

THE TRADER.

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SPECIAL NOTICE.

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Editorial.

DISCOUNT SALES HUMBUG.

A few days before Christmas, we were waiting in a retail jewelry store in order to have a chat with the proprietor, when we overheard the following conversation between that gentleman and a customer, to whom he was shewing a set of colored gold earrings, in a morocco case:

CUSTOMER.—“Ten dollars you say is the price of these earrings?”

PROPRIETOR.—“Yes, sir, ten dollars is right.”

CUSTOMER.—“Does that include the leather case?”

PROPRIETOR.—“Yes, price is for earrings and case, just as you see them, and we regard them as being extra good value.”

CUSTOMER.—“Now, look here, I'll give you eight dollars for them, cash.”

PROPRIETOR.—“We can't do it, sir, our goods are marked down as low as we can afford to sell them, and our prices are all spot cash.”

CUSTOMER.—“Well, but that's only 20 per cent. off your price, and is the regular discount that all the jewelers on King street are giving; come, now, you can do that if you like; surely you can afford it just as well as they can. What do you say?”

PROPRIETOR.—“Well, I've just to say, that while we want to do business just as

much as any other house in the city, we don't want to do it under false pretences. We mark all our goods at a regular rate of profit, which is just as low as we can possibly afford to sell at, and won't admit of us taking off one per cent. discount, let alone 20 per cent. If we were to put on an extra twenty-five or thirty per cent. I suppose we could do the same as those stores you speak of, but we don't think you would be any better pleased if you know how it was done, or better off if you didn't know how it was done. We don't want to humbug you in any way, and we offer you honest goods at honest prices, which we know you can't beat if you hunt the whole city over.”

The young man went out without buying, and the proprietor thought he had wasted half an hour of a very busy day to no purpose. Next day we happened in again, and, curiously enough, while there the same young gentleman came in, and without any parley bought the earrings he had been dickering about the day previous. Now, thought we to ourselves, here is a first-class illustration of the humbuggery of discount sales. Here was a young fellow that had investigated the thing in the light of common sense, and he was apparently willing to sacrifice the advantage of the 20 per cent. discount and pay full price for his goods. Perhaps he was a fool. Well, perhaps he wasn't so much a fool as the discount sales people imagined when he refused to buy their goods. One thing is certain, that firm will never have much trouble in selling that young man again, and when he wants any goods that they have, very little time will be lost in making a bargain.

TARIFF CHANGES.

It is more than probable that the present session of Parliament will witness quite a number of changes in the rate and operation of the present tariff. Until recently it seems that the importers have been viewed by the Government simply as peop'le from whom to extract money, and beyond this they were entitled to, and have actually received little or no consideration. With the Government the interests of the manufacturers seem to have been paramount to any and all other considerations, and the Manufacturers' Association had only to express a wish in order to have it gratified. Now,

however, that dull times have caused a shrinkage in the imports and the revenue is likely to show a large falling off, the vigorous protests of importers are beginning to be heard and will probably receive thorough, though tardy, attention. As long as times were good, the Government could afford to ignore these complaints, but now, with dull times staring them in the face, some change must be made, and “Barkis” will now have to be “the friend” of the importer as well as of the manufacturer. If the Minister of Finance desires to make any changes for the benefit of the jewelry and fancy goods' trades, and we trust he does, he can, we think, do them a great deal of service without at all impairing the revenue.

We have always contended that the present rate of duty on jewelry (20 to 25 per cent.) is excessive, and by its excess defeats the very end it was intended to serve, viz.: protection to Canadian manufacturers and a means of raising a larger revenue. Could the present high duty be collected we would consider it a positive advantage to both manufacturer and jobber to have it kept in force, but unfortunately it is not and cannot be collected alike from all, and its very high rate makes it an incentive to the dishonest trader to smuggle goods which under a low tariff he would never think of attempting. Jewelry differs from nearly all other goods imported, inasmuch as while valuable, it is comparatively small in bulk, and therefore all the more easily secreted and smuggled. Those who know the trade best know that the present high duty is simply an incentive to smugglers and that there are more smuggled goods coming into Canada to-day than there ever was before. This is especially the case with American made goods, which can and are smuggled across in an innumerable number of places along the two thousand mile boundary line that the imagination of the Government has stretched across this continent. Every retail dealer in Canada knows that the country swarms with these itinerant so-called “Jobbers,” who unblushingly advance as a reason why they can undersell respectable houses, the fact that they are not fools enough to pay duty on goods that they can so easily smuggle. Of course there is a danger attached to the buying of such goods, or even to having them in one's possession, but there are those to be found who will run this risk in order to make a larger