

MANAGEMENT OF A BUSINESS—Continued.

a good thing once, or so many merchants would not have taken it up, but I believe its usefulness has worn out, and, that the extensive practice that some stores make of marking their goods with odd figures has become simply ridiculous and a detriment to their business. Some time ago a certain department store had a window of very handsome lace wraps. There were five pieces only displayed in the window, on which the prices were marked, and these were the prices on them: \$49.99, \$99.99, \$149.99, \$299.99 and \$1,399.99. This system of marking prices is the worst that could be devised. It not only makes the store ridiculous in the eyes of the public, but evidently impresses buyers with the fact that the store is seeking after an odd figure, rather than seeking to mark the merchandise at a reasonable price. If I may be excused for referring to personal experience, for the second time in this article, I would quote a rule which I made for the advertising department of Siegel, Cooper Co., during my service for them, i.e.: "In marking goods for stock, as well as for advertising purposes, avoid as far as possible odd prices, such as \$1.99, \$3.98, etc., which are often used by some stores as catchpenny figures to make their goods appear cheaper than they really are. When the sum is less than \$1.95 any odd figure desired can be used, as in small amounts 1c. really means a good deal. In sums larger than \$1.95 no odd prices should be used, goods should be marked \$1.95, \$2.05, \$2.10, etc. In sums larger than \$10, goods should be marked \$10.25, \$10.50, \$10.75, \$11, etc., being multiplied by 25c. The purchasing power of the 'Big Store' should enable our buyers to sell for \$1.95 or less any goods which competitors feel called upon to mark \$1.98 or \$1.99, or to sell at \$10 any goods which competitors feel called upon to mark \$10.17, or any such odd prices." This, I believe, would be a good rule for many stores to adopt.

Overdoing Sales.

V. I have known stores to make mistakes in doing too much business. The merchant very seldom considers an overbalance of business as a detriment, but it sometimes is. In cities where goods are to be delivered, nothing enrages the customer more than to fail to get the goods which she has ordered. If your sales in certain lines are going to run so far ahead of your facilities to deliver, they are going to hurt you almost as much as doing the extra business would do you good. I have in mind a certain store in a city that makes a great feature in sales of housefurnishing goods. They will make an immense purchase of housefurnishings and have a special sale of them some Monday, advertising the lines extensively. The sales are so large that it is impossible for the ordinary delivery force to handle them, and many of the customers who bought goods on Monday are still waiting for them the following Monday. Now, it is a good thing to be able to push business to this extent, but it is very poor policy not to provide the necessary delivery facilities to take care of it. The delivery is an item of great importance and has to be watched very carefully. Sometimes it does not even pay, from a financial standpoint, to have to deliver an immense quantity of cheap housefurnishing goods. I have known storekeepers to argue after this fashion: I have got the delivery department and the delivery force, and, therefore, it does not cost me anything to deliver goods. They forget the expense of this delivery department, which might be saved if they did not have to deliver so many goods.

Errors in Measurement.

VI. I was standing in a store the other day, opposite the lace counter and noticed two clerks measuring laces for customers. One of these clerks, every time she made a sale, took hold of the piece of lace and stretched it as far as she could over the yard measure. I venture to say that every customer who bought lace and afterwards measured it when they got home, found they were short an inch to an inch and a half on every yard. The other clerk was just the opposite; she didn't

try to be accurate at all. She threw down the lace on the counter, laid it loosely over the yard measure and whacked it off anywhere within an inch or two of where it ought to be cut. Now, both of these kinds of measurement are bad. One injures the customer, and that also means the merchant, and the other injures the merchant, although it does not injure the customer. Clerks should be taught to measure goods accurately. The laces that were being sold were not very expensive, and, consequently, the house could afford to give good measure, but if over-measure is given to every customer on every purchase it would soon amount to a great deal of money, which would be a direct loss to the store. A little bit of care will remedy this, a fault which I believe is very common in many stores. See that the customer gets absolutely fair measure, but don't waste your goods. Be careful, however, to see that the customer does not get less than what she pays for.

The Sale of Remnants.

VII. If a dry goods merchant asked me what to do with his remnants, I would answer: Sell them, of course. Remnants ought not to be very hard to sell. I have seen some stores that could make a great sale of their remnants, many of them, in fact, selling out the remnants on hand so quickly that other pieces of the goods would have to be cut in order to get more remnants. Remnants must be as near as possible to a desirable length. Almost any woman knows what to do with a few yards of this or that dress fabric, and many of them even wait until they can buy a short piece, at a reduced price, rather than to have the same goods cut off the bolt. Put your remnants out on the counter. Mark them at a special price and let it be known, and I don't think you will have any trouble in selling them.

The Popular Prices Idea.

VIII. This is growing to be a medium-priced age. I mean by this that those things which have heretofore been called popular-priced, because they are neither high nor low, are now becoming more popular. I believe that this is followed in every line of business. One time in fifty a store can cater to the exclusive high-class trade and gain by it. Such stores there must be, and always will be, but the store that caters to the popular trade also encroaches upon the exclusive field every day. Again, the store that caters to the cheaper trade, the trade that wants the lowest in quality and price, is not to day growing as rapidly as its neighbor whose aim is one degree higher. This, as I have stated, is not only shown in the dry goods business, but in other lines. Take, for instance, the theatrical business. The popular prices theatre is the one that is making the most money to-day, and the one that must be called a financial success. We hear talked about everywhere that "vaudeville, vaudeville" is all the rage. All the best actors are going into vaudeville. Some of the finest theatres are running vaudeville shows. Everybody says it's vaudeville that's so popular. Now, I don't believe it. It isn't vaudeville that's so popular, it's the fact that the vaudeville theatre charges 50c. for admission, whereas the other theatres charge \$1.50 and \$2. It is the popular price of vaudeville that catches the large mass of people. Some theatrical manager is going to find this out some day and is going to make a great fortune by putting a first-class drama on the stage at 50c. Now, the store of to-day that is making the greatest success is the one that is carrying popular-priced goods. They have the fine goods for those who want them, but they have discovered the secret that there is a vast majority of people who want to pay a medium price for a good article, and there are comparatively a fewer number of people who want to pay even a little more for a better one. I don't propose to countenance poor goods at any price, but I believe that the commonsense way of merchandising to-day is to give people what they want. The people at the present time seem to be demanding popular-priced goods.