

THE CANADIAN DRY GOODS REVIEW

VOL. IX.

MONTREAL AND TORONTO, AUGUST, 1899.

No. 8.

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 Charles F. Jones, New York.

System in Delivery of Goods.

The stores that make any pretence of delivering parcels can make friends daily by prompt and regular deliveries of all purchases, or they can become ridiculous in the eyes of patrons by having a lot of "ifs and ands" connected therewith and making promises only to be broken.

If delivery of merchandise is attempted at all, it should be done in a free and open manner and with a system which will not prove an annoyance to all concerned—salespeople and patrons.

Appoint some place in the store for a bundle or parcel counter, and place a competent boy or girl in charge, one who is capable of taking the address and forwarding it promptly and properly.

If parcels are to be sent at a specified time to depots for out-of-town customers, it is asking a great deal of salespeople, especially if it be in a busy season, to see that the purchasers are not disappointed. This is generally the result where things are allowed to care for themselves.

If the merchant keeps a delivery horse and wagon let him not be afraid to keep it moving in accommodating patrons, because every effort to please counts, in these days of close competition. He should not act as if his heart's strings were about to be severed every time there is a parcel to deliver, or make apologies to customers in the frantic effort to excuse his shortcomings.

The merchant of to-day must not be afraid to make some concessions to his trade, and mask, as far as possible, any naturally selfish traits which are prone to creep out in his commercial intercourse with his fellows.

The day of take all and grant nothing has passed, so, whatever is done, is done as pleasantly as possible and the little sacrifice made for patrons' convenience will amply repay.

If a merchant does not approve of parcel delivery let him say so like a man, then, those who insist upon having their goods delivered can go elsewhere, but, if he makes any pretensions in this direction, let it be in an obliging and business-like manner.

Taste in Buying.

It is a great thing for a buyer to have good taste in selecting goods and in judging colors, and it is one of the accomplishments which, I am sorry to say, is very rare in some places. But, not long ago, I came across a dress goods buyer who had such good taste that he

really lost money every year for the firm with which he was connected. He was a first-class judge of styles, fabrics and colors. He knew to a dot which were the best goods, which were the novelties, and he had the reputation among the jobbers of buying the most tasteful line of goods that was sold throughout that section of the country in which he lived.

This buyer, however, had a taste which was far above the tastes and desires of the class of trade which patronized his store. You could go into his stock any day and pick out the loveliest goods and the handsomest colors which were to be found anywhere, and yet every year that he conducted the dress goods department he lost money for his employers.

The simple fact that a man has good taste in buying what would be suitable for the ladies with whom he associated in daily life does not always avail him in his business. In this case it was not the kind of taste that would render his business successful. He bought the best and prettiest that was going, but that was not what the patrons of his store wanted. They were of a class of people who could not appreciate the novelties which he bought, and, consequently, the goods were slow of sale and could only be moved at all by selling them at prices lower than they cost.

This kind of good taste is to be avoided in all dry goods stores. Do not buy goods which would please yourself or your wife; but buy goods which you know will please your customers; cultivate a taste for such things as will sell well, rather than for such things as look beautiful to your own artistic eye.

Unsalable Stock.

The greatest evil that exists in the dry goods business of to-day is probably the accumulation of unsalable stock. This is caused by a great many different things, and it is only by watching all the points that it can be avoided to any great extent.

In the first place, one way which old stocks accumulate is because the buyer very frequently has a short memory, and, on top of that, a disinclination towards very much investigation as to the condition of his stock. Buyers very frequently invest in a line of goods, say, early in the season, and if the article sells reasonably well, a little later on they are tempted to buy another line of the same goods, or to reorder their first bill without looking into the