

## A CORNER FOR CLERKS

A CIRCULAR on "Good Salesmanship" has been issued by the United States Playing Card Company. In it numerous hints of value to the ambitious salesman are to be found. The circular reads after this fashion:

It is easy to sell a customer something he wants to buy. It does not require salesmanship—a child could do it. Yet, many clerks consider their duty done if they sell simply what is asked for.

Good salesmanship goes further. A good salesman might be defined as: One who sells at a profit not only what the customer asks for, but something the latter had no thought of buying until his attention was called to it.

We have in mind a progressive book store employing a number of salesmen. Among them a few rose rapidly, and are now holding positions of responsibility. Others are just where they were at the start. Doubtless, all these clerks, when a customer asked for a certain book, produced it instantly for his inspection. But the more progressive salesmen did not stop there. They showed also other books on the same or allied subjects. Books by other authors, treating the subject from other standpoints, etc. Was a scientific treatise asked for—supplemental or explanatory books were offered for examination. Was the book a novel—other recent books of fiction were displayed.

Not only this, but the tastes and habits of customers were carefully studied. Was the lady interested in flowers—the latest book on floriculture was shown her when she came into the store, although her request might have been for something quite different. In this way sales were frequently made which customers had no thought of buying on entering the store.

Then, in lines where different grades of goods were kept in stock, for instance, fancy leather goods, the better goods were shown first, and inferior goods at lower prices afterward. The difference in substance, appearance and quality were carefully pointed out, with the result, usually, that the better goods were purchased.

The clever salesman sells goods which a customer did not ask for, or articles of a better grade (and at a correspondingly better profit) than those the customer intended buying.

All of this should be done in a gentlemanly and straightforward way, to be effective. The approach should be made in a pleasant manner, the facts stated clearly and impartially, and without any undue urging on the part of the salesman. A dictatorial tone or spirit should be avoided.

If the clerk has this always in mind, it will surprise him how often and easily he can effect sales.

The average person is open to suggestion, especially along the line of his own habits and tastes.

But there is a subtle bit of flattery in presenting the higher priced article as being best fitted to the customer's preferences and means, which, in itself, often decides the matter to the dealer's advantage, since his profits are highest on the more costly goods, and the salesman's total of sales is swelled by them. The larger the salesman's total sales the more valuable is he to his employer.

When playing cards are wanted, offer Congress first. Call attention to their beauty, their high gloss finish, their gold edges, show how easily and smoothly they deal, and how clear cut and sharply printed are the faces and the large, legible indexes. Mention that for card party and home use they are much more appropriate than cards with conventional designs, that are intended rather for clubs and men's gatherings.

Keep new, fresh designs in stock, and do not hesitate to show them to customers whom you know entertain or use cards in their homes.

Only a few days ago a gentleman waiting for a prescription in a drug store was examining with interest a line of fancy holiday perfume sets displayed in one of the cases. A clerk approached him and asked: "Do you wish any perfume this evening?" "No, I think not," hesitatingly replied the gentleman. The clerk walked away. It was an opportunity wasted.

On the other hand, a lady had purchased some notions in a fancy store when the clerk, who knew from observation that she frequently entertained, remarked: "Mrs. Blank, if you have just a minute to spare, we would like your opinion of a new line of goods we have just opened. They are very dainty and stylish." The introduction attracted her attention and interest. A case of Congress cards was just being opened, and from it the salesman showed a number of the latest and prettiest backs. The lady did not leave until she examined the entire series, and before going remarked: "I cannot resist the temptation of being the first among my friends to show such beautiful cards," and gave the salesman an order for a variety of designs.

This is but a sample of the kind of salesmanship that leads to success. To attract the customer and convince him or her that their interests are best served by purchasing only articles which the salesman knows are absolutely first-class and reliable; to keep posted on the talking points of all goods in stock, both old and new; to present them in an interesting and convincing way—these are among the first principles of the art of selling goods.

The practical application of these principles will require study of both stock and of customer, but in the end it is sure to pay.

On July 27, the first envelopes were turned out at the new Barber & Ellis Company's factory at Brantford.