

Advertising

Practical Hints on Advertising

By CHARLES AUSTIN BATES, New York.

The other day I talked to the manager of one of the leading retail houses in Canada. He said that they had about decided to cut down their newspaper advertising two or three thousand dollars in the ensuing year, and to use this money in offering special bargain inducements. That is to say, he proposes to lose two or three thousand dollars on special sales for the purpose of increasing the acquaintance and prestige of the store.

* * *

To demonstrate exactly how this special bargain sale business works, I will recite an experience of my own. In a department store I organized a sale of house-furnishing goods. We advertised a large number of items at cost, and, in some cases, considerably less than cost. The cuts were generally made on low-priced articles, so that we could sell at half-cost in a good many cases and not lose very much money. Every bargain advertised was genuine. Every price was stated exactly as it was. If we said that a 25 cent article would be sold at 9 cents, exactly that thing was done. We found at the close of the two days' sale that we had sold \$900 worth of goods—about double the normal sales for those days—that we had sold \$100 worth of the goods that were advertised, on which we had lost \$9. The sale was a perfectly straight business proposition. Nobody was fooled by it. There was no attempt or desire to fool anybody. It is on exactly this same principle that every bargain sale is managed.

* * *

Women are not fooled by bargain sales. The merchant probably could not fool them if he wished. For my part, I believe a man is much easier to fool than a woman, and that the merchant who attempts to build a business by "hoodooing" women is pretty sure to come to grief.

* * *

Now, I presume that you can't advertise bargains in lumber, for instance. I don't suppose that this form of bargain counter advertising would go in the lumber business. Nevertheless, if I were in the lumber business I would make a

struggle to do something of that kind occasionally. The idea to be used in advertising a lumber business is just the same as that to be used in advertising any other business. It is the same with the iron business, the steel business, or "any old business." The desire on the part of the dealer is to convey convincing information to the consumer. He wants to tell prospective buyers why they should make their purchases in one particular lumber yard or iron store. He wants to tell them all the advantages that are offered. If possible, he wants to occasionally offer some little advantage in prices. In other words, he wants to advertise just about as he would if he were advertising a bargain counter.

* * *

I have never been able to see the objection to advertising more than one thing at a time. There are some ad writers who say: "The multi-bargain kind of advertising cripples the writer and bewilders the reader." That's a mistake. The multi-bargain kind of advertising is the kind that draws a lot of people into the store, makes business boom. Look at the Wanamaker advertising in Philadelphia and New York; Siegel-Cooper's, in Chicago and New York; R. H. White & Company, in Boston; Bloomingdale Brothers', Macy's and the rest of them in New York, and you will see the effect of advertising more than one thing at a time. Day after day and week after week, they publish long lists of bargains, and these advertisements fill the store with buyers.

* * *

There is no reason in the world why an advertisement should be confined to one item if you have more than one item to advertise. The one item idea is all right, but it is misunderstood. I frequently tell people to talk about one thing at a time. That doesn't necessarily mean that the entire advertisement be confined to that one thing. There is no reason why a druggist should not advertise witch hazel, flavoring extracts, bay rum, headache cure, and liver medicine all in the same ad, if he completes his story about each one of these things. Of course, if he merely said that he had a full line of witch hazel, flavoring extracts, bay rum, headache cure, and liver medicine, it would be a bad advertisement, and he would

have much better used the space for one of these things, describing it in full. If he has space enough to tell a complete story of half a dozen things, there is no reason in the world why he should not do it—in fact, there is every reason in the world why he should do it.

* * *

I have had men say to me that when a furniture dealer has said "Furniture Store" everybody knows what he keeps. That is nearly as far from the fact as it possibly can be. When a man says "Furniture Store" you don't know very much about what he keeps. He may have a swell furniture store with eight stories and four or five warehouses full of goods, or he may have a little six-by-nine affair on a back street, where you can't buy anything that is worth more than fifteen or twenty dollars. The only way you can make people know what you have is to tell them. I believe every dealer ought to advertise several things at once. He can make the principal part of his ad about some one thing if he has something special to offer, but there is no reason why he should not take more space and advertise more articles.

The Dominion Glass Company's Building, corner of Demontigny and Parthenais streets, Montreal, was partially destroyed by fire Dec. 9th. Loss about \$1,500, covered by insurance.

Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly for February, 1899.

The midwinter *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly* is bright, crisp and picturesque. It is to some extent a Spanish-American number, embracing among its leading illustrated articles: "West-Indiaward, Ho!" in which Champion Bissell gives some valuable information and advice to citizens of the United States who contemplate settling in Cuba or Porto Rico; "To Make a Spanish Holiday," by Mrs. Frank Leslie, in which occurs one of the most vivid descriptions of a bull-fight ever penned, supplemented by the splendid drawings of F. Luis Mora; "An Old Spanish-American Colony," by F. Williamson, giving a beautifully illustrated account of a journey up the great Magdalena River of South America, and a ride over the Andes to the Colombian capital, Bogota; and "General Gomez's Tactics, and Cuban Law and Order," by Thomas R. Dawley, Jr., the famous war correspondent.