

EXACTIONS OF THE HARDWARE TRADE.

Few of the general lines of trade are so exacting in the price of success as general hardware. In most lines the principle of department organization and the development of specialties find ample scope, but in the general line of hardware it is less applicable. In the great jobbing houses this fact is not so marked, as the various classes of goods are generally handled separately. In the smaller stores of the retailers, however, where anything from a finishing nail to a traction engine is offered for sale, the difficulty is obvious. And it is probably true that, among a given number of men of average intelligence and information, more competent clerks could be secured for almost any other line than for the sale of hardware. It is not enough for a hardware clerk to know the difference between an axe and a handsaw, and to be able to read the price marks correctly, but he must be ready to supply the deficiency which so often exists in the knowledge of the purchaser.

In hardware, men are almost the only buyers, and, while less placable than the fair sex, are generally less well informed as to what they want. Able lawyers, learned theologians or shrewd speculators whose judgment in their particular spheres of activity is scarcely questioned, will come in quest of a screw or a piece of simple repairs with such a confusion of ideas that even the most expert salesman sends them away with just the thing of all others least suited to their purpose. It avails nothing to say that they do not know what they want—the necessity of the situation demands that the salesman shall discover from the "symptoms" what is needed. It follows, therefore, that the first-class hardware salesman is the product of long and careful training. To this the salesman must add what his special aptitude and quickness of perception can suggest from his experience with customers.—*Michigan Tradesman.*

THE GROCER AND THE KITCHEN.

It not infrequently happens that the kitchen robs a grocer of his customer, injures his reputation, calls in question his accounts and stirs up no end of trouble. This is often the case where the route system is the custom of the place or neighborhood. Scores of customers are personally unknown to the grocer, who has never met nor is likely to meet them. Orders are sent via the kitchen or given direct by its autocrat—the cook.

This means that the patronage of many of the best customers is entirely dependent upon the relations established between the driver of the wagon and the cook. In cases where a steward manages the household commissary, the case is little if any better. Bribes are demanded in the shape of a bottle of Old Rye, a dress or some other article. In many cases, a handsome fee is expected if harmony is to continue between the kitchen and the grocer. If the demands of the steward or cook are not granted, complaints may be anticipated that the butter sent was not fit for

use except as wagon grease; that the coffee was horrible; the tea of a wretched flavor; the flour no good; the ham stale and tough, if not tainted.

Sometimes the driver of a rival grocer will bribe the kitchen to spoil the goods of the competitor in order that the cook may have a good excuse for transferring the account. There is no end of the devices of the kitchen to thwart the endeavors of the grocer to please some of his best customers. What is the remedy? The answer is not easy. Some grocers allow their salesmen to bribe the kitchen, finding it more profitable to accede to the demands than to refuse. We believe the manly way is to resist every irregular demand, and wherever there is any disposition on the part of the kitchen to discredit the quality of the goods, to promptly notify its master or mistress of the situation.

It is also common for route drivers to volunteer gifts to the kitchen in order to secure heavy orders. They put a premium on theft and waste. Goods are delivered that go from the kitchen unopened to the friends of the cook. Only recently a housekeeper in looking over her storeroom found several unopened packages of oatmeal, coffee and other articles. The quantity of sugar and butter charged in her account was more than twice the consumptive capacity of the family. Is it any wonder that under such circumstances customers complain of the size of their accounts and charge the grocers with error, and intimate that there is fraud. Efforts should be made by grocers to make the acquaintance of customers; to have stores so inviting as to induce their making frequent visits. This is one reason why the fixtures and surroundings of a grocery should be in keeping with the tastes and habits of those it serves. Evils will always be present so long as human nature is as it is. The quickest and best way to reach such an evil as that under consideration is to refuse to compromise with the kitchen; in fact, with any sort of questionable practice.

DERELICTS MUST GO.

It is reported that on her last voyage from New York to Liverpool the White Star steamer Teutonic passed through a quantity of wreckage, which made it necessary for the speed of the vessel to be reduced. If the wreckage had been met with at night, or had been run into unperceived, as is often the case, and the steamer seriously damaged, the casualty would have been put down as unavoidable accident of the seas. It is among the possibilities that the *Naronic* met with some such accident. But this danger can be put among the avoidable ones of the class that Government authorities are responsible for. The navigator does his best to keep off the way of them, but he has scant knowledge of their position or extent. Derelicts are to him an unknown quantity. They appear when least expected and often at the worst time to avoid them. It is the business and duty of maritime governments to remove these avoidable dangers. They have the means and ability, and it is incomprehensible that they should not begin the work. There is a good deal heard about the police of the seas and protection of the highways of the world, but

nothing is said about keeping the highways clear of obstructions. Maritime nations combined and succeeded in clearing the seas of pirates. In removing derelicts, the task is much easier, and, although the renown and prizes may not be so great as when a pirate was taken into port, yet there must be some compensation in making navigation safer. At least the commercial navy will think that the military one is engaged in good work. When the *Maritime Register* first took up the task of having some system adopted that would clear the seas of derelicts, the undertaking seemed almost hopeless. No system had yet been adopted. No Government had yet ordered warships to clear the ocean highways of derelicts. But a public opinion has been created in favor of this course. Requests are constant from maritime organizations for the destruction of derelicts. Navy and Admiralty departments have this subject brought to their attention, and the requests are growing more and more imperative. The task is no longer hopeless. The time is not far distant when the order will go forth that naval cruisers shall engage in the peaceful destruction, or saving, whichever it may be, of castaway vessels, and the ocean highways be policed in a better way than they are at present. The derelict must go.—*Maritime Register.*

SALMON.

The *S. F. Herald of Trade* says: In Alaska, nothing is reported. Packers appear to be waiting developments. The opinion prevails that prices will open higher than had been thought even by the more bullish inclined. This opinion is doubtless grounded on reports of \$1.15 paid in New York for the 1892 pack with the view of concentrating stocks, and also a probable shortage on the Columbia of about 110,000 cases in comparison with last year's output. There is a long falling off in the pack on the rivers in California, Oregon and Washington. Columbia River advices continue to report a light catch, with fishermen greatly discouraged owing to the large July run not materializing so far this season. From British Columbia and Alaska, we have no late advices.

The *London Grocer*, June 24, reports: Salmon remains in much the same position as before, supplies being quite on an equality with the demand, which sometimes flags, and we have heard of sales being reported at a slight discount from the rates originally quoted, but the full particulars have not been allowed to transpire.

In a late circular, Hyde Modera Co., (Limited) of London, say: Several cargoes of salmon have lately arrived, but distributors having enough stock for their immediate requirements are not willing to stock further quantities unless at lower values, and, as the bulk of salmon is firmly held, holders are not disposed to let it go under the current rates. The market may, however, be described as slightly easier within the last few weeks, although the exceptionally warm weather we have had during the spring and summer should tend to improve this line, as in fact it should all classes of canned goods.