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PROGRESSIVE STOREKEEPING.

A Monthly Article on the Proper Management, System, etc., of an Up-to-Date Retail Business.

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Specially written for THE DRY GOODS REVIEW.

Give What Is Wanted.

The system of having each department in a store separate and distinct from every other department is one of the best which has ever been devised for conducting a general dry goods business. Still, there are some inconveniences which must be carefully watched, for fear that they will lead to dissatisfaction among the customers if proper attention is not paid to the subject.

One feature that I would particularly like to dwell upon is the fact that there are some salespeople who are so eager to make sales for which they will get individual credit that they often forget the interests of the house, and do things which, while it may result in their making a sale for which they get personal credit, still it is to the disadvantage of the house in the long run, in that it does not give the customer as good satisfaction as if the clerks had neglected their individual interests for the time being.

For instance, in some stores, goods of a similar nature, but differing in some particular, are kept in different stocks, and are, consequently, under the control of different salesmen.

A short time ago, in passing through a large dry goods store, I noticed a saleslady who was waiting on a customer for underwear. The lady asked for a particular kind of underwear, but stated that, while she desired very much to get it, if it could not be had she would take something else. It happened that the first choice of the lady was in the store, but in a different stock from the one at which she made the inquiry, while the second choice was in that stock. The saleslady who waited on her, instead of informing her that her first choice was easily obtainable by stepping across the aisle, told her that the firm did not keep the first goods wanted, but that she could show her the second choice.

The saleslady thus secured the credit of the sale, but she did not work to the interest of her employers by endeavoring to please the customer.

This practice cannot be too much condemned, as it leads to a great many annoyances to patrons, and, in the event that the customer afterwards finds out that the goods were kept in stock, but that the salespeople did not give her the proper information, it will often cause the customer to feel badly towards the

firm, under the supposition that it might have been possible that they were trying to work off on her some undesirable goods on which they would make a larger profit than on the goods that she really wanted.

Substitution Never Does.

The practice of substituting other goods for what the customer desires is one which is becoming prevalent among some retail dry goods stores. It is a practice which I must condemn in the strongest terms; it is a nearsighted policy, which only looks at the to-day and forgets the to-morrow.

Substituting different goods from those ordered or purchased, or any kind of imposition upon a customer, is a policy which might pay very well if there was no future, but every sale that one makes of this description will probably lose many sales in the future.

If a merchant intends to go out of business in three months from this day and never again go into the dry goods business, then it may pay him to palm off on his customers things which they do not want. Otherwise, it will not.

Substitutions can be made in any department of a store. For instance, a lady comes in and wants to purchase a pair of shoes. The merchant sees at once that she ought to have a certain width of shoe for comfort and wear, but does not happen to have just that width in the grade of shoes which she wants. The substitution plan is to take the shoe behind some counter, where the lady will not see it and by a stroke of the pen change the size or the width to suit the occasion. The shoe is then tried on and probably the lady, supposing it to be the right size, does not notice just then that it does not fit quite as perfectly as it ought; but when she gets home and wears the shoe awhile she will find out that she has been deceived about the size. Then she does not buy shoes from that store again.

This same practice can be carried on in every department and will be just as hurtful wherever it is tried. If a storekeeper has not the size that the customer desires, let him say so in so many words; then, if he can persuade her to take something different and it proves unsatisfactory, she cannot blame him. It is better to lose a present sale than to lose the future sales.

The same bad practice is sometimes used to a great extent