

HINTS TO THE PROGRESSIVE RETAILER.

FROM THE DRY GOODS CHRONICLE.

TAKE your store just as it is, just as you left it last night, and start right in. No need to wait until you have made this improvement, or that alteration. Don't set some time in the future, but start now, while your mind is picturing the possibilities of a progressive store.

Map yourself out a plan to work by. Think of all you ever heard or read about successful merchants, and use the part that seems the best—the part that you can apply to your business. You will find that all merchants who have been successful have become so by seeming to be honest. Be more than that. Be honest. It's hard to do, but it pays. Make your plan so broad that it will cover each detail. Put yourself in the customer's place and see how you would like to have this or that matter decided. Then make your plan so that your customer will be pleased. Protect your customer's interest just a little more than you do your own, and your plan will succeed. This don't refer to prices, although the prices must of course be right, but the hundred little details that come up in a day's business, that, if not adjusted right, will lose more customers than a week's advertising will regain.

See that the goods in your store are the kind that people want. Don't think they are; make sure of it. If you have any goods that are out of style, or soiled, or wrong in any way—and there always are in the best of stores—get rid of them even at an apparent loss. It's not a real loss, it's a gain, for goods are only worth what they will sell for. All people make mistakes—especially buyers—but if you do make a mistake, admit it and rectify it at once. Don't wait—it's more money lost to wait.

You must buy cheap, for you will have to sell cheap. Not pretend to do it, but actually do it. People nowadays are intelligent. You may think they are not because they don't display their knowledge, but the ladies know when prices are right and you should see that yours are right all the time. You must go to the city market often. Not for pleasure, but for business. Even if you buy but little, your expenses will be paid by the added knowledge and push and energy you will gather. There's a dozen stores in the city that are an object lesson for any country merchant.

Sell your customers what they want. Not what you prefer to sell. It's a great mistake to do otherwise. By persuading a customer to buy goods you want to get rid of, you may make an apparent gain, but it's only apparent; the chances are you have lost a customer. Mark the price by the piece and dozen in plain figures, and stick to it. Under no circumstances should the price be changed in the presence of a customer. Tell the truth about your store and goods. To do this they must both be above suspicion. Don't be afraid to admit a fault—it makes the truth seem more real.

Make no distinction between buyer and looker. Lookers to-day will be buyers some time, and their trade is yours if you have made your store pleasant. The most tiresome shopper is the best advertiser your store could have. Treat her so she can only speak well of you. Make your store a regular information bureau.

Have the directory handy, have some one who will gather information about the trains or boats, or any other matter that people are liable to ask for. Be able to render little services. Never mind the trouble—it is making friends and customers for

your store. Show by your actions that you are pleased with the patronage your customers have given you.

Avoid servility—it's offensive and unnecessary. Be gentle, be respectful, be modest, and above all be watchful. Your customers are mostly ladies accustomed more or less to pleasant surroundings and gentle manners. Your store should come as near to this as business will allow. Do not show by your manner a haste to sell. No matter how long the customer may take, let no thought of obligation enter her mind. It is you who are under obligations to her—she came into your store to look at your goods. Whether she buys or not it was a compliment to you, and you should treat it as such. Do your business on generous principles. Good-will is part of your stock in trade, but the mean man never gathers stock of that kind. Be more than just, give good measure—nothing helps so much—rectify errors quickly without the slightest show of displeasure. Make the customer feel as if she had done you the greatest favor by reporting it.

Exchange everything that is returned in perfect condition, and do it gladly and willingly, with a smile on your face, just as if it was the greatest pleasure. You might just as well not take back the article, as to make the customer feel uncomfortable and displeased and then take it back. The good effect is lost, and quite likely you have lost a customer. Sometimes you may have to say "No," but do it in such a way that the customer's good will is yours.

Give money back when wanted. Don't ask the why or wherefore, but give it back quickly and cheerfully. The fact that they want to trade back should be enough. There's something wrong, of course, but it's time enough to find out what after the money has been returned. Then, if you manage right, you'll get it back.

These are mercantile principles upon which large and successful merchants have built their business.

WAKEFIELD SKIRT BINDING.

James Johnston & Co. carry in stock a full range of the famous "Wakefield" binding in blacks and colors. As this line of

leather bound skirt bindings is fully protected by patents, see that every yard is marked in gold letters: "Wakefield Specially Prepared Leather, Patented."



HANDKERCHIEFS.

More handkerchiefs are sold during the Christmas holiday trade than throughout the other portion of the year. See the magnificent range of these goods in every style and kind now being shown for the approaching season by the Gault Brothers Co., Ltd.

BUSINESS IN NANAIMO.

Stevenson & Co., Nanaimo, B.C., have purchased the bankrupt stock of Messrs. Sloan & Scott, who failed recently. They are closing out the stock in the old stand at reduced prices, and will combine the two stocks in one at as early a date as possible.