

nebulous clouds blown high in air, and the preliminaries were at an end.

"I've canvassed the whole situation," was Bill's introduction, "you must either call on Reynolds in New York to-morrow and induce him to take back the bulk of the goods, or else launch a courageous advertising campaign that'll sweep the decks. If you decide to accept the initial course, quantities of future business will have to be guaranteed to the jobber for coming to your aid, and it's just possible he may demand advanced prices on early deliveries. In any event, your department will be out the freight both ways."

"A resignation rather than that," declared Livingstone, emphatically. "I won't sacrifice every shred of business sentiment and honor to the mere holding of a situation. If a man can't qualify for a position on his merits he should be reduced to the ranks. Besides, it would be making the firm pay for my mistakes and incompetence."

"Your're a brick, Dave, and an orator, too," cried Jones, emphatically. "I knew you'd turn down that proposition. Order me to start a big advertising campaign at once. You can't lose."

Livingstone was dubious at first, but seeing no other course open, eventually agreed. He argued, however, that the necessary decisive selling should be sought for at the Xmas Sale, now only three weeks off. In this he was strongly opposed by Jones, who insisted that an event of such importance would be minimized by the low-priced attractions of other departments, and must be brought on without delay.

After a veritable flood of argument, the latter's opinion prevailed, and Jones received orders to commence a generous series of sale ads. at once.

"Win or lose, my department is charged with the newspaper bills," cautioned Livingstone, "use all the space necessary, but not a single line more. I'll leave preparatory orders for the assistant manager, and be back myself in time for the opening, Tuesday morning."

On the way to the metropolis, the step he had taken seemed a rash one to Dave

Livingstone. If the sale failed, there would be a big hole in his small savings before another situation as good as the present one was secured. And then his wife, so susceptible to worry, would conjure up an endless train of disasters. During the entire journey he weighed and measured, and measured and weighed. Now the "pros" were up and again the "cons." Finally a compromise caught his fancy, and he wired Bill:

"Keep big sale ads. out of morning papers. Letter follows."

The telegram reached Jones soon after "copy" had been sent down to the different composing rooms, and his first impulse was to have it returned.

"Here, Fred," he called to the office boy.

Then a thought struck him, "Dave's married, I'm single." The messenger was dismissed, down came the roll top on his desk, and he hurried to the book department.

"I know you've received instructions from Mr. Livingstone," said Bill to the assistant manager, "but let me urge upon you the necessity of having the most perfect arrangements for the sale of the library sets—clear counters for inspection, at least one hundred price cards, announcements in all our bulletins, extra clerks, and a dozen auxiliary cash boxes for the pneumatic tubes. I'll see to it myself that you get the two best Craig Street windows."

When Dave's special delivery letter arrived the next morning, Bill read what he had already surmised, a veto of the remaining ads. and the expression of a wish that the sale hang fire till Xmas week, when it would command better chances of success.

The note was carefully folded, creased, and laid away with the telegram in Bill Jones' inside pocket.

And the big sale ads. went on.

III.

"Gee whiz!" yelled an office boy, as the great front doors swung open for business Tuesday morning, "I guess the bargain hunters are out for fair."