

THE VALUE OF
A GOOD NATURE.

In my judgment this is the most important subject of the nine submitted to us, for, as a matter of fact, it would be immaterial how we approached a business man, how we approached a lady customer or how we tried to get the neighbor as a customer, if, at the time, we were mad and grouchy, or, in other words, were not good natured.

Away back in the middle of the eighteenth century, a poor unfortunate suicide, whose name is unknown, left the following line on a table, which has proven to be the world's most famous proverb, "He whom the gods would destroy they first make mad." So in anything you may undertake to accomplish in your life, if you want to lose fifty per cent. of your efficiency, just allow your good nature to be overthrown. There are no exceptions to this rule. It is true of the business man, it is true of the professional man and it is most certainly true of the salesman.

Then, conserve your efficiency. Many of us unfortunately, need all the powers we possess and let us sacrifice none of them in a fit of madness.

Many times the things that tend to make us angry have a humorous side and that is the side to look to. The bee gets honey from the commonest herb. The spider sucks poison from the sweetest rose. Be a bee.

If a lady slams a door in your face you have this con-

solation; you are out in the pure fresh air while she is cooped up in an old house nursing a fit of madness.

Some people are born good-natured, some acquire a good-nature and others can assume one so successfully that it will answer every purpose. This leaves you a chance. If you have a good nature, all right; if you haven't one, get it and if you can't get it, assume it.

Taking it for granted that a good nature is absolutely necessary in our business, I will suggest some of the things that are conducive thereto, namely: good health, cleanliness, neatness, good clothing, regular habits, pleasant surroundings, intelligence and temperance.

If your health is not normal you are not yourself and could hardly be expected to be good natured; but we are some times directly responsible for being indisposed. Be careful that you do not contribute to your own illness and also to your own ill nature.

You could hardly expect to be good natured, and especially to have those with whom you are associated good natured, if you had not very recently had a good bath. It would not be well for you to economize too much along the lines of soap and hydrant water. In fact, I would recommend the reckless use of these commodities.

Neatness in your dress can't be overestimated. If your taste is not good, let some of your friends aid you along this line. Avoid anything in your dress that would make you

look doodish or sporty. Shoes of the ox-blood variety and a hat with a striped band would be suicidal to your business.

The clothing can't be too good or fit too nicely. Above all it must be such as would denote reasonable prosperity. If you wear any jewelry, it should be good of its kind. Don't wear a tie pin that looks like the ornament, commonly used by harness makers, in decorating the sides of a bridle.

A cheap hat is not in line with Winona goods, which, as a matter of fact, is the finest line of Hosiery, Underwear and Sweaters that are made in America. Be sure the brand in your hat indicates a similar standard of excellence.

The shoes are not apt to be too good and they can't be too highly polished; for strange, as it may seem, when a lady meets you at the door, she invariably looks at your feet first. Remember that nice, clean, highly polished shoes will cause more doors to swing open for your admittance than any one - in fact, than all the other articles of your wearing apparel.

Regular habits and a good nature are closely related. The person who sleeps two hours one night and twelve hours the next night; who eats six times one day and the next day does not eat at all, has not good sense; and Dryden says, "Good sense and a good nature never separate." It follows, that if you have not good sense, you are minus a good nature.

If your surroundings are not pleasant they will eventually destroy your predisposition to a good nature for it is like the continual flaunting of a red flag in a bull's face.

Intelligence is an important factor. You can't be too wise. Champ Clark, said of Roosevelt, "That he knew a little bit about more things than any many in America," and you should, at least, know a little bit about a whole lot of things. You should be a good talker and you can't be, unless you are reasonably well poséed; for instance, you should know what caused the great European war, who started it, when it will end, and what is an appropriate bill-of-fare for a card party luncheon; you should be able to quote readily from Billy Sunday's sermons. You should know what to do, in first aid, in case of accidents, and what is a good solution for washing the hair, and above all what is a good cure for corns.

For fear you think this is overdrawn, I will say, that recently I went to a lady's house and when I rang the bell she appeared, and said, "My house is on fire, will you help me?". "Certainly," I said. I immediately assumed command, ordered all the doors and windows closed (think I learned this in an almanac when I was a boy) I then turned in the fire alarm, and, in almost less time than it takes to tell it, the entire fire department of Topeka was on the ground and ready for action. The only thing that kept me from being a hero and being entitled to a Carnegie medal, was the fact, that, as it turned out, the house was not on fire.

It is just as important to have your prospective customer good-natured as to be good-natured yourself and all the things mentioned as conducive to your good nature, and many that are not mentioned, will have a tendency to please them.

If a lady comes to the door and sees you have tracked mud all over her nice clean porch and walks, you must not expect her to feel very kindly toward you and if your clothing is shabby and your appearance shows you have not been in a barber shop for some weeks, don't be surprised if she tells you her supply of hosiery and underwear is ample for the season and, if when she comes to the door, your nose is right up against the screen door, you may expect to startle her, even if she is a strong woman, and, if her health is in any way impaired, you will throw her into fits.

Flattery is a dangerous commodity and should be handled with the same care that a physician would handle strychnine; but you will have to use some of it.

Compliments should never be of a personal nature; for instance, you should not say, "Mrs. Hightower, you have such beautiful teeth;" but you should tell her that her little girl has beautiful brown hair or that you admired her beautiful home, with absolute safety, and without fear of terminating your business relations with her.

Practice no deception, as it will destroy any confidence customers may have in you. I sold a lady a bill of goods once and as I was ready to leave, she informed me, that she would not have bought the goods had she not seen, from my watch charm that I was a Mason. I informed her, if that was her reason, that I would cancel the order, for I was not a Mason; that the design on my charm was a horse's head and not a square and compass.

When a lady comes to the door, remove your hat, as this is a little mark of respect all ladies will appreciate. Hold your hat up and not down at arms length, like you were completely exhausted. This strange lady is "sizing you up" and is making up her mind whether she is going to let you in her house or not and her decision is apt to be final; the first appearance is the most important and do your best.

Some claim you should learn the lady's name before you go to her door and address her by her name. This may be so, but I don't believe it.

The first little speech you make must be in nice language and spoken in a way that will impress the lady favorably. For instance, say: "This is Mr. Blosenhamer, I represent the Winona Hosiery, Underwear and Sweater Co.- a high grade of goods that appeals to the best trade, they are sold in every city of any size in America, and are sold only by salesmen. They would appeal to you I am quite sure and I would be glad to show them to you." The lady says, "Will you come in?" Mr. Blosenhamer says, "Thank you."

Now you only have a few minutes at best to get acquainted with this strange lady, and she is not going to feel acquainted with you until she is calling you by name; so, whether it is good taste or not, you will have to call your own name until it becomes familiar to her.

This can be done in this way; for instance, you can say: "Mrs. Kaczyinski (I use this name for I think it is one of the prettiest names I ever knew and for the further reasons that it is

easily spelled and pronounced, Ka sin' akt.) phoned me this morning and said, "Mr. Blosenhamer, would be glad to have you call as soon as convenient and take my Spring order;" and by this and similar expressions you will be surprized how soon a strange lady will be calling you by name.

Never refer to yourself as "Blosy" or "The Old Man" but always as Mr. Blosenhamer.

You are now seated in the parlor as that is where salesmen of the class of Mr. Blosenhamer is taken and since I have told you some of the things to talk about, I will tell you some of the things not to talk about; for instance, if your grandmother has recently died, keep it to yourself; if your prospective customer has several sons don't make a lengthy argument on preparedness, don't mention the fact that you are very tired, for your looks will perhaps be evidence enough of that subject; if one of the children is indisposed don't mention the fact that it is probably taking the small-pox and above all don't refer to the hard-times that is oppressing everybody.

While you are opening your sample case will be a splendid time to say; "What is the name, please?" Mrs. Popence (Pop' in e)" and you should get that the first time and use it like it was a very common name to you and address her this way always. "Mrs. Popence, will you please sit nearer so I can hand the goods to you?" Never move your chair toward her and now comes the process of showing the goods and it is apt to be taken too seriously and if so you will not leave there with much of an order; if possible, put a little life, a little humor and a whole lot of

good nature in your interview, if you would have Mrs. Popence looking at the samples instead of at some one passing.

When I notice that Mrs. Popence is not talking the proper interest and is taking matters altogether too seriously, I usually pick up the small boys union suit and holding it up in front of her say; "Mrs. Popence, look at this elegant suit for boys; if I had had such nice things to have worn when I was a boy, I would have grown to be nine feet high." Mrs. Popence laughs and says "Well, Mr. Blesenhamer, judging from your size you must have had pretty nice things to have worn when you were a boy" Then, I laugh. Mrs. Popence says she wants some of these suits for Eddie, "How many, three?" "No, not so many, for he will outgrow them before he wears them out." I say; "Well, as far as that is concerned, he will outgrow one of these suits before he wears it out; but it is often convenient to have the third suit." She says; "That is so, give him three suits."

I will not continue this dialogue between Mrs. Popence and Mr. Blesenhamer, ^{farther,} ~~father,~~ for the reason, that taking into consideration the prevailing good nature at this point of the interview the salesman who could not leave there with a twenty dollar order could not sell first grade silk at cotton prices any way.

It is just as much your duty to be a good listener as it is to be a good talker and when the deal is closed the salesman usually has not much to talk about; but you should give the customer a reasonable time to finish any discussion she may have

One of the most difficult things to do is to say good-bye and make your departure. In fact, very few people have attained any great distinction along this line, even in a social way, and since I have given this subject some thought and also experimented some along this line I will tell you some of the things you should not do, as well as some of the things you should do.

Don't say good-bye more than once; don't keep putting your hat on and taking it off again and again; don't give any excuse for going, for the lady will presume that your business is excuse enough and don't assume that your departure will cause the lady a great amount of grief, for the chances are that she will be glad when you are gone.

Now, the only proper way to say good-bye is to see that all your samples are in your case and that the case is securely fastened and when the lady has finished any little story she may have been telling you, pick up your hat and case and say good-bye and start and keep going - don't look back and above all don't back out of the door.

Put your hat on at the door and then immediately remove it and keep it off until you are down on the walk. This will give the lady an opportunity to observe just how polite you are and the respect you are showing her and the chances are, she will say to herself, "that may be a pedlar; but he acts like a gentleman."

The interview the Winona salesman has with a strange lady in an attempt to interest her in Winona goods has often re-

minded me of a rope of five strands. For the purpose of this illustration I will call it the "interview rope." For instance, when you approach the door you hope to find the lady good-natured, strand one; you hope to find her at leisure, strand two; you hope to learn that her supply of hosiery and underwear is exhausted, strand three; you hope to be able to supply her demands along these lines, strand four; and, if you should be unable to sell her goods at this time, you hope in the future you may be able to supply her demands, strand five.

This little interview rope suggested itself to me one day as I walked up rather a long walk to a very handsome residence and to the right of the walk I noticed a very beautiful bed of tea roses. I approached the door and, as I rang the bell, I was wondering how my little rope would stand the tension that would soon be applied to it.

The lady came to the door in a very excited and nervous condition with her hands raised on a level with her shoulders, indicating that she was about ready to take flight and strand numbered one was severed instantly.

Strand numbered two went almost as quickly for the lady informed me to begin with that she was very, very busy.

Strand numbered three is a very important for in many instances its resistance is sufficient to allow time for making repairs on others that are broken; but in this instance after the lady had time to catch her breath she informed that her supply of hosiery and underwear was bounteous and strand numbered

three parted as if cut with a knife.

The tension now on strand four was something terrible. It was quivering and vibrating like the "E" string on a fiddle, tuned to "B" flat and yet I had confidence in it, for it had stood many similar, if not greater strains; but when the lady informed me that she absolutely would not make a purchase of any kind, strand numbered four separated like a toe string attached to a ten ton anchor.

I still had strand numbered five and brother salesman this is the all important strand for it is the one that tells whether or not you can "come back." In fact, it is the men who can "come back" that are moving the world to-day.

I made up my mind that if the tension could be removed temporarily on strand numbered five, while the more unfortunate strands were being repaired, that my little rope would yet prove equal to the occasion and, at this time, I remembered the bed of tea roses and I remarked to the lady that she had the most beautiful bed of tea roses that I had seen in the city. (Now the reader must remember that perhaps there had been a hundred men up that walk and that very few of them and maybe none of them had noticed that bed of roses; for, a great many men do not know the difference between a tea rose and the blossom on a jimson weed). "Do you admire them," the lady said. "I certainly do; they are perfectly beautiful." "Would you like to have a rose?" Yes Mam, and you could not give one to a person that would appreciate it more."

We then walked out to the rose bed and while she was selecting one for me I was making some suggestions as to the care of roses and was naming the different varieties she had and so on. This lady who was so very busy had plenty of time to show me each bit of shrubbery she had in her yard and followed me to the sidewalk and asked me to be sure and call on her next season as she would like to try the Winona goods. I bid her good-bye and walked away with a beautiful rose that she had selected for me.

My little rope had been repaired, in fact, it was better than it ever was for it is not likely that it will ever break in that place again.

Now brother salesman keep your eye on strand numbered five as it is the one that will keep you in the game.

You may not see the bed of tea roses; but if you keep your eyes open you will see something else that will answer the purpose. It is not such a great loss to fail to get in a lady's home the first time you appear at her door; but, if your first attempt bars you forever thereafter, that is a great loss.

I am reminded here of a saying of Congressman Dick T. Horgan. In speaking of money, he says - "If you don't get it when you want it, you will be sure to want ^{it} when you get it." So if you don't get in a lady's house when you want to, you will be sure to want to, when you get to.

Temperance was mentioned as one of the things that is conducive to a good nature; but I will make no attempt to prove this assertion. Our business as a rule is with the very finest

of ladies and the salesman who would dare to solicit the trade of these nice ladies under the influence of liquor of any kind would soon have no business.

Be sober, gentlemanly and courteous to these nice ladies and they will be just as proud of their Winona salesman as they are of their lawyer, their doctor or their preacher and you will be treated just as nicely in their homes.

Respectfully submitted,

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