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PROGRESSIVE STOREKEEPING.

A MONTHLY ARTICLE ON THE PROPER MANAGEMENT, SYSTEM, ETC., OF AN UP-TO-DATE RETAIL BUSINESS.

Specially written for THE DRY GOODS REVIEW.

By CHAS. F. JONES, NEW YORK.

Pointer to Salesmen.

Salesmen should try to know their business thoroughly. The salesman of to-day must necessarily know more about the goods that he is selling and the technical points of the business than the salesman of 25 years ago. Intelligent salespeople are the real want of the merchant at the present time. They are really hard to get, and where they are secured they command good salaries. The intelligent salesman can nearly always count on receiving double the salary that can be earned by the one who is not posted.

Know your goods thoroughly. If possible, try to know them just as thoroughly as the head of the store who is over you. Learn all the technical points of the manufacture, of the real fibre of which the goods are composed. Be sure you know the values of the goods well enough to tell in a moment whether they are very cheap or only reasonably so.

A Tale of Two Cities.

The writer of this article once upon a time made a trip from one city to another. The city from which he came was one of what we call moderate enterprise, but had quite a large business on account of its own and the neighboring population, which, taken altogether, amounted to more than 200,000 persons. The merchants in this city were fairly progressive, but made no particular boast of setting the world afire, and were all supposed to be doing a fair amount of business at a good living profit.

The city to which he went was one of unusual size, and one which has the reputation of being one of the greatest and most enterprising in the country. The stores in this city have grown to enormous proportions, and have the name the world over of being the cheapest and most liberal of any others. Yet, when the writer came to the larger city and began to look into the inside workings of business, and notice the different prices at which various goods were sold, he found that, although the stores had the name of being wonderful bargain-givers, and were known everywhere by the name of great price cutters, still, taking the stocks as a whole, these stores in the larger cities, in nearly every instance, sold goods at a higher price than they were sold in the smaller town, and, almost without exception, the gross profits which the merchants made on the

goods were from 10 to 15 per cent. higher than the merchants in the smaller city could get.

This seemed exceedingly strange, and it set the writer to wondering how it was that this large city and these large stores should have the name everywhere for enterprise and low prices, while the stores in the smaller city, which sold the cheaper, were, as a rule, called high-priced and old fogey.

As the subject was investigated a little more closely, however, he began to notice one thing—that there were some instances in which these large stores sold goods wonderfully cheap, much cheaper, in fact, than the goods could be even manufactured at. This at first seemed a little queer. What could be the object in selling goods at such ridiculously low prices? For instance, in one case a certain store advertised a well-known dress lining which usually sells at 25 and 35c. a yard, for 8c. These goods cost a great deal more than this selling price and what could be the object in taking so popular an article and disposing of it at perhaps one-fourth of what it sells for in many stores?

The writer thought he would go to the store which made the offering and see what information could be gained on the subject. When he got to the store he found it packed with eager buyers, not only around the immediate counter where these goods were being slaughtered, but the majority of those persons who came to buy the bargain advertised had gone all over the store buying other goods which they might be in need of.

On inquiring of the manager how the business was, he replied that it was splendid. "We are offering the people some bargains to-day which they cannot resist."

"But," the writer asked, "how can you afford to sell these goods which you advertise at so much less than cost?"

The reply was: "Oh, that is only done to bring the people to the store. They will not come unless there is some unusual inducement held out to them, but when they do come they buy enough goods at a regular profit to more than make up for the loss which we sustain on the linings."

A further careful examination into the matter and visits to several other stores where sales were being conducted in a