

hundreds of instances—indeed they are of every day occurrence—where orders are received by letter from customers whom they are only too anxious to oblige, but which are so obscure that it is only one chance in half-a-dozen that they can be properly executed without communicating with the sender in order to find what he really wants.

Thus, take a few of the most common things in the trade and let us see how they are often ordered: Mr. A wants a particular kind of watch case to suit a good customer who is in a great hurry, so he at once wires to his jobber as follows: "Express immediately one 4 oz. case." His jobber gets the message in due course, but is at once met with the query, "What kind of a case does he really want?" The writer knew exactly what he wanted, and he evidently thought that the jobber would know all about it too, for the only bit of explanation he vouchsafes is that it must be 4 oz. Whether it is to be open-faced or hunting, key or stem wind, plain or engraved, or silver or albatra cap, he says nothing, and the jobber, in a quandary, has either to fill the order at random, send him a complete assortment on approval from which to select one, or write to ask him for full particulars. The jobber is not always in a position to send every such bungler a full assortment of the goods he orders, and is therefore compelled to resort to either the first or the last method mentioned of overcoming the difficulty and is not unfrequently rewarded for his prudence by receiving a letter from the offender, telling him that he has bungled the order and don't know his business, or that his delay in waiting for the explanation of so plain an order, has lost a sale as his customer wouldn't wait, or some similar tirade on the jobber's incompetency and the writer's own smartness.

The ordering of a watch case is only one solitary instance of how orders, even for simple things, may be, and are bungled, and the instances could be multiplied almost indefinitely did the occasion demand it. Another and very common thing in ordering, is to say "Send me such an article—the same as I had before," or "the same as I had last time." This is not quite so bad as the former method of ordering, but if the person is in the habit of getting goods frequently it is not only puzzling to the jobber, but takes up a great deal of his time to find

out from his books what his customer did really have on a previous occasion. Life is too short and profits in the wholesale jewelry business too small to allow of such a system of ordering coming into general use, not to say anything of the liability to make mistakes that such a system must necessarily produce.

There are a few simple, common sense rules that should always be observed in ordering, the observance of which would make things run far more smoothly between the buyer and seller.

1. Never mix an order and a letter together. Write your letter the same as if you had no order at all, and put your order on a separate sheet, or on another part of the same sheet. Don't mix your order and letter up like the materials for an omelette.

2. Always order goods by number, when there is a number to order by, and don't forget to give the price at the same time.

3. If the goods are not known by numbers, give a full description of what you want, mentioning size, style, make, material, quality and price.

4. If the style is very peculiar, a rough sketch is oftentimes a great help to the jobber, and insures your getting pretty near what you want.

5. Don't be afraid of giving too much description; a long description is far better than none and will at least give the jobber an insight into your wants.

6. Write plainly, and always copy your orders, so that if any mistake occurs you will know for sure on whom to lay the blame.

Selected Matter.

CULLED PHILOSOPHY.

You may notch it on de palin's as a mighty resky plan

To make our judgment by de clo's dat kivers up a man;

For I hardly need to tell you how you often come across

A fifty dollar saddle on a twenty dollar hoss; An' wukin' in de low groun's you diskliver as you go

Dat de fines' shuck may hidede meanes' nubbin in a row!

I neber judge o' peopple dat I meets along de way By de places dat dey cum fum and de houses whar dey stay!

For de baniam chicken's awful fond o' roostin pretty high,

An de turkey buzzard sails above de eagle in de sky:

Dey ketches little minners in de middle ob de sea, An' you fin's de smalles' possum up de bigges' kind o' tree.

—The Century.

CONFESSION OF A BRIC-A-BRAC DEALER.

"A word as to buying cheap imitations of articles which are not susceptible of being fairly reproduced," said the old dealer in bric-a-brac. To purchase an imitation of *cloisonne* ware, for example, is to make a bad error in taste, for its beauty depends, not upon its form or color, but on its exquisite handiwork, a quality of which no imitation can give the least idea. Here is a piece of imitation Japanese *cloisonne*. It is of copper, like the genuine, and, for cheap enamel, has a rich appearance. Now examine it beside an original piece. The imitation, you observe, becomes dull and tawdry looking, and the colors do not appear fresh or distinct. It is, however, in its base imitation of tracery that the thing shows out really false and abominable, the lines of gold or brass are daubed on with a brush. In the genuine article the markings between the colors and all of the traceries are firm and clear, for the point in *cloisonne* is to tool little gutters of metal in the copper, and press in the fine wires, golden or brazen. No imitation can give any idea of the effects to be gained in this way.

"The bit of imitation *cloisonne* I have shown you is of home manufacture, and is bad enough to protect the buyer; the really dangerous imitations are made by the Japanese themselves, for it is a sad fact that the American demand for cheap art goods has demoralized the best artists in the world in this kind of work. Beware of *cloisonne*. The most deceptive thing in bric-a-brac I ever saw was a so-called *cloisonne* vase sold as damaged. The injury consisted of a break in the metal only half an inch long, but sufficient to disclose the fine threads of the tracery, which had in fact been torn from their beds. As the break was susceptible of perfect repair, the object brought a high price. On examination it was found that apart from the threads laid bare there was not a single *cloisonne* wire in the vase: all the rest of the tracery had been painted on, the break having been especially made to show a construction which did not exist in fact. The article was worthless.

"There is one point in the purchase of bric-a-brac in which we Americans are egregiously deceived. We import large quantities of several kinds of Japanese and Chinese art goods which had pre-