

for an intelligent man will and should have due consideration of the interest of the firm for which he works.

#### SPECIAL BUYING FACILITIES.

I sometimes think that some merchant attempts to make cheap prices, feeling that he has superior ability to buy his goods better and cheaper than his competitors, and has a real advantage over them, and for this reason goes into the market and makes very low prices, feeling that he can afford to do so. It is possibly true that all of us get some specials which do not go to the ordinary buyer who does not keep strictly up with the market, but this is an exception and not the rule, and it is usually not articles on which he would depend for affecting the general profits of the business to any great extent. My general observation has been that the jobber who is able to pay promptly for what he buys, and has an established credit and ability to dispose of goods in quantities, usually buys his goods at the very best market prices; for there are salesmen representing factories visiting him frequently, who are all anxious to obtain his order, and will name him the very best price they can or are allowed to; besides, we have usually noticed that these special deals, instead of being a blessing to him, are usually a hindrance. He seeks with this leverage to force sales, which may be necessary on account of the surplus taken, and gives away more in his selling price than he saved in buying, and thus demoralizes the market prices, setting a precedent for himself as well as his competitor which is sure to cause him trouble in future. It will, therefore, be a much safer basis for us to proceed upon that our customer is buying his goods just about as cheaply as we are, and for us to demand a fair return for ours.

#### GIRLS IN U.S. DEPARTMENT STORES.

ONE reason why the agitation against department stores is so much bitterer in certain parts of the States is that girls get such small wages they are often forced into a life of shame—the cost of living being higher in the States. One western U.S. paper tells a story of a young girl employed in a city department store at a salary of three dollars a week. A couple of worthy ladies became interested in the girl, and realizing that she couldn't live decently on such meagre salary went to the proprietor of the store and interceded in her behalf. He bluntly told them there were a thousand girls waiting to take the place of the girl in question, and that if she couldn't live on the wages paid her, she could do as his other girls do—have a fellow. The paper says: "The reply was brutal, to be sure, but it is the key-note of the department store, which has come to be regarded in some parts of the States as the breeding place of infamy. While in New York last fall I was approached one evening by a good-looking young girl apparently not more than sixteen years of age who was out 'soliciting.' Her face bore no traces of dissipation or waywardness, and I stopped long enough to ask her why she had chosen the path of sin and death. Her childish reply was that she was compelled to work for \$2.75 a week and that she was obliged to sell her soul and body in addition to her services at the big store, to make a living."

It is not charged that this state of things exists in Canada.

#### CANADIAN EMBROIDERIES.

Braid and braid ornaments are very much in vogue for dress and jacket trimming. They have been a good deal worn this spring, and bid fair to become popular in the fall. Loops and sets in military designs, boleros, etc., are quite fashionable, made up of different kinds of braid, mohair tubular being the most used. Messrs. Moulton & Co., Montreal, are bringing out a large range of these trimmings of their own manufacture, and in anticipation of a large demand are putting in additional modern machinery for making and finishing the goods.

#### A CRITIC WALKS ROUND

AND POINTS OUT DEFECTS IN STORE APPEARANCE AND MANAGEMENT.

I HAVE just been looking through the business of a store in a city of 20,000 people. As part of my work I went as an unknown visitor into most of the leading stores of the place. One thing that was made very clear to me was the fact that probably not one store in twenty, the country through, makes anything like the attractive show of goods that is easily possible. This was a thrifty city, a driving, wide-awake, manufacturing city. And yet scarcely a store in the place was doing, either with its windows, or its stock, anything like what should have been done.

I noticed also an almost universal absence of signs or cards on goods and comparatively little in the way of price tickets. Such price-tickets as were used were mostly pencil-marked on inch-square bits of cardboard. As a rule the prices were not in plain figures, but were "private."

It surprised me very much that such antiquated notions should be so much in evidence. In some of the stores, limited use was made of crude price signs, evidently painted with the cork of an ink bottle. Of course, such work told as clearly as more finished figuring and lettering would have done, that prices were so and so—sometimes that they were reduced. But I could not help feeling that such sloppy work detracted from the tone of the store. It made the goods seem cheap and common.

To be sure, since there was nothing better in the city to compare with, the average visitor very likely did not draw a conclusion from these signs, at least not one against the grade of any of the stores. But suppose some one of those storekeepers were to introduce a better grade of work, neater figures, neater letters, something bright and snappy in the wording of the signs—I have no doubt that he would at once feel the good effect of it. Where all is on a general level of excellence anything below that level is conspicuous for its badness. Where everything is on a general level of sloppiness anything considerably better is bound to be relatively striking.

Another thing that struck me was the tendency to monotony in goods displayed. The dry goods man almost invariably showed shelves crowded with cloths of one sort or another, but without any break or any display of their qualities or colors. It only needed a careless fold of a few loose ends of some bright weaves to give a touch of life and brightness to a whole counter. There wasn't a bit of it. If the "Quaker Meeting" idea could be materialized in a stock display this is precisely what would result. It was just the same with cutlery and glassware and almost everything that could be made monotonous.

Now I am free to admit that the customers in these various stores took it all as a matter of course. Very likely not one of them has a thought of anything different, probably not one of them has a criticism to make on the score of stock display, or signs, or price tickets. But if they were to go into one of these stores and see the touch of modern methods, not one of them could fail to be impressed with the new life in that business. It would surely make them rub their eyes, it would make them talk, it would surely awaken them to new regard for that store.

We hear now and again of some merchant who is making a stir in his town. People flock to his store. He "gets the trade." Look into his methods and I'm sure you'll find that while he may not be noticeably better than his merchant neighbors in most big things he has taken care to outstrip them by getting away from some of the hundred little things that are earmarks of cross-roads storekeeping.