

## MANAGEMENT OF A BUSINESS—Continued.

because soap is an article of every day use, and a great many customers buy their soap by the dozen or half dozen cakes. Again, in a sale of sugar, I should not think it would be reasonable to limit the sale to one lb. to a customer, but would rather allow them 10 lbs., or even 25 lb., which is a sufficient quantity to be called a reasonable purchase.

## THE RIGHT KIND OF SPECIAL SALES.

IV. Special sales are sometimes an important factor in dull seasons as well as in other times. If you are going to have a special sale, go about it right, make a success of it, or do not have it. Do not have a special sale unless you have something special to sell. The so-called special sale of regular merchandise at regular prices has been worn out long ago. Make the first day of your special sale a great success at any reasonable cost, and then those who attend this day will help the sale along with their tongue advertising. First appearances go a long way. Do not start your sale until you are ready, and then start it with a will. Decorate your store with merchandise; place price tickets on whatever goods you have to sell; announce your special sale in whatever way you may deem best, so that the public will know when to expect it. Special sales which you wish to repeat from time to time, such as semi-annual or annual sale of any line of goods, will be found more profitable on second, third, or subsequent sales, than the first, provided the first sale has been a success. If this is your first special sale, be sure to make a success of it, no matter what the cost.

## EMPLOYEES' REMARKS OVERHEARD BY CUSTOMERS.

VI. In going among a vast number of stores, as I frequently do, I hear many things said by the employees, many times purely in jest, but which are taken in dead earnest by the customer who hears the remark. Try to impress upon your people that what they say to each other, if overheard by the customers, has sometimes a greater effect than if it was said to the customer in person. Many customers have the idea that the clerks are honest in their talks to the public, and, therefore, the jesting remarks made on the side are taken as the truth. In a dry goods store in New York, some time since, at the dress goods counter were sitting two persons making a purchase. One was an employee, permitted to shop during business hours, and the other was a customer, just in the act of buying a dress from a piece of gray cloth. The salesman behind the counter called the other employee's attention to the same goods, asking how it would suit for the dress that the employee wished to buy. Evidently, in a half joking, yet thoughtless, way, the employee replied: "Oh, you can't beat me into taking that." The lady customer about to buy dropped her intended purchase with a suddenness which surprised the salesman. She, perhaps, only heard the word beat, and knew of its application to the merchandise in question, and felt that the employee, who evidently knew what she was talking about, was insinuating that she was being beat into buying the goods. Here is another case. Recently, in a Broadway store, that is supposed to be strictly one price, a conversation was carried on by two employees, which evidently made the dozen or more customers who heard it believe that the house was not as one-price as it claimed, but, if occasion necessitated, made special prices for special individuals. The real circumstance, had it been known, was that a certain piece of merchandise had fallen on the floor earlier in the day and become soiled. The head of the department, whose business it was to make the price on the goods to be sold, had agreed with the salesman to make a special price on it because it was soiled, but had forgotten to say just what price it should be sold at. In the meantime, a customer came in to buy the identical piece, and the salesman, instead of walking over to the head of the department and asking him privately what special

price he had concluded to make, sings out across the store, so that everybody could hear it: "Mrs. B.— wants to know what is the special price you will make her on this, it is marked 75c." The head of the department thoughtlessly answered back: "Sell it to her for 50c." The persons who overheard this, not knowing the circumstances, evidently drew a wrong inference from it.

Watch your clerks, watch your heads of departments, and watch yourself. Caution your clerks to be very careful in their remarks to one another, and, if they have anything to say to one another, say it privately where it cannot be misunderstood.

## THE PROFIT LOCATED.

VII. There ought to be some definite means, in any store carrying separately several lines of goods, for the proprietor to know which line is paying and which is not. Supposing the store carries clothing, shoes, hats, dress goods and men's furnishings, and lumps all the returns together, it is impossible to tell where loss occurs and where the largest profit occurs. A Boston merchant complained that his profits were not satisfactory and called in an expert to determine what was the matter. The principal departments in the store were dry goods, carpets and furniture. An examination showed that the carpet man had been losing the money and eating up the profits of the others. This had not been discovered because all the expenses and profits had been lumped together. Of course, there may sometimes be small or no profit on some staples that have to be carried simply because you are expected to have them, but surely these lines are not numerous.

## GETTING THE VALUE OF ECONOMY.

VIII. The merchant is told to practise economy, and the advice is sound. There is real and spurious economy. Being stingy in the outlay for necessary expenses is not true economy. Let me illustrate: A merchant decides that the store is not light enough and puts in, at some cost, one or two new windows. But, if the windows are not kept clean, the outlay is largely lost. Or, suppose that the merchant, from the class of trade he does, finds that it pays him to use good stationery. If he keeps to ordinary printed letterheads, as being just as good as the better-looking lithographed ones, then his economy is misplaced. Or, assuming that after spending a couple of hundred dollars in improving the windows, no extra labor is bestowed on trimmed displays, and the trimmer is kept so busy inside the store that no additional advantage is secured from the extra window accommodation, then the expected profitable result is not secured from false economy.

## RECIPROCITY CONSIDERED IN SOME QUARTERS.

A great many merchants, who came into town from local points during September, reported trade in their districts to be distinctly better. Mr. Tyndale, of Arthur, Ont., said that in his district the crops are better, notwithstanding the injury to the potatoes by frost in July. Merchants were taking a certain amount of interest in prospects of reciprocity at the Quebec Conference. In the Arthur district, for instance, free trade in barley would be appreciated, as a high quality of that article was grown there. As the United States needed barley, it was hoped that something would come out of an arrangement.

## THE DISCOUNT TO DRESSMAKERS.

The dry goods merchants of Brantford, feeling that they have been giving too liberal discount to dressmakers, decided unanimously to allow only 5 per cent. discount on and after September 10. This step was taken owing to the close margin of profit at which goods are handled.