IVORY FOR CUTLERY PURPOSES.

English ivory dealers and makers of ivory and pearl handles for cutlery purposes have not been very busy for some time past. The trade with America in ivory-mounted cutlery has declined considerably, but there now appears to be a reaction, and the demand for ivory and pearl scales is increasing. The last London ivory sale was one of the worst attended that has been for many months, and much of the stock was inferior, some of it having been left over from previous auctions. Altogether about 120 tons were offered, including 30¼ tons of East Indian, 39 tons of Egyptian, 48¼ tons of West Coast African, and about 3 tons of miscellaneous lots. In consequence of the absence of many of the principal buyers, prices of nearly every variety declined. The McKinley Bill was in some measure held responsible for this, for owing to the fact that cut ivory sent to the United States is now liable to a duty of 40 per cent., while raw is admitted into the American ports free of charge, cut billiard pieces, as imported from Bombay, declined £10 per cwt. West Coast African, which is specially suitable for the Sheffield cutlery trades, declined about £3 per cwt.; hard Egyptian went down £2 to £3 per cwt., but soft Egyptian showed no falling off

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE RETAIL TRADE.

The following is extracted from the correspondence of a writer signing "C. L. Stearcy," in the *American Storekeeper*: "If you are worthy of the confidence of your neighbours go to work with a vim and try to get every good new customer possible by being polite and attentive. Be the first man to open your store in the morning and the last man to close; take as much pains to wait on a child as on a grown person; never misrepresent goods, but do a straightforward, square business, and you will gain custom. Keep your own secrets; if you are making $5,000 per annum do not tell any one, as human nature is weak and jealous. If you are losing money and cannot stop the leak don't tell it, but close out to some man that thinks he can make money, and try a new location. Don't try to be a successful merchant and at the same time run the political machinery in your "district:" it will be too great a strain on your nerves.

It falls to the lot of only a few merchants to be able to run a strictly cash store, but they have to sell on credit in farming communities, etc. Don't imagine that when you are selling a great many goods on credit at a good profit you are getting rich. You will soon run against a solid rock wall, and will have to take to the woods. Scrutinize closely all the surroundings of your customers who desire credit. Have a specified limit agreed to and thoroughly understood by customers who desire credit, and do not fail to stop when the limit is reached. When a customer is not entitled to credit, say "No," politely, but positively. Be firm in all your transactions. There can be considerable ingenuity and tact about refusing a man credit and still retain him for a cash customer. As a general thing, avoid giving credit to squatters and transient customers, as they generally fold their tents and quietly slip away to try their credit on another confiding merchant.

In giving credit always remember that you are the party that is extending the accommodation, and not the customer. When you have your goods credited out you are at the mercy of your trade, and have to depend on their prosperity for your success. If you owe a lot of minor accounts in your neighborhood it is your duty to settle up by cash or note. Don't permit them to accumulate. Short settlements make good friends. In collecting debts remember the old Quaker advice that there is more virtue in a gill of oil than a barrel of vinegar; therefore do not abuse a man when he owes you, or crowd him when he is down, but trade your bad debts to him for anything that has a market value, and you will realize more than in a legal process, and still have him for a cash customer. Never leave a debt open on your books; no matter how small, close it up by note, and then there will be no misunderstanding.

Don't forget that the credit business is dangerous and requires much watching and prayer to avoid the deadfall. In every community there are customers who regard all merchants with doubt; a good idea is to present each with a pass book and require them to bring it and record each transaction and they will soon get over it. Have every transaction thoroughly under stood before customers leave. Keep a pass book in your pocket to enter each sale when made, and invariably at night copy same in day book. Keep you ledger posted up; never get way behind; it is a mark of laziness and shows that you do not keep in advance of your business. After you have been in business 40 years you can still learn something new. To sum up, a merchant's life is one of toil and trouble; all that embark in this business must begin with a determination to keep a firm and steadfast grip on their business. At times it will seem dark and gloomy, but will eventually land you on the top round. Frequently an embryo bankrupt, with a little money or brains, will open a rival store and tear up the gravel generally for a few days by selling goods at ruinous prices and take every underhand advantage of your trade, but by and by all will be still except the red flag fluttering to the breeze about his store. As a general thing, merchants are always the first approached for all enterprises that help build up the country, and it is a constant thing for them to feed and clothe the widow and orphan, the humble and down trodden all over the land, and for these many unpublished charities let us hope they are recorded on the Cr. side of that Great Ledger in that country where no shoddy goods go.

"BULLS" AND "BEARS"

A "bull" is a fellow who believes in everything, and a "bear" is a chap who believes in nothing. The former will devoutly take stock in the wildest flights of fancy, while the latter discredits the existence of his very self. As a rule, we must say we prefer the mind of the "bull" if we must choose between them, for we have but little patience with the croaker, and the man who delights in the total destruction of values. "Give it to her!" yowled a blatant, loud-mouthed fellow in the pit the other day. "She can never get low enough for me. If I could get the stuff for nothing, I should try to make you pay me for taking it." "Wow!" shrieked a rampant "bull" a few days later, "up she goes! This is just a starter. A dollar and a quarter for wheat will be low in a few days." The trouble with both of these factions is that they never know what an extreme is; they will never admit the existence of a limit at either end of their respective lines. The figure they set is an ignis fatuus which recedes as it is approached. Given dollar wheat, the "bull" yearns for and believes in an ultimate price of one and a quarter; put the price down to 50 cents, and the "bear" hungers for a further decline.

WHAT IS IN A NAME?

The cheap name of a place often leads people to make bad bargains. The reputation of the store as a cheap place to deal at is as dust scattered in the eyes of those who go to buy a particular article there. They pay without question a price they would haggle about elsewhere, and the article bought is as likely to be dear as cheap. This is the strong point in the position of the dealer who trades upon his fame as a price-cutter. He does cut prices, but he also pieces on profits in lines wherein he can baffle simple methods of detection. Fancy goods, notions, small wares generally, lend themselves admirably to the purposes of such dealers. On trashy stock they can get the price of first-class stock. There is many a line in which the department store may steal a march on the customer who goes to it for bargains. The most is made of the confusion between the cheap name of the store and the supposed cheap price of the article sold.