknown, leaving an empty store or valueless stock behind. It seems as if these sharks are annually becoming more numerous, much to the distress of honest storekeepers, who cannot compete against that sort of business. It is a well established fact that professional swindlers, who feed upon the credit established by honest people, and who enter business with intent to defraud at first convenient opportunity, are becoming painfully numerous. Their practice being to swindle one community, then change their names, and locate for the same purpose elsewhere. Even our two large mercantile agencies are total failures in ferreting out and exposing this class of criminals, a class that does more toward demoralizing the honesty of a community than aught else.