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THE MIND OF THE BUYER

A PSYCHOLOGY OF SELLING

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PREFACE

This book is written for the progressive salesman, advertiser, sales correspondent—for every one who is engaged in influencing men to buy. It does not deal with the *technique* of selling; each form of selling has its own technique which must be separately acquired. Rather it deals with principles. It recognizes that certain elements are common to all forms of selling. These elements are certain occurrences within the mind of the buyer. Whether directed by word of mouth, by pen or by picture, the mind must perforce pass through certain stages *en route* to the act of purchase. It is to describe these mental processes that the book is written.

Such a work must necessarily deal with profound psychological questions. Such mental processes as attention, interest, desire, and confidence require voluminous treatment in the literature of theoretical psychology. The author has endeavored in this presentation, however, to rob them of their forbidding

dryness by stripping away technical terms and substituting words of current business usage.

Two outstanding ideals have governed the preparation of the work: (1) To show the reader how to take the psychological point of view toward the business of selling; (2) to teach that in investigating the sale psychologically we must employ the methods of scientific measurement. By repetition and example the author has emphasized these two ideals. If he shall have made them clear he will have accomplished his chief aim whether he teaches a great amount of psychological fact or not.

The psychologist-reader will discern a studied avoidance of the spiritistic conception of mind. The mind is here conceived as an organic unity. Though exposition of this point of view is withheld, as unseemly in a book of this kind, still the phraseology will be found to fit it, without at the same time affrighting the non-psychological reader unfamiliar with the controversies about the mind-body relation. This avoidance of metaphysical disputations is further helped by the consistent emphasis upon the buyer's behavior. Objective descriptions are largely

used. And since our objective psychological nomenclature is not cluttered with spiritistic connotations, the aim of being scientific and at the same time understandable is more easily achieved.

Grateful acknowledgments are due to J. B. Lippincott Company for permission to use certain passages and cuts from the author's "Manual for the Study of the Psychology of Advertising and Selling," with which this may be used as a text; to the editor of *The Scientific Monthly* for permission to reprint portions of Chapter XIII; to the editor of *Western Advertising* for permission to reprint portions of Chapter V; to Professor W. F. Book for reading the manuscript and making helpful suggestions; and to the many students at The University of Chicago and at Indiana University, who by their keen interest and their scientific zeal have stimulated the author to prosecute his quest towards a scientific approach to the mind of the buyer.

H. D. K.

June, 1921.

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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

THE STREAM OF THOUGHT IN THE SALE

Successful selling demands psychological point of view. A sale is an interaction between two people who are exchanging economic goods. This interaction consists of a series of changes occurring in both buyer and seller. The latter makes certain moves which call forth responsive movements from the former.

The moves made by the seller may consist of various things: display of goods; verbal descriptions; pictures; even the proffer of a friendly cigar. The responses of the buyer may be equally variable: entering a store for a box of candy displayed in the window; reaching into the pocket for a coin; sending for a catalog; dispatching a written order.

In the light of such variable conditions we must recognize as forms of selling: advertising, window display, sales correspondence, and personal salesmanship. Although each of these modes of selling has its peculiar problems and methods, all have one aim in

common—to influence the mind of the buyer. Any seller, then, who wishes to be successful, must study the mind of the buyer—in other words, must take the psychological point of view.

The mind a stream. In discussing the mind of the buyer we may profitably use James's figure of speech and picture it as a stream, consisting of the sum-total of mental processes going on within the individual: ideas, sensations, feelings, volitions and actions. There are two characteristics of the stream which deserve special notice:

Characteristics of the mental stream.

1. The mind never stands still. It is in constant motion. The thoughts of one moment are quickly replaced by others. The mind of the buyer in a sale consists of a procession of sensations, feelings, and willings. From the beginning to the conclusion of the sale these flow along like a stream.

2. The mind is complex. It is not a simple thing that we are dealing with, but an organism of many qualities and powers. It will be our task in this book to describe this stream; to slow it up and examine its contents. We shall analyze it in two directions—longitudinally and cross-sectionally. In the

first case we shall divide it into several rather well-defined stages, each of which we shall study separately. In the second, we shall cut cross-sections at critical points and examine the contents minutely under our psychological microscope.

The stages in a sale. The mental stream of the buyer may be divided into six stages:

I Attention
II Interest
III Desire
IV Confidence
V Decision and Action
VI Satisfaction

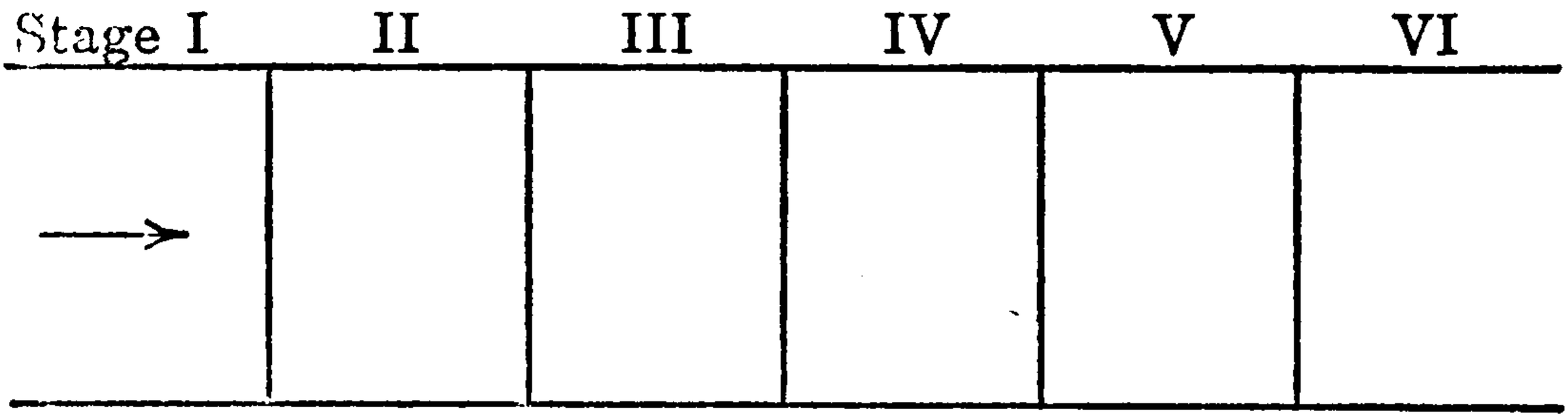

Fig. 1. The stream of thought in a sale.

(Reproduced by kind permission of J B. Lippincott Company, from the author's "Manual for the Study of the Psychology of Advertising and Selling.")

The order just mentioned may not be strictly adhered to in every sale. For instance, confidence may precede desire and even interest; interest may come simultaneously with attention. Generally speaking,

however, the order given above will truly represent conditions, especially in the initial purchase of an article.

We should also recognize the fact that the stages are not necessarily equal in length. The initial pulse of attention may last but a moment before merging into interest. Interest may then endure for an hour. Moreover a single stage may vary in length under different circumstances. Interest may endure for a minute, an hour, a day or a year.

Cross-sectional analysis of the stream. Though we shall regard the mind as an ever-flowing stream, still we shall occasionally be obliged to act as though we could stop it. At important stages we shall retard it and take cross-sections of it. Were we to represent these diagramatically we should use a circle similar to that of Figure 2, and represent the sensations, ideas, and feelings of the buyer by symbolic designs. We should bear in mind throughout that this procedure is really an artificial one. Strictly speaking we cannot stop the mind in its flow and make detailed pictures of its contents. Nevertheless we shall employ this method as far as possible, being justified by the facts thus obtainable and the clearness of analysis thus made possible.

Other points of view. In taking the psychological point of view we do not mean to imply that the only problems in selling are those of a psychological nature. Particularly important are those of an ethical and economic nature. And before proceeding with our

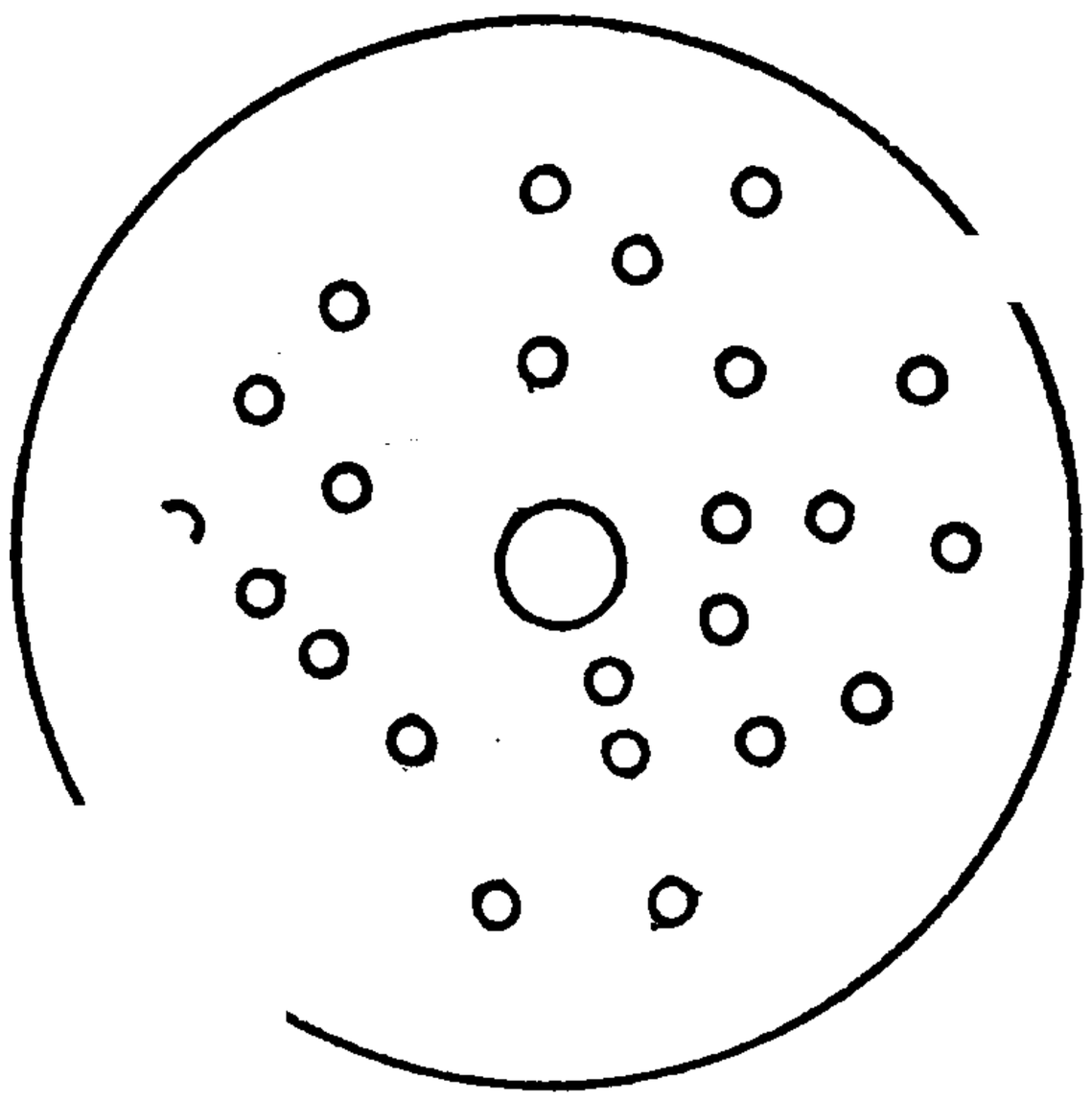

FIG. 2. Cross-section of stream of thought.

(Reproduced by kind permission of J. B. Lippincott Company, from the author's "Manual for the Study of the Psychology of Advertising and Selling.")

psychological descriptions we should observe the relations between these several points of view.

When we regard a sale from the ethical point of view we stress the rightness or wrongness of the transaction. We ask: Is this practice right? Are the goods being sold at a fair price? Are they being sold with a consideration for the rights of competitors?

The ethical side of selling is exceedingly important from the standpoint of the welfare of society. And it is gratifying to note that the standards of ethics in the business world are rising. We shall present some evidence for this in a later section of the book (page 192).

When we regard a sale from the economic point of view we ask such questions as these: What are the sources of the commodity under consideration? What agencies are required to bring it from source to buyer? What are the separate elements that enter in to determine the price? It is needless to enumerate more questions. Every business man formulates scores of them daily; for whether one neglects other points of view or not, one is bound to consider the economic point of view.

Important as are these two aspects of the sale we shall not stress them in this book. We shall assume that no reader will undertake any practice which is not ethically justified. And we shall assume that the professional economists will take care of the economic issues involved. So we shall concentrate our attention upon the psychological aspects.

In undertaking to psychologize about the conduct of the buyer, let it be understood that

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and wills; and he sought to determine whence it came and where it went after death.

Aristotle's kind of psychology endured for many hundreds of years, in fact, until the seventeenth century. About this time Locke, Hume and others began to assert: Though we have been trying for centuries to discover the nature, origin and source of the soul, we have not succeeded. Let us, then, abandon these questions and relegate them to the realm of things beyond our ken. Instead let us observe the events that occur during the lifetime of an individual. In other words, let us consider the mind only as it relates to man's bodily conduct.

This advice was heeded and psychology came to be defined as the "science of mind" or "consciousness." This definition endures at the present time, colored in the popular mind by relics of Aristotle's mysticism.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century another conception of psychology has arisen. During the nineteenth century the physical sciences—physics and chemistry—developed greatly; and the biological sciences—botany, zoölogy, and physiology—arose. Under the influence of these developments, psychology began to change in subject-matter and method.

(1) The influence of bodily conditions upon the mind came to be more clearly recognized; and (2) the methods used in the other rapidly-developing sciences were timidly applied. Many of these methods worked, particularly those used in the investigation of animal behavior. As a result, psychology came to be defined as the "science of consciousness and behavior." (Some extremists have gone so far as to leave out the word consciousness and call it the "science of behavior.") This definition, though not vitally objectionable to most psychologists of to-day, nevertheless carries some undesirable implications. Accordingly we shall adopt a slightly different wording: "the science which aims to describe and explain the conduct of living creatures."

After this brief historical *résumé* the reader may understand why in the popular mind psychology continues to be identified with mystical, abstract, and ethereal things. He may also see that the real progress of the science has been away from mysticism; that to-day it is just as matter-of fact and "earthly" as the sciences of physics, geography, and astronomy. This kinship with the other sciences will be shown more clearly in our next paragraph where we shall discuss the

method of psychology and show that it is identical with that employed by other sciences.

Scientific method—experiment. In describing and explaining the actions of the buyer, psychology employs the method common to all sciences—experiment. The procedure of an experiment may be described as follows:

1. To *observe* the phenomenon under consideration. To observe systematically, not spasmodically or sporadically. Indeed, to be thoroughly scientific we must make our observations under carefully controlled conditions—usually in the laboratory where we can control them more easily than in the hurly-burly of everyday life. By "control" we mean to arrange conditions so that we may repeat our observations (for in making scientific measurements we cannot rely upon merely one observation); watch one factor at a time; and change conditions at will. In brief, an experiment is "a series of observations which can be repeated, isolated and varied."

2. We must *record* our measures. We must use great care in doing this; describing exactly the conditions under which we perform our experiment, so that another experimenter working under the same conditions may secure similar results. We record our

results, be it understood, in mathematical terms. Accordingly a very important part of our records will be figures.

3. Our next step is to *tabulate* these figures in orderly array, then to summarize them in a concise form so that they may be readily perceived.

4. On the basis of the results secured we draw *conclusions*.

In order to illustrate this procedure we shall give an experiment which is sometimes performed in the psychological laboratory:

A PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERIMENT

(Adapted from C. H. Judd, "Laboratory Manual of Psychology" by kind permission of Ginn & Co.)

Hold page 15 directly in front of the eyes at a distance of about twenty inches. Though these two lines are equal length (10 centimeters = 4 inches), the horizontal line appears to be shorter than the vertical one. There is a psychological fact at the bottom of this: namely, that the apparent length of a line depends to some degree upon its position. This much is evident from casual observation. But to have a scientific statement of the fact we must state *how much* effect is produced by changing the line from the horizontal to the vertical position. We must measure the effect and state it in mathematical terms.

In order to do this, cover the vertical line with a piece of plain paper, setting the page up in front of the eyes at a distance of twenty inches. Then, using the horizontal line as a standard, draw on a piece of plain paper, a vertical

line which appears to you to equal the horizontal line. (Do not try to make allowance for the discrepancy which you now know exists.)

If you measure the line you have just drawn you will probably find that it is less than four inches; thus showing that you judged the line longer when in the vertical position, than in the horizontal. And you can state how much longer you judged it by subtracting the length of your copied line from the length of the standard. But this single observation is not sufficient to permit a scientific conclusion. In scientific investigation a single observation is seldom relied upon. You must make more measures. Cover up the line you just drew and draw another; cover it up and draw successive lines, covering each line as soon as drawn, until you have drawn ten.

Now measure all the lines and record the lengths; add them and find the average. Your series of measures will resemble the series below, showing the lengths of lines drawn by another experimenter under these same conditions. The measures are stated in centimeters. With a horizontal line of ten centimeters (four inches) as a standard the vertical line was drawn ten times with the following lengths:

8.6
8.2
8.1
8.7
8.4
8.6
8.2
8.1
8.2
8.2

10)83.3

8.33

The average shows a difference of 1.67 centimeters between the horizontal standard and the vertical copies. This gives us sound basis for concluding that under the conditions of the experiment, the apparent length of a line changes from 10 centimeters to 8.33 centimeters when the line is changed from horizontal to vertical.

Fig. 3.

This was a typical psychological experiment, conforming to our formulation above.

a. We made an observation, surrounding it with all the care possible.

b. We repeated the observation, being careful to maintain conditions unchanged. And our measures were fairly consistent. By following our procedure another experimenter will secure practically the same results.

c. We arranged conditions so that we might observe merely one factor about the line—the effect of position upon apparent length. We *isolated* that factor, disregarding effect of position upon apparent thickness, brightness, etc.

d. Again we arranged conditions so that had we wished we might have *varied* our observations, slanting the line first at thirty degrees, then at sixty.

e. Lastly, we measured the effects and stated our conclusion in quantitative terms.

Three forms of scientific method. We may apply the experimental (scientific) method to problems of selling in three forms:

1. "Statistical investigation of returns." We may arrange conditions in a selling campaign so that the returns may be measured. By successive trials of different methods and comparisons between returns, we may determine which method is the most effective. Good examples of this in the field of advertising are furnished by Shryer.

This scientific "investigation of returns," however desirable it may be, is many times not feasible. The returns from many sales-

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legible headline. To investigate this we might enter the psychological laboratory, expose sample headlines through an instrument called the tachistoscope; measure the speed with which a number of persons can perceive the headlines in the two kinds of type; tabulate our results; collate them; and conclude which type is the more legible. Many applications of this form of scientific method are described in the several books on the Psychology of Advertising. We may confidently affirm that the method has demonstrated its adaptability to the solution of a number of problems of selling. With certain problems, however, it can hardly be used effectively, owing in part to an inevitable artificiality of the laboratory atmosphere.

3. But we have not exhausted the possibilities of scientific method in the investigation of problems of selling. In case neither of the above two methods is adaptable, or in case we wish to corroborate our findings by other kinds of information, we may secure light from still another direction. Our aim, be it remembered, is to discover with scientific accuracy the most effective way to do a thing before we proceed to do it. If we cannot accomplish this in the market or in the labora-

tory, we may appeal to the experience of other sellers who have faced our problem; and by observing their solutions, we may govern our procedure.

How discover their experiences? To ask them would evoke contradictions and opinions of different degrees of reliability. Furthermore, since we seek scientific formulations of our facts we must have figures instead of opinions. How shall we reduce the experiences of sellers to numerical terms?

The answer is, Use the "historical method." Investigate the practices of the sellers of the past and observe the ways in which they solved the problems that confront us.

For example, in answering "historically" the question propounded above: Is it in general more profitable to use upper-case or lower-case type in headlines?, one would go to the files of newspapers and magazines for many years back, and ascertain the percentage of headlines in small letters. An investigation of this nature by the author disclosed the fact that advertisers have been using with increasing frequency lower-case headlines. Whereas in 1905 sixty-three per cent of the headlines in full-page advertisements in the *Literary Digest* were in lower-case type, in

1920 the number had increased to seventy-six per cent. (See Fig. 4.)

Another illustration of the "historical" method: A number of firms desired to determine the best method of selecting salesmen.

FIG. 4. Showing the increase in the use of lower-case type for headlines between 1905 and 1920.

They formed a coöperative bureau which examined the practices of all the firms; tabulated them and combined the results, embodying them into a system by which all might select their salesmen.

In employing the "historical" method we make use of several assumptions:

a. The practices which have persisted over a period of years have probably been of value. We infer either that those firms which did not follow these practices did not make enough money to enable them to continue to advertise; or that those which did continue to advertise, discovered the difference between valueless and valuable practices and adopted the latter.

We must not assume that sellers made these changes as a result of conscious discoveries. They worked mainly by trial and error. As indicated in Figure 4, they discovered the usefulness of lower-case type in headlines only after a long-extended period of experimentation.

We may regard modern selling practices, then, as products of unconscious evolution. In the struggle for existence in the world of publicity, certain features have survived because of certain psychological elements of strength and fitness. They exemplify a sort of economic "survival of the fittest."

b. A second assumption we make in utilizing the "historical" method is that if sellers had studied the practices of their predecessors they might have avoided some errors and might have eliminated much wastage.

And we assume that by surveying the practices of the past and by discovering which ones have survived and which have failed, we may modify our practices and find a shorter and more economical road to business success.

We repeat that we are not proposing the historical method as a formula for the solution of all selling problems. We advocate it merely as one form of scientific investigation which will permit us to supplement and corroborate information secured by other means.

Indeed we cannot regard either one of these methods as sufficient for the approach to selling problems. At best each throws only a bit of light upon the entire situation. One method may be better adapted to one type of problem than is another method. And one may be more adaptable to one type of problem than to another type. In most cases probably two or all three of the methods will be found useful; each one supplementing the results secured through the others.

After this discussion of the history and methods of psychology, the reader will see that modern psychology has no hint of hocus-pocus in its procedure; that it is far from being the mesmeric game of popular fancy. Rather that it is a serious matter of labora-

tory apparatus, statistical tables and graphs. Instead of donning the crescent-decorated robe of the clairvoyant, the psychologist rolls up his shirt-sleeves and enters the advertising-copy room, the factory, the market—any place where human conduct may be found—with a slide-rule under his arm.

As we enter upon the psychological study of the sale we shall adhere as rigidly as possible to the method of science. We shall avoid the vague and easy formulations of arm-chair psychology, and endeavor to make no statement which cannot be supported by facts secured through experimental research. Where we lack such information we shall attempt to outline the steps by which it may be secured. Wherever we give opinion we shall label it as such. Though this may prevent us from making downright, dogmatic statements regarding certain points that some readers would like to have settled; still it will testify to our ardor for truth, and will impress upon the reader the chief message of the book: namely, that the psychology of selling must be developed according to the rigid methods of experiment.

"Rule of thumb" versus scientific psychology. After we have followed the hard and fast

procedure of scientific method in solving a problem, we can conclude: "I know." The aim of science is to give positive knowledge (the word science is derived from the Latin *scientia,* knowledge) and it is this quality, and others which we shall enumerate, that differentiate scientific business psychology from the unscientific psychology of most business men. For we must admit that successful business men use a form of psychology. They describe and explain human conduct, sometimes in a very effective manner. In what respects is their psychology different from the scientific brand?

1. It is individual. Though valuable as far as it goes, it is limited by the bounds of one person's experience. It is, therefore, not representative of all possible situations. Scientific psychology, however, is based upon a large (theoretically infinite) number of experiences drawn from all sources.

2. Rule of thumb psychology is particular. The devices which it teaches are applicable only to situations which one man has met. The findings of scientific psychology, however, are general in their application.

3. Rule of thumb psychology comes with long, painful and costly experience. On the

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STAGE ONE—ATTENTION

CHAPTER TWO

IMPORTANT FACTORS IN ATTRACTING ATTENTION

The nature of attention. In the preceding chapter we likened the mind of the buyer to a stream constantly in motion and highly complicated. We formulated our purpose: to describe and explain the stream in its flow. The method: to cut cross-sections at various important stages and to analyze them under our psychological microscope.

The first stage that we shall analyze is attention. To secure the attention of the buyer is the seller's first task. It is often fraught with difficulty. For the buyer's mental stream is flowing along placidly, charged with thoughts relating to his personal affairs. The seller, who brings forward a new article, foreign, perhaps, to these affairs, is bound to encounter some difficulty in thrusting it into the stream. His task is more difficult from the fact that he must place his commodity not merely at the edge of the stream where it may remain practically unnoticed.

He must thrust it, as it were, completely into the middle of the stream. Only thus can he secure for it a high degree of attention.

The ease with which the seller may do this depends partly upon the rate of flow of the stream and partly upon the contents of it. Sometimes the current flows sluggishly, as when the buyer sits without occupation in a street-car and casts his eyes carelessly from one advertising card to another. On such occasions it is easy for the seller to enter the stream.

At other times the mind flows with torrential vehemence, as when the buyer is consummating a deal on the floor of the stock exchange or watching an exciting ball game. Under such circumstances it is difficult to inject a new object into the center of attention.

Further difficulty is encountered if the contents of the mind are quite foreign to the commodity under consideration. Under such circumstances the seller is obliged to prepare the mind beforehand—an operation about which we shall talk in detail in later chapters.

Whatever the difficulties may be, the seller must make a start by attracting the attention. Hence we shall consider some devices by means of which to claim it. No single rule

can be laid down applicable to all rates of flow, all commodities and all sales mediums. Nevertheless there are certain factors which are usually effective.

Intensity. The first is intensity. (By intense we mean "strong.") Normally the mind is very sensitive to strong stimuli: bright lights, loud noises, strong odors, severe pressures, extreme temperatures, intense pains.

We shall more clearly understand the force inherent in intensity if we inquire its origin and *rationale.* When we consider man historically we must regard him as the inheritor of various traits from past generations. For many generations his forbears have been subjected to certain environmental conditions. To those that jeopardized their welfare they gave quick attention: for example, to bright lights which might put out the eyes; to loud sounds which might split the ear-drums. The individuals who failed to take notice of such things were injured or killed. Since to attend to intense things has tended to prolong life, then, the habit has become ingrained within the members of the human species as an ineradicable trait.

Many other traits of the buyer may be thus accounted for on an hereditary basis. We

shall devote an entire chapter to them at a later stage. For the present we shall pass them by, merely noting the excellent reason why certain kinds of objects readily attract the attention.

This gives us a hint as to the method of arresting and penetrating the mental stream of the buyer: Choose a stimulus stronger than the other objects round about him. In olden times the town crier used a bell; the fishmonger, a horn. To-day the advertiser uses shrieking bill boards. The salesman who depends upon personal contact rarely uses intensity in attracting the attention of his prospective customer; probably because of its frequent rudeness and vulgarity. If he can devise some elegant and inoffensive way, however, of utilizing it, he will highly augment his chances of securing favorable attention.

Extensity. The second factor is extensity, by which we mean size, bigness, magnitude. The mind is very susceptible to the influence of bigness. In its rapid flow it may neglect the small objects seeking shelter in its midst, and shove them unheedingly to one side. But it can hardly do so to the big ones. An autoist bowling along a country road can scarcely

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by one who wishes to influence the human mind. Probably we should regard it as explainable by the same principle we used in explaining man's affinity for intensity: as a racial habit (perhaps instinct) wrought during the struggle for existence, when man was obliged to take notice of things larger than himself in order to escape being overcome by them.

Whatever be its explanation it offers a live cue to the seller, and suggests that he may increase his chances of success by operating on a large scale. The practice of successful sellers exemplifies this. "Probably no man in the world has more unqualified belief in the power of [big] advertising than William Wrigley, Jr. In the twelve years since his first great national campaign he has spent more than $20,000,000 to spread his message in eighteen languages across the civilized world." "As a result of one of his huge contracts each of the 62,000 street, subway and elevated cars in operation in the United States carries one or more of his cards. Above Times Square, New York, flashes nightly an electric sign which costs $104,000 a year." "In 1915 he collected every telephone directory in the country and mailed four sample

sticks of his gum to the 1,500,000 listed subscribers. He duplicated this campaign in 1919, this time to more than 7,000,000 homes. His advertising expenditures for the one year pass the $3,500,000 mark." [1] The tremendous growth of advertising in general during the past twenty-five years bears similar evidence of the attractive power of magnitude in the form of increasing use of extensive space. An investigation conducted by the author showed that the number of full-page advertisements in one periodical increased five-fold in the decade 1910-19.

Change. Our third proposition is that *change* has great value in arresting attention —change in any sense: in intensity, extensity, or nature of stimulus. We may test the truth of this in everyday life by noting that we are aware that the clock has been ticking, only after it has stopped.

Movement. One very common form of change is movement. To it we give certain and eager response. Though for the most part unaware of it, we shall find, when we stop to think, that it bulks importantly in our daily life. We sit for hours by the ocean, gazing at nothing but swelling, tossing, jostling

[1] *American Magazine*, March, 1920, p. 192.

waves; we lie on the ground absorbed in the clouds that float across our vision; we sit before an open fire fascinated by the ever-darting flames, almost to the point of hypnotization.

How explain this fascination? Probably largely in terms of inheritance, as we did our affinity for intensity and extensity. In the distant days when man's progenitor stalked in the jungles, one of the most important factors in life was movement. The lightest flutter of a leaf might indicate the presence of a hidden enemy; the flicker of a twig might signify lurking death. As a result our ancestor was obliged to give close attention to anything that moved. If he had failed he would have fallen victim one day to the destructive forces surrounding him. As a result the offspring of primitive man manifested intense interest in moving things. The trait, being useful in preserving life, became ingrained within the members of the species and persists to this day.

There is another way of accounting for the influence of movement. It fits into the very nature of mentality. The mind is like a stream, constantly in motion. A moving objeet, then, has a ready chance of securing a

foothold in the stream. The relationship may be pictured by imagining two platforms, one (the mind) moving, and the other (the object of attention) stationary. To step from the latter to the former requires considerable effort. If, however, we start the second in motion in the same direction and at the same rate as the first, we can make the transition easily. It is thus that a moving object fits into the nature of the onward-flowing mental processes.

In addition to this onward flow of the total stream there is a form of movement within the stream itself. Eddies are present, which keep the contents of the stream oscillating to and fro. The mind is so constituted that it cannot hold an object in the center for longer than an instant. The reader may test this for himself by attempting to fixate steadily the letter o. Though he may try his best to maintain it unchanged in the center of his attention, he will find that he cannot. His attention will wander from one part of the letter to another, from top to bottom, from side to side; and presently, off the letter entirely to a nearby flaw in the paper.

In fixing the limits to the time during which one can hold an object in attention

in a perfectly unchanged condition, psychologists have discovered some evidence that the period may be two or three minutes, but far more commonly, only a second or two in length. After this length of time in the vortex of the stream an object must give way to another one which has been hovering on the

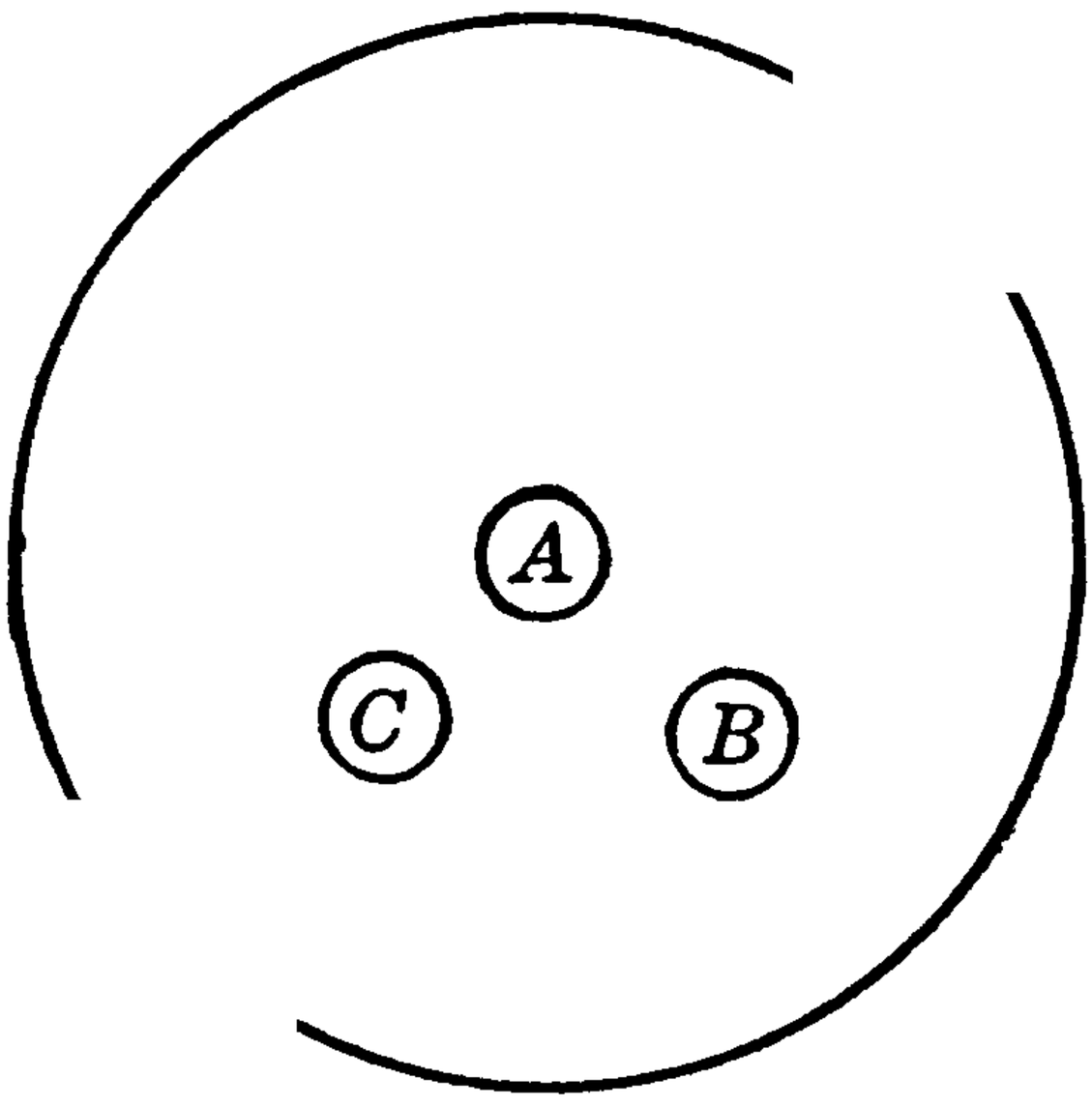

FIG. 5.

margin waiting for a chance to wedge itself in. Be it remembered that at any one moment there are many things variously distributed in the mental stream. A cross-section would reveal a condition resembling that pictured in Figure 5, where object A (let it be a street-car advertisement of Bunte Cough Drops) gives way after a brief dominance over the center of attention, to object B (an adjoining advertisement of Arrow collars);

which in its turn gives way to object C (an advertisement of Sloan's liniment).

Again, such a cross-section might be likened to a kaleidoscope in which minute pieces of varicolored glass continually shift their positions. That which was at the center drifts marginward and vice versa.

From this we see that movement is a capital device for the seller to use, not merely in introducing his commodity into the center of the mental stream, but also in holding it there. Now we see, at least in part, the mechanism by which we give attention so spontaneously to selling devices which embody movement: the army of manikins in store windows feverishly plying safety-razors; the display shoes aridly stepping in and out of pans of water.

The moving electric sign offers excellent opportunity for the exploitation of movement. It is demonstrably effective. The reader may test himself to-night as he walks down Main street. Let him watch himself out of the corner of his eye, so to speak; and he will find himself observing the moving signs almost invariably. He will be aware of them far to the right and left; even of those in the rear, flickering in his eye-glasses. He will notice,

also, that a faint moving light attracts attention more quickly than a strong stationary one.

A field with still greater possibilities of development is the moving picture. Here is movement incarnate, the consummation of man's age-long dreams and cravings. And man worships at their shrine nightly, be he rich or poor, young or old, savant or imbecile. He tries to justify his infatuation by elaborate reasons of an esthetic, social or economic nature: the cinema offers a varied entertainment; is always just around the corner; costs only about a quarter. But these do not fully account for his interest. For when the plot is vaporish, the humor inane, the vamping "old stuff," he still attends with seemingly insatiable avidity. The cinema as a selling medium has not yet come into its own. Nevertheless it will undoubtedly develop into a valuable ally for the seller, because it embodies a feature to which man is passionately inclined—movement.

Simulated or suggested movement. So strong is our affinity for movement that we respond to the mere suggestion of it. An automobile which is pictured as moving pleases us more than one which appears to be standing still.

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variety. In background, type and illustration, one may achieve, thanks to the inventions of modern printing, a number of striking effects. These varieties, numerous as they are, constitute only a fraction of the number possible in the realm of color. And effective as are the former, they pale beside the latter.

Several lines of proof point to the overpowering attractiveness of color. For one, we need go no further than everyday observation. When the early settlers of America wanted to make an attractive price to the Indians did they offer black or gray beads? We are not told so. Rather do the chroniclers emphasize "colored" beads. It is said that the mail-order houses have found colored catalogs to be very superior to those in black and white. More scientific proof from the laboratories is reported in the voluminous literature upon the subject.

If our curiosity leads us to inquire why color attracts the attention so much more easily than grayness, we may find a partial explanation in the fact that the light waves for colors travel farther than do those for grayness. Whatever be the reason, we may confidently employ color whenever possible.

Other effects of color. Before concluding this inadequate treatment of the subject we should point out that color may be useful not only in attracting attention. It may also hold attention. Again it may arouse pleasurable feelings. The feelings may come from intrinsic pleasure-giving quality of the color; then may be transferred to the object being sold—an end evidently sought in the coloring of the containers of certain brands of face powder. Or it may give pleasure by reason of certain ideas it arouses within the buyer. In seeking to use color we face a large group of questions relating to the appropriateness of color to commodity. We shall merely recognize the existence of these for the present, reserving their detailed consideration for a later chapter.

Summary. In discussing these four factors: intensity, extensity, change and color, we have not exhausted the list of determinants of attention which are available to the seller. We have merely touched upon four which fit into the outline of this book. Another in particular—repetition—is so important that we shall use it as the basis of our next chapter.

NOTE:—For discussion of the theoretical aspects of color the reader is referred to the bibliography. For practical applications in the field of advertising the reader is referred to the well-known books on that subject.

CHAPTER THREE

THE INFLUENCE OF REPETITION

Repetition wins attention. If we cannot force our commodity into the center of attention by any of the devices mentioned in the preceding chapter, or by virtue of its intrinsic merit and appropriateness to the contents of the buyer's mind, we may have recourse to another factor—repetition. Mere bald, brutal repetition goes far in attracting attention. This fact is crystallized in the old proverb, "Constant dropping wears away stones."

We have frequent verification of this fact in everyday life. Often when we are asleep a sound occurs without awaking us the first time, the second or the third. As it persistently recurs, however, it forces its way through the murk of unconsciousness and arouses us. And then as we look back we recall that the sound had been there vaguely (in the margin of the mental stream) for some time, but had required repetition to be effective.

For an explanation of the great power resi-

dent in repetition, we are driven to a consideration of the brain and nervous system. In order for a thing to affect the mind it must enter the pathways to the brain. These pathways are somewhat resistant to new impressions, but after repeated assault they open up and permit access to the brain.

Another form of explanation is the assertion by some psychologists that man is innately credulous, that he is inclined to accept as true every statement he hears. In the course of experience, however, the adult person develops inhibitions, which make him sophisticated and resistant. To overcome this resistance requires considerable battering. To this factor is due the effectiveness of many sales-names, like Uneeda. Though the buyer may resist the repetitions of this name for a time, he eventually comes to believe that he does need a biscuit, and makes the purchase.

It is this coercive power of repetition which justifies the so-called display advertising constituting so great a part of modern publicity. Many a firm advertises on bill-boards, theater programs, and the like, when it knows it cannot effect an immediate sale. But by keeping its name and commodity before the mind of the public, it hopes to derive a cumulative

effect that will ultimately bring about action. During the World War many firms which had already sold their entire output to the government continued none the less to use a great amount of advertising space, hoping by repetition to retain a place in the mind of the public. And their course of action was justified by this psychological principle we are now considering.

Repetition influences memory. This leads us to recognize that repetition does more than merely force the merits of a commodity upon the attention of the buyer. It imprints the message deeply within his memory. For as a rule the seller desires not merely to put his message into the buyer's mind, but to keep it there that it may instigate purchase time after time. Repetition, then, is a powerful agent with which to overcome the well-known forgetfulness of the human race which would naturally tend to relegate a commodity to the margin of the mental stream.

Distribution of repetitions. We may vary the effectiveness of our repetitions by the way in which we distribute them over a period of time. By repeating our message at certain intervals, we may increase the retentiveness of the buyer's mind.

The matter may be explained by imagining a case where we are announcing a new article in a monthly magazine. Let us assume that we have decided upon eight insertions for the year. How shall we most effectively distribute them? A number of alternatives are possible; eight consecutive insertions in the first eight, last eight, or any eight successive issues; four in the first four issues of the year, four in the last four, and so on. Though we cannot say for certain what is the best distribution for every specific article, still we may make some profitable guess by consideration of certain facts proven by laboratory demonstration

After much investigation of memory, psychologists have discovered that facts once impressed upon the mind tend to slip away at an uneven rate—rapidly at first, then more and more slowly until the amount retained reaches a constant level and stays there. The matter is graphically represented by a curve of forgetting, similar to that of Figure 6, where the greater part of the material is forgotten almost immediately and a smaller part remains relatively constant (as shown by the line AB).

It is not inconceivable that this condition holds good for the memory of things seen in advertisements. If so let us speculate upon the profitable ways of distributing repeated advertisements. The author has ventured to lay out a reasonable distribution upon the curve in Figure 6. Since forgetting takes

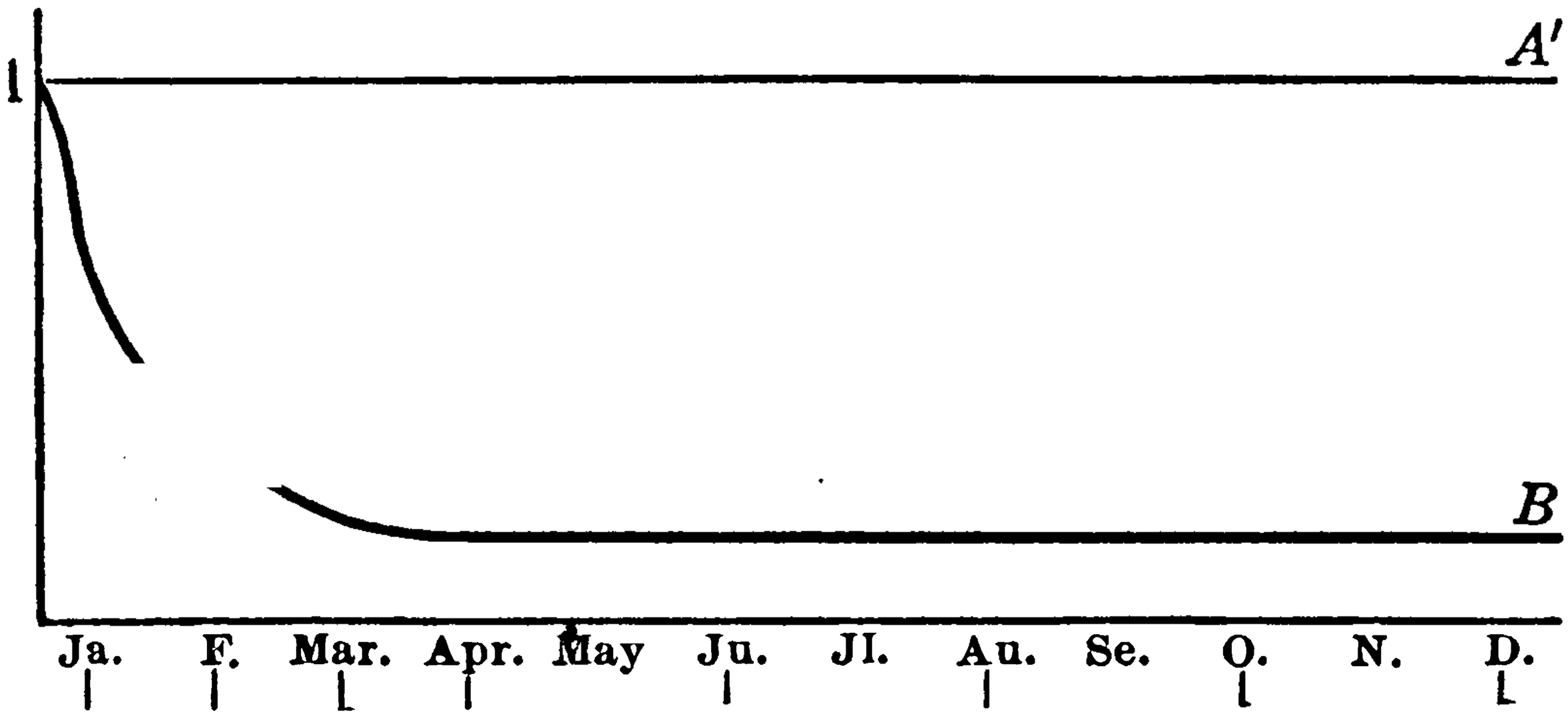

Fig. 6. Showing a theoretically possible distribution of eight advertisements among twelve issues of a monthly magazine.

place rapidly at first, let the early announcements come at frequent intervals. Since the rate of forgetting is slower toward the end of the period let the later announcements come at less frequent but regular intervals. The general principle is to adapt the number and regularity of repetitions to the amount and constancy of the material retained. The object, in graphic terms, is to raise the line

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modifications, sometimes of very considerable importance, without being itself conscious of the process, until its *results* present themselves to consciousness, in the new ideas, or new combinations of ideas, which the process has evolved."

An instance related by Coleridge illustrates this strikingly:

"A case of this kind occurred in a Roman Catholic town in Germany a year or two before my arrival at Göttingen, and had not then ceased to be a frequent subject of conversation. A young woman of four or five and twenty, who could neither read nor write, was seized with a nervous fever; during which, according to the asseverations of all the priests and monks of the neighborhood, she became possessed, and, as it appeared, by a very learned devil. She continued incessantly talking Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, in very pompous tones and with most distinct enunciation. This possession was rendered more probable by the known fact that she was or had been a heretic. Voltaire humorously advises the devil to decline all acquaintance with medical men; and it would have been more to his reputation, if he had taken this advice in the present instance. The case had attracted the particular attention of a young physician, and by his statement many eminent physiologists and psychologists visited the town, and cross-examined the case on the spot. Sheets full of her ravings were taken down from her own mouth, and were found to consist of sentences, coherent and intelligible each for itself, but with little or no connection with each other. Of the Hebrew, a small portion only could be traced to the Bible; the remainder seemed to be in the Rabbinical dialect. All trick or conspiracy was out of the question. Not only had the

young woman ever been a simple, harmless creature; but she was evidently laboring under a nervous fever. In the town, in which she had been resident for many years as a servant in different families, no solution presented itself. The young physician, however, determined to retrace her past life step by step; for the patient herself was incapable of returning a rational answer. He at length succeeded in discovering the place where her parents had lived; travelled thither, found them dead, but an uncle surviving; and from him learned, that the patient had been charitably taken by an old Protestant pastor at nine years old, and had remained with him some years, even till the old man's death. Of this pastor the uncle knew nothing, but that he was a very good man. With great difficulty, and after much search, our young medical philosopher discovered a niece of the pastor's, who had lived with him as his housekeeper, and had inherited his effects. She remembered the girl; related, that her venerable uncle had been too indulgent, and could not bear to have the girl scolded; that she was willing to have kept her, but that, after her patron's death the girl herself refused to stay. Anxious inquiries were then, of course, made concerning the pastor's habits; and the solution of the phenomenon was soon obtained. For it appeared, that it had been the old man's custom, for years, to walk up and down a passage of his house into which the kitchen door opened, and to read to himself with a loud voice, out of his favorite books. A considerable number of these were still in the niece's possession. She added, that he was a very learned man and a great Hebraist. Among the books were found a collection of Rabbinical writings, together with several of the Greek and Latin Fathers; and the physician succeeded in identifying so many passages with those taken down at the young woman's bedside, that no doubt could remain in any rational mind concerning the true origin of the impressions made on her nervous system."

This case shows in extreme form what may happen in lesser degree to any buyer. An advertising appeal to which he pays little attention at the time, may, if repeated often enough, leave an impression which will at some later time influence him to buy. The reader may test his own memory in this respect in the following paragraph:

What trade names first come into your mind in connection with these commodities: Liniment, gum, cough drops, camera, watch, garter, roofing, paint, talcum powder?

In connection with each of these commodities it is probable that a certain name arose instantly—that one which appears most frequently on car-cards, bill-boards, newspapers and magazines. It is likely that if the reader were buying the article for the first time, he would buy this certain kind. Though in his daily life he probably had not paid much attention to these flaring signs, still he was impressed "subconsciously," as it were, and when he came to buy, he would act accordingly. This fact is justification for the liberal use of "display" advertising.

Repetition affects the sale in other ways than through attention and memory. It may influence later stages of confidence and de-

cision. We shall not pause here to discuss these, however, preferring to plumb the stage of interest before passing on to the later stages of the sale.

CHAPTER FOUR

SELLING TO THE COLLECTIVE BUYER

Definition of "public." A good deal of the selling of to-day is done to people *en masse.* A car-card strikes not merely one person at a time, but a carful. A newspaper advertisement falls under the eyes not of one individual but of a group. The persons who are served by any selling medium constitute a collectivity —Ross calls it a "public"—which we may define as a group of dispersed individuals having similar ideas, feelings and actions, intensified by the consciousness of their "collectiveness."

It should be noted that a public is not a simple arithmetical summation of individual minds. Nor is it a new super-mind transcending its components. It can be regarded as one mind only in the sense that the individual minds composing it are almost identical in certain respects. Then, because each member of the group knows that all the other members hold opinions identical with his, he feels

more strongly than he would without such social support. It is in such a sense, then, that we speak of a collective mind as different from the individual minds composing it.

Newspapers and magazines offer good internal evidence of the existence of the collective mind. The editor writes in the plural number, implying that he is spokesman or chairman of the group. He emphasizes this relationship by using such prases as, "Editor's Easy Chair," "The Editor's Drawer"; by heading his feature sections: "Friend of the People," "Column for Workers," "Our Boys and Girls"; implying that he is seated in the midst of his readers, all of whom constitute a psychical family.

We may assert, then, that psychologically speaking, the readers of a sales medium constitute an entity, a public, which is not a loose aggregation of isolated and individual minds but an organic union, coalesced into one collective mind in the sense just mentioned.

Each public unique. There is further complication in the fact that each public is unique. The *Chicago American* public, for example, differs from that of the *Evening Post.* The readers of the *Country Gentleman* differ from the readers of the *Fireside Companion.*

We do not disregard the fact that an individual may belong to more than one public. He may at the same time be a reader of the New York *Times*, the *New Republic*, the *Congregationalist*, and the *Commercial and Financial Chronicle;* in which fact is involved no anomaly or mysterious splitting of personality. It means simply that when one reads the *Times* he is entertaining ideas that are being shared with a certain number of other people; and when he reads the *Congregationalist* he is entertaining mental tenants identical with those in the minds of another group of people.

Sales- and advertising-managers frequently complain about the multiplicity of mediums which they must use in carrying their message to the buying public. They regard it as a misfortune. As a matter of fact, such multiplicity is an advantage; it simplifies the task of the advertiser. There is not simply one infinitely large "buying public," out of which a seller may win a few customers. There are many "buying publics." Not all of them care for every commodity, or every type of a certain commodity. Fortunately they are sifted out and are grouped, with reference to tastes, about certain periodicals. The

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2. Economic. Facts should be gathered showing the property holdings, earnings, etc. Some periodicals have gathered such facts for distribution to interested space-buyers.

3. Sociological. What is the social level of the public? What are the leading occupations represented; the sports and relaxations?

These data are difficult to gather and often can be ascertained only indirectly. The chief difficulty comes in expressing them in numerical terms. One periodical overcame this ingeniously by collecting telephone directories of the country and ascertaining what percentage of its subscribers' names appeared therein. This did not furnish a complete description of the social status of its public, but it gave an indication.

These examples indicate that sellers are aware of the differences existing between publics and are seeking to measure them scientifically. Successful as they are, however, they have omitted one important form of investigation, which we shall call:

4. Psychological. Some of the greatest differences between publics are mental—ideas, feelings, motives, and the like. People vaguely recognize these differences; they say that the X Monthly is read by "high-brows";

the Y Monthly by "low-brows"; that one newspaper controls the "labor" vote; another, the "wet" element. If these differences exist surely we ought to be able to measure them. True, the task will be difficult; for psychical things are obscure and elusive. Furthermore, the status of psychology as an accurate science is so recently established that we do not yet have psychological "yard-sticks" with which to measure all kinds of mental things.

In the effort to secure such measurements the author undertook an investigation of several periodicals, and discovered a technique which revealed distinct psychological differences and permitted their mathematical presentation. Though these differences are not of a nature to be markedly significant for advertising and selling, they are nevertheless striking enough to encourage us to hope that we may ultimately develop methods that will be practically applicable to the two-fold problem which the advertiser faces: what medium to use, and how adapt copy to each one?

By way of preliminary approach the following simple procedure was planned and executed: Two periodicals were chosen which are commonly alleged to serve different publics—the Chicago *Evening Post* and the

Chicago *American*. From the editorial, news and feature columns of six parallel issues of these two papers, approximately five thousand words were taken in consecutive order—an equal number from each newspaper—and tabulated according to the number of syllables they contained.

The results are shown in Table I, in terms of the percentage of words containing more than two, three, etc., syllables. These figures show that the number of words over two syllables long in the *Post* is greater than that in the *American* by seventy per cent; this ratio holds for all the polysyllabic words.

Table I.

Showing percentage of words containing more than 2, 3, 4 and 5 syllables in *Chicago Evening Post, Chicago American, Century* and *American* magazines.

	Over 2	Over 3	Over 4	Over 5
Post	13.2	4.6	1.2	0.0
Chi. Am.	7.7	2.7	.7	0.0
Difference	5.5	1.9	.5	..
Per cent	70	70	71	..
Century	13.5	4.3	1.0	.2
Amer.	9.9	2.7	.6	.1
Difference	3.6	1.6	.4	.1
Per cent	36	59	67	100

In order to see if such a test would reveal similar differences between two magazines, the *Century* and *American* magazines were likewise examined. Results, as shown in Table I, answer our inquiry positively. They show that the number of words over two syllables in length in the *Century* is greater than the corresponding number in the *American* magazine by thirty-six per cent; the number over three syllables by fifty-nine per cent; the number over four syllables by sixty-seven per cent; and the number over five syllables by 100 per cent.

In continuation of the search for intellectual differences, the length of sentences was next measured. From parallel issues and columns of the same four periodicals (one issue each of the newspapers and two each of the magazines) a total of 8000 sentences were taken in consecutive order. The number of words in each sentence was computed and recorded by tens. That is, sentences containing from one to ten words were grouped together, those from ten to twenty, twenty to thirty, and so forth. The percentages are shown in Table II. These results show a greater number of "long" sentences in the *Post* than in the *American*. Considering any-

TABLE II.

Showing percentage of sentences of various lengths in *Chicago Evening Post, Chicago American, Century* and *American* magazines.

	1–10	Over 10	Over 20	Over 30	Over 40
Post	16.9	83.1	49.0	22.3	8.5
Chi. Amer.	23.1	76.9	43.4	20.6	10.3
Difference	—6.2	6.2	5.6	1.7	—1.8
Century	22.8	77.2	45.4	24.4	10.6
American	30.5	69.5	33.5	14.5	5.2
Difference	—7.7	7.7	11.9	9.9	5.4

	Over 50	Over 60	Over 70	Over 80	Over 90	Over 100
Post	2.7	.8	.2	..	..	..
Chi. Amer.	2.3	1.8	.6	.3	.2	.2
Difference	.4	—1.0	—.4	—.3	—.2	—.2
Century	5.5	2.4	.9	.4	.2	..
American	1.8	.7	.3	.1	.1	.1
Difference	3.7	1.7	.6	.3	.1	—.1

thing over twenty as a long sentence—the median length is between ten and twenty—we find a difference of 5.6. That is, whereas the *American* has 43.4 per cent, the *Post* has 49.0 per cent, an amount greater by thirteen per cent.

The difference in favor of the magazines—again favoring the *Century*—amounts to thirty-three per cent.

The author does not reason from these findings that a superiority in number of long words and sentences proves conclusively a corresponding intellectual superiority. Clearly long words and long sentences are not an absolute criterion of erudition or short ones of ignorance. Nevertheless, we must admit that in the long run, the chances favor a greater number of long words being associated with more enlightened people. Measurements made by various vocabulary tests have shown that there are *more* words in the vocabularies of the more enlightened; hence we might expect a greater number of *long* words there.

If we should grant the validity of such assumptions, however, we still should recognize that the kind of measures we have just made are still very fragmentary. The psychological differences between periodicals, and especially those differences that interest the advertiser, are much broader. Particularly important are those of an emotional order, such as tastes, interests, and the like.

Such differences might conceivably be shown as follows: In each periodical being investigated, measure the amount of space devoted to each kind of reading matter (ex-

cluding advertisements). Classify the contents under such headings as Politics, Finance, Religion, Literary Criticism, Science, Sports, etc. Then chart the results so as to show the proportionate amounts of space devoted to material of each class.

Such a study of two magazines (pooled measures of four issues each, same months) gave results as shown in Table III. By thus statistically studying various periodicals the seller may prepare a table (see Table IV) showing the amount of space in each periodical devoted to the subject nearest to his particular commodity; and from it may infer the degree of interest held by a public toward each field. For surely, *in the long run*, there is a close relation between the tastes of the readers of a periodical and the amount of space devoted to various topics.

The amount of space devoted to advertisements of various kinds of commodity might next be statistically examined. And the seller, using our historical criterion set forth on page 21, might settle on those mediums that devote a certain per cent of space to materials relating directly to his commodity. For example, a marketer of tennis paraphernalia

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they serve, may be discovered and measured. With additional labor and collaboration between psychological laboratory and advertising copy-room, we may hope to develop a kind of measurement which may ultimately be of great service to the advertiser.

Adapt copy to medium. After having decided what mediums to use, the advertiser who is alive to the psychological factors involved in selling to group buyers, will devise for each medium a piece of copy which will be appropriate to the psychological characteristics of the public that reads it. A good example of such adaptation which was successfully made even if it could not be based upon scientific differentiation between publics, is reported by Mr. Frank Fehlman who, as sales manager of H. W. Gossard Company, planned an advertising campaign involving the use of eleven national woman's magazines. He was convinced that each of these periodicals served a typical group of women, and that his copy should be adapted to the personality of each of these types. Lacking mathematical characterization of these types, he sought the editor of each magazine and asked for a description of the typical reader, as he, the editor, visualized her. The adver-

tising copy writer then composed a different piece of copy for the top half of each advertisement, tied up with the editorial policy of the magazine.

For example, the policy of *Good Housekeeping* had been closely knit around Dr. Wiley and food tests. The magazine guaranteed its advertisements; hence the idea of guarantee was well grounded in the mind of the reader of the magazine. Accordingly the headline over a picture of a galaxy of moving-picture beauties garbed in the Gossard product was, "Tested and Proved by the Greatest Stars in the Film World."

Woman's Home Companion had been conducting a campaign for better films. In order to fit in with this policy the following headline was employed with the picture: "Better Films—Beautiful Stars—Gossard Corsets."

"Then we wrapped our full page in *Vogue* in the smart, aristocratic, *haute aire* atmosphere of the lady of the limousine who pays twenty-five dollars for a corset with the nonchalance with which you or I spend a cent for a newspaper. We knew that the headline of this advertisement in *Vogue*—"The Regal Beauty of Dora Rogers"—would have the right effect on the haughty, double-chinned

society dowager whose corsets contribute so vitally toward the regality of her figure as she sweeps from her Rolls-Royce into the entrance of Sherry's."

After citing other adaptations of copy to medium this writer concludes: "We are now so thoroughly convinced of the necessity of linking up copy with the editorial tone of the magazine that it is one of our strongest advertising policies."

If such profitable adaptations can be effected without the use of scientific measurements, surely after we have refined a technique similar to that suggested in this chapter, we shall be able to make much more effective adaptations of sales appeals to the publics we are trying to reach.

Fashion a phenomenon of the collective mind. One characteristic of group minds is the phenomenon which we call fashion. It may be defined as "a series of recurring changes in the choices of a group of people which, though they may be accompanied by utility, are not determined by it." Fashion is one of the most important psychical factors affecting modern selling. Every one recognizes its force, but few lay down any prin-

ciples by which a seller may turn it to his account.

We shall be able to secure some light upon this question if we analyze fashion, showing what it is and how it operates. We shall do this by itemizing several of the most prominent characteristics concerned in its birth and development.

1. The first is universality. It may attach itself to any kind of human conduct—dress, speech, dancing, gait, hair-dressing. A further form of its universality is that it is prevalent throughout the human race. On Fifth avenue and on the palm-fringed beach of a South Sea island it flourishes with equal luxuriance and exuberance.

2. It is not determined by usefulness; indeed, many fashions thrive because they are conspicuously not useful. For example, one thing that makes French heels fashionable is that they hinder a woman from working very actively, and thus testify to the world that she is a woman of leisure.

3. A fashion at its inception must have some element of newness.

4. It originally represents the desire of some individual to mark himself off from others. If a belle on Riverside Drive or in

Zululand secures a set of green beads when her companions have none, she thereby marks herself as different from the rest.

5. Due to the next component of fashion—imitation—the other young women in her set secure some green beads.

6. In this imitation, we should observe the higher individual is imitated by the lower.

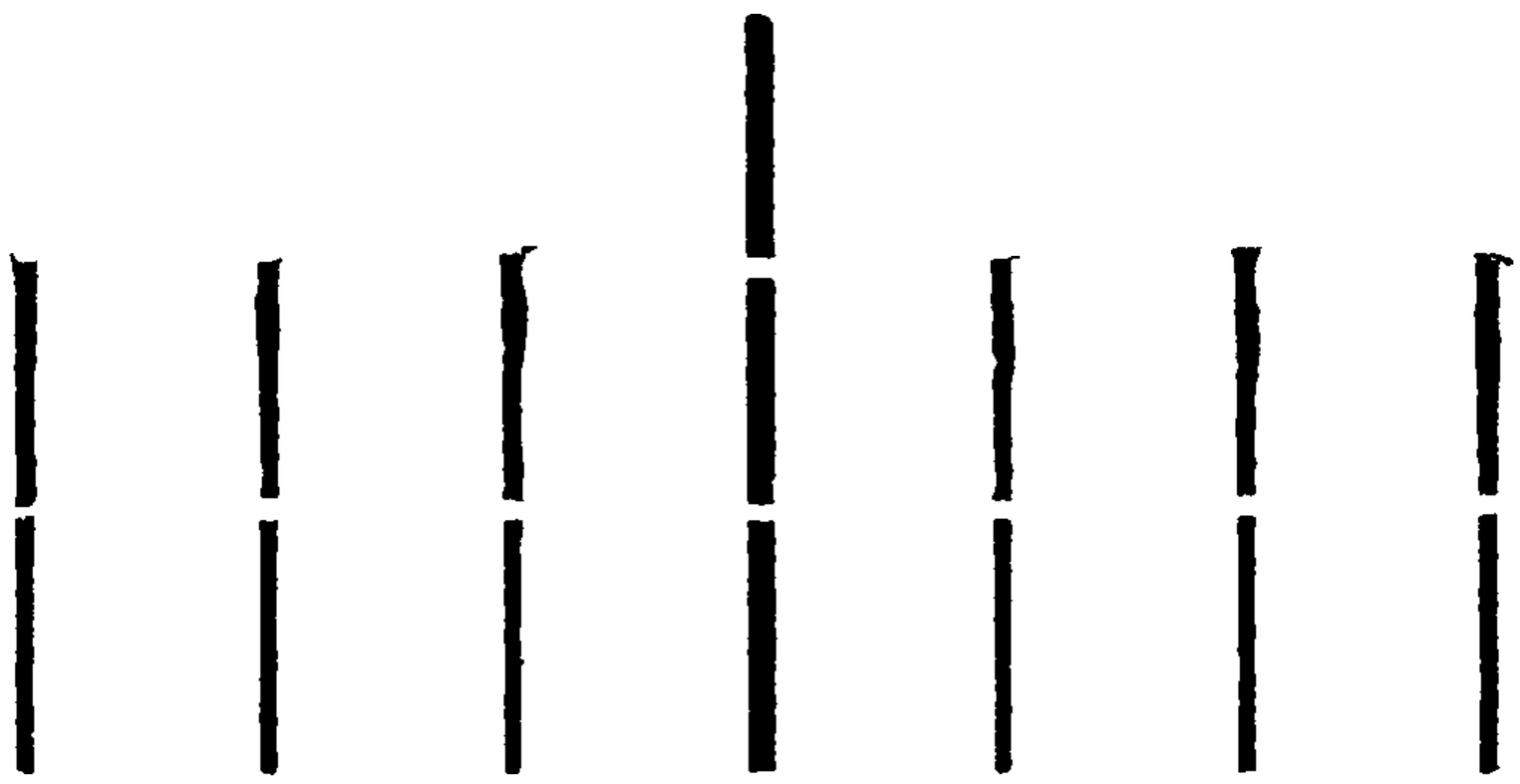

Fig. 7.

7. As a result of this imitative action, the individual who was first made conspicuous by the new apparel is no longer distinguished. The situation may be graphically represented by Figure 7.

In the social group A B C D E F G, individual D adopted the novel practice of wearing green beads thus raising herself above the level of her companions. When they, however, followed her example and put on green beads, they raised themselves to her level.

Finding herself again an undistinguished member of the group, D adopted some new ornament (perhaps bows on her shoes) which raised her again above the common level. Unfortunately, her inferiors are bound to copy this fashion; and so she will be obliged to search for another distinguishing mark.

8. After many such changes it becomes difficult to devise a new distinguishing mark; one is forced to revert to a fashion which had its vogue a long time before and died out. Having been quiescent for a long time, sometimes a generation, it possesses the element of novelty in the eyes of the new generation and answers the purpose of a new object of fashion. In other words, fashions move in cycles. Shoes range from wide to narrow toes, high to low heels. Women's skirts oscillate between extremes of length and shortness, narrowness and width.

Is there some favored length of time for fashion cycles? Various answers have been given. But speculation is futile. The true facts can be secured only by statistical investigation.

Such, in epitome, is the interesting story of fashion in general. The reader may apply

this schema to any fashion and may easily see its commercial implications.

Relation between fashion and selling. Obviously fashion may stimulate selling by creating and furthering new demands. It may retard selling by reducing the demand for an article which has ceased to be fashionable. For these and other reasons the seller should study fashion, statistically, if possible. By means of the knowledge thus obtained he may estimate what to buy, how much of a stock to lay in, when to plan for another fashion, and how long it may run.

In introducing a new article to the public, the seller may succeed vastly better if he studies the psychology of fashion and acts accordingly. Thus he may utilize law 4 by showing the buyer how the purchase of this commodity will give hini individuality and ascendancy over the mass. In observance of laws 5 and 6, the seller would seek as his first buyer the acknowledged leader of the social group. Then he may inform the lesser buyer that he may distinguish himself by doing as did the most distinguished member of the group.

Summary. In this chapter we have shown that the buyer is not always appealed to in-

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STAGE TWO—INTEREST

CHAPTER FIVE

HOW TO AROUSE INTEREST IN A COMMODITY

Attention may merge into interest. After the buyer has given his initial momentary attention to a commodity, he does one of two things: either he turns away, in which case he for the time being ceases to be a prospective buyer; or he continues to pay attention and remains a prospective buyer. In the latter case his attention becomes something more than the mere intellectual awareness considered as the first stage of the sale. It becomes a deeper, warmer, more rapt kind of attention, so different as to constitute a new stage in the stream of thought and to deserve a new name. We shall denominate it Interest. In this chapter we shall discuss the nature of interest in general; and in the two following chapters, two of the devices that maintain it at high peak—good feeling and imagination.

Definitions. In describing interest we may properly start with a definition. Several have been formulated: "Interest is the recognition

of a thing which has been vitally connected with experience before—a thing recognized as old." "Impulse to attend." "Interest naturally arouses tendencies to act." "The root idea of the term seems to be that of being engaged, engrossed, or entirely taken up with some activity because of its recognized worth." "Interest marks the annihilation of the distance between the person and the materials and results of his action; it is a sign of their organic union."

Watch a boy of fourteen as he bends over a mystery tale. Blind and deaf to sights and sounds around him he throws his entire being into the page. We say he is interested. To achieve such effects upon the reading public would fulfill the dearest wish of the advertising copy-writer. For, according to our last definition of interest, when the reader of an advertisement is interested in the description of a thing he identifies himself with it; he makes an imaginary purchase; if it turns out to be agreeable he tries to materialize it by actually purchasing the commodity.

First law of interest. How to create this degree of interest within the mind of the buyer is the question before us. The answer may be found in two psychological laws. The first

is: *In order to create interest in a thing, give information about it.* We may see the force of this law if we examine some interest in the course of development. Take the interest of a typical young girl in a certain movie actor. She knows the name of every picture in which he has appeared; his age; the color of his hair, eyes and automobile. She cherishes these facts and fondles them as a precious rosary with which she pays her devotions. They constitute the psychological basis of her interest. The astute press-agent knows this, and at well-timed intervals, he lets slip through the press a few items and anecdotes about the star which fan the interest of the fair devotee to a still whiter heat.

Sellers in general may profitably follow this example, disseminating information about their wares. Progressive advertisers have been making much use of this device within the past few years. Probably they have not consciously applied our rule; but in studying the effects of the various elements in their advertisements, they have discovered that information-giving advertisements bring results; and so they have increased the use of them. Of 1000 advertisements in *Collier's Weekly* for 1902 only 220, or *twenty-two* per

cent were "informational." In the same periodical for 1919 the per cent had increased to *seventy-four*. If we consider the doctrine of "survival of the fittest" applicable in the realm of advertising, we may reasonably infer that this feature has proved of considerable selling value.

In giving information about a commodity it is desirable to observe an important corollary to our first law: *State the new in terms of the old.* For example, in giving information about a new kind of filing cabinet which will fit into the drawer of an executive's desk, describe some difficulty which every executive faces; such as the necessity of interrupting an important conference to call a clerk and wait for her to fetch a record card. This situation is already familiar to the buyer, being a part of his daily experience. It is for this reason a valuable starting point from which the seller may proceed to impart information about his new product.

Classification. In thus utilizing old interests the seller has a wide variety to select from. They may be classified as innate and acquired. Those in the first group are born within the race. As shown in Chapter II, man naturally

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which we are using as our chief selling point —waterproofness. This is a difficult task. In bringing it about James advises: "Next, step by step, connect with these first objects and experiences, the later objects and ideas which you wish to instill. Associate the new with the old in some natural and telling way, so that the interest, being shed from point to point, finally suffuses the entire system of objects of thought." Here the advertiser may begin to appeal to the acquired interests by showing how these waterproof shoes will save money and trouble by eliminating the necessity of wearing rubbers. Many advertisers at this step fail to make a smooth transition between the old idea and the new one. They fail to show how Lincoln's birthday, which they may be referring to as a matter of contemporary interest, is related to their commodity. This is an important matter and deserves more than passing attention. But we must proceed with the task in hand.

We might group the acquired interests, upon which a seller may play, into two classes: permanent and temporary. Those in the first class have enough vitality to persist throughout the greater part of a lifetime. Such are preferences for sugar (or salt) on tomatoes,

a particular political party or fraternal order. Those belonging to the second group are of less importance to the individual: interest in a passing murder trial, in the first aëroplane trip across the Atlantic, in a pending presidential election.

In choosing informational facts with which to evoke interest in a given commodity, we might group them into four classes: (1) sources of the raw materials, (2) processes of manufacture, (3) facts about the men who compose the firm, (4) uses for the commodity. By thus classifying the thousand advertisements mentioned above we may discover something about the relative merit of these classes of facts in advertising practice. The results of such arrangement are presented in percentage form in Table V.

Table V.

Showing the percentages of informational advertisements in *Collier's Weekly* for 1902 and 1919, grouped according to the kinds of information given regarding the commodity.

	Uses	Processes of Manufacture	Personnel of the Firm	Sources of Raw Materials	Total
1902	57	22	11	10	100
1919	66	14	18	02	100

These figures show that the items featured most frequently are the uses to which the

commodity may be put. This is true of both the 1902 and the 1919 advertisements. Indeed, in the later period, the frequency is greater. Perhaps the explanation is that by describing uses the advertiser can get nearer to the heart of his reader. He can talk about the daily needs of the reader in terms already familiar, and can show the related uses for the commodity, thus exemplifying the true course of interest as we outlined it in earlier paragraphs. Perhaps, too, the effectiveness of use may be attributed to the human liking for activity. One's reaction toward an object seems to be innately in terms of "what is to be done with it?"

Facts about processes of manufacture, though formerly second in frequency, seem to have lost some of their popularity, likewise facts regarding the sources of raw materials. The value of facts about the personnel of the firm, however, seems to be increasing; the percentage having grown from 11 to 18 during the eighteen years covered by the investigation. This may be indicative of the growing interest which society is taking in big business, and particularly in the personal aspect. It requires to know income returns, amounts of excess profits; and naturally desires to

know about the character and ability of the men at the head of the affairs. Besides, people like to read about successful men in order to discover the secret of their success.

Howsoever we explain these qualities, we know for certain that during the great expansion of advertising of the past twenty years, the use of information-giving advertisements has increased in the ratio from twenty-two to seventy-four in a hundred. And that among informational facts, certain groups have been numerically favored over others. The enterprising copy-writer who desires to profit by the experience of the past may well adopt the practice of arousing interest by means of informational copy, and may well consider seriously the results of our investigation showing the relative value of different classes of interest-evoking facts.

Second law of interest. Leaving now the unlimited possibilities of variation in the spreading of information about a commodity, let us pass on to another phase. For there is another psychological law of interest: *In order to create interest in a thing, arouse activity toward it.* We may see this law exemplified in the methods pursued by various organiza-

tions in enlisting the interest of certain persons. When a hospital desires to secure a wealthy patroness it places her on the Board of Directors; then on some important committee. As she busies herself with the affairs of the institution she becomes interested in it, and soon makes the hoped-for financial contributions.

Opportunities for the utilization of this prescription are numerous enough in direct personal selling. The salesman may induce the buyer to feel the texture of the silk, take a ride in the automobile, try the piano. A pertinent example is given in this description of the method employed by salesmen sent out to introduce a new cooking product to the housewives of the country:

"The canvasser knocked at the door of the house. When the door was opened, the canvasser immediately removed his hat, placing it on the floor of the piazza or on the rail if one were handy. Using a set phrase such as: 'Madam, I am here to show you Crisco, the new shortening,' he offered her with his two hands a pail of Crisco. The instant that the woman took the pail from the canvasser's hands he drew a pencil from his pocket and held it in his right hand, at the same time he drew from another pocket a coupon which he held in his left hand. This was so that the woman could not hand back the pail to the canvasser. The most she could do was to drop or place it on the floor. Then the conversation started."

Opportunities to arouse activity on the part of the buyer are not quite so numerous in advertising. There are some, however, which when exploited, serve the purpose admirably. Here belong coupons to be torn off, requests for names of friends and dealers, offers of prizes for the solution of puzzles, reproduction of cartoons, composition of limericks. All these devices, which have established their utility by their persistence in advertising, derive their psychological justification from their ability to arouse interest through activity.

Summary. We have now answered the question posited at the beginning of this chapter. We have made a psychological analysis of interest; have described the kinds of interest common to the human species; and have formulated two laws for the development of interest.

We have seen that these laws are not merely theoretical formulations. By an investigation of advertising practice we found their practical verification in the conscious or unconscious use of them by successful sellers. By a more minute analysis of the specific stimulants to interest which have been employed,

we have discovered which ones are likely to have the strongest appeal.

It should be remarked that though we may seem to have treated interest as a distinct stage of the sale, we do not thereby imply that it is entirely separate from the other stages. As a matter of fact, once it is aroused, it persists throughout the sale, in desire, confidence, decision and satisfaction.

We shall now proceed to discuss two components of the mental stream—good feeling and imagination—which are important stimulants to the growth of interest.

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in connection with the stage of interest, and we shall repeat it in discussing the later stages, especially that of satisfaction, where we shall show that the sale is not really consummated until the buyer is in a completely satisfied state of mind. Meanwhile, in order to understand the reason for good feeling at the various stages of the sale, we shall consider it as a general psychological factor, endeavoring to show what it is, and how it affects human conduct.

Pleasantness reflected in bodily changes. In endeavoring to show how good feeling facilitates the act of purchase we must recognize the fact that states of feeling are characteristically accompanied by wide-spread bodily activities. These consist of many varieties, often called "expressions." Some are connected with the gross muscles of the trunk, arms, legs and neck. Others with the finer muscles in the face and eyes. Still others with internal organs hidden from the naked eye.

Some psychologists assert that such of these movements as accompany pleasant feelings represent a heightening of the bodily powers; and that those which accompany unpleasant feelings represent a depressing effect. For

example, a scientist who investigated the effect of various stimuli upon the extent of the knee-jerk, discovered that pleasant music increased the extent of the movement. We cannot accept unqualifiedly this thoroughgoing relationship between pleasantness and heightening of bodily powers, because of certain contradictory evidence which we shall not enter into here. Nevertheless the theory offers interesting possibilities for speculation concerning the power of pleasant feelings over the actions of the buyer.

Another view is somewhat more credible, namely, that pleasant feelings with respect to an object are accompanied by movements *toward*, while unpleasant feelings are accompanied by movements *away from*, the object. Something of this sort seems to happen when we make experiments upon a simple organism like the amœba. When we place one kind of object in his neighborhood he moves toward it; when we place there another kind of object, he quickly moves away. An infant reacts similarly. To a shiny ball dangling before his eyes he reaches forth his hands; from a sharp pin he draws away.

It is probable that an adult reacts with similar positive and negative movements ac-

cording as he is confronted with an object which is pleasing or displeasing. Sometimes his movements of expansion and retraction are easily discernible. At other times they are minute, and perceptible only by means of delicate measuring instruments. For though in the course of our civilized existence we learn to conceal our outward manifestations of feeling, we rarely succeed in repressing the inner ones. They occur without the interposition of the will. And they form a large majority of the signs of unpleasantness. They are, as we say, instinctive—to be more thoroughly discussed in Chapter XI. Though we shall not enumerate them here, we shall indicate their astonishing multiplicity by mentioning a few. It is well known that the sweat glands and saliva glands are affected by strong feeling. Other glands not so well known are also aroused, such as the thyroid, pituitary, pineal, adrenal. Changes also occur in the circulatory system; the heart beats change in rate; and the arteries expand as in blushing, or contract as in paling. Electric disturbances occur—man being a sort of electric battery. Chemical reactions occur. Is this not proved by the fact that the hair may turn white in a single night?

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Interpreting good feeling as hilarious humor they conceive their rôle to be that of a court jester; to manufacture a constant flow of wit with which to keep the spirits of the buyer at a high pitch.

Some advertisers act on the same principle, straining every nerve to evolve a humorous story, picture or limerick. Whether this device is successful or not is seriously open to question. If we seek the testimony to be found in the practices of the majority of advertisers we find scant use of humor as a stimulant to good feeling. In an investigation of the advertisements appearing in *Collier's Weekly* and *Harper's Weekly* between 1902 and 1919, the author found that the number of humorous advertisements never exceeded seven in 100. If we place any reliance upon the historical method as an index of successful selling practices, we may conclude that few advertisers have found humor a valuable selling aid.

Perhaps this apparent lack of success is not due to any intrinsic unprofitableness in humor or to any violent distaste for it on the part of the buyer. The apparent success of a few such mildly humorous devices as the dog who hears "His Master's Voice"; the Gold-

Dust twins; and the cheery chef of Cream of Wheat suggests this. Probably the failure of certain similar attempts is due to the poor quality of humor employed. To be funny artistically requires the services of a real humorist. An advertiser may have first-rate ability as a composer of "straight" copy without being a clever humorist. In recognition of this fact some advertisers desirous of using humor have lately called in professional humorists, particularly cartoonists, and have asked them to prepare copy containing the same funny situations that have already caught the public fancy. Such commercializations of expert humor are too recent to permit us to draw conclusions. After sufficient trial, however, they may tell whether or not our previous failures in humorous copy were due to the ineptness of copy-writers.

Other stimulants of good feeling. But humor is not the only method by which to generate good feeling. Pleasantness need not take the form of hilarity. It may be esthetic; called up by pleasing combinations of colors or pleasing lines of a package. It may consist of the mild feeling of recognition called up by frequeney of repetition of the sales message (Chapter III). It may be the feeling which

in the preceding chapter we called interest, generated by the linkage of old with new. It may be one of the feelings accompanying desire, where pleasant old experiences are attached to new objects vividly projected into the future (Chapter VIII). In an intense form it may consist of some pleasant feeling (in this case called emotion) accompanying instinctive forms of reaction discussed in Chapter XI.

Supremely important is that form of pleasantness which, in our final chapter we shall discuss under the name, satisfaction. There we shall supplement this discussion by showing that good feeling, which is the true goal of the sale, should constitute, indeed, the great sub-stratum in the mind of the buyer. Until then we shall rest content with the contention of this chapter, namely, that by means of arousing pleasant feelings, the seller calls forth within the buyer a number of instinctive movements, great and small; which release a great amount of nervous energy, which the seller may direct into the act of purchase.

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may have actual images of things touched; auditory images of things heard; gustatory images of things tasted; olfactory images of things smelled; and so on through the entire range of sensations.

The law of association. If we try to account for this power of imaging, we must refer to the nature of brain tissue, which is so constituted that any object impressed upon the senses makes a permanent modification in the brain; to recall the object later, one needs only to revive this pathway. One usually accomplishes this revival by stimulating another pathway which was stimulated when the first one was made. As a rule, several pathways are stimulated at once. They are associated, we say. This, because our experiences are necessarily related to each other; either they follow closely upon each other's heels; or else they possess common elements. As a result, whenever a new object (a commodity for sale) stimulates one pathway it revives another at the same time.

Thus the seller has the power to call up within the mind of the buyer any objects experienced in the past; reviving them in the form of images. For example, with the word "Wrigley," he may call up "gum," which has

been frequently associated with it. Let us observe some of the characteristics of images which the seller may utilize in furthering the sale.

Characteristics of images.

1. The first, as we have already said, is variety. Images may be as variegated as the senses.

2. Certain kinds are more numerous than others. In point of numbers, visual images probably come first. Measurements in the psychological laboratory have shown that most people can use visual images more freely than they can the other kinds. Auditory images come next. The others occur with considerable less frequency. Some people are able, only with great difficulty, to revive, for example, tastes and smells, especially those only feebly impressed. To test this, let the reader try to image the taste of coffee. (Be sure it is taste and not smell.)

We do not mean to imply that images other than visual and auditory are absent from the ordinary mind. The conclusion which we would draw is that the seller will have greater likelihood of calling forth visual images. He should therefore set his psychological traps to catch this kind. When he wishes to make

the buyer appreciate the glories of apples from the Hood River valley he will be able to arouse mental *visions* of apples more easily than mental tastes, smells and "touches." This is to be expected because images are derived from previous sensory experiences; and the ordinary buyer has come into contact with apples more frequently through sight than through his other senses. Assuredly, however, any of the other forms of imagery may arise, and the seller may legitimately appeal to any variety that he wishes. Indeed, in advertising apples he might evoke mental tastes and smells with great effectiveness because of the strength and novelty and pleasantness that would probably accompany them.

3. Images may be either clear or obscure. Some are so clear as to be hardly distinguishable from original sensations. The extreme form of such self-deception is called hallucination. Not all images come with this degree of clearness, however. Some are obscure, fleeting and sketchy, almost to the vanishing point. Many times one tries to image the voice of an absent friend with no more revival than perhaps a phrase or two and the vague suggestion of an intonation.

In view of this fact, the seller who intends

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To achieve this kind of definiteness is a difficult task. Our lazy human nature tempts us to follow the line of least resistance and to use general terms. We are prone to describe all things with the same words: "wonderful," "great bargain," "immense saving." These are not descriptive words at all; they give no hint of the nature or quality of the article. They may with equal pertinency be applied to a house and lot, an automobile, a pair of gloves, a block of oil stock.

One explanation of our proneness toward the use of general, indefinite terms is the poverty of our vocabularies. We have not formed the habit of using words of variety sufficient for the designation of fine shades of meaning. The remedy is obvious: develop a full and exact vocabulary. In describing a commodity, search out words which fit it exactly and which represent its varied qualities vividly in the mind of the buyer.

4. Images may bring strong feelings in their train. This is especially true of infrequent but unusually vivid images. In encircling the sale with pleasant feelings as recommended in Chapter VI, the seller may use these with great profit. There are certain images that generally bring pleasant feelings

—images of eating ice-cream and similar dainties. These are much used by a certain candy company in advertising its chocolates. There are other images that generally bring unpleasant feelings—noisome animals and reptiles. Besides such general tendencies there are likes and dislikes peculiar to certain individuals—idiosyncracies developed in the course of experience. The seller should study them and use only those images which have pleasant associations.

Empathy in the sale. One interesting use to which we occasionally put mental images is in that process called "empathy." Empathy may be defined as "the process of humanizing objects, of reading or feeling ourselves into them." We are so constituted that we are inclined to place ourselves imaginally into situations that may be presented before us. We do this sometimes over so simple a thing as a straight line. If it slants at a certain angle without any visible means of support it gives us an uncomfortable feeling. We feel as though we were the line; and to hold an attitude of such obliquity gives us uncomfortable feelings of strain. The reader may note such feelings as he looks at Figure 8. The line, a, with its overweighted top, and the

triangle, b, with its lack of poise, give the observer distinctly unpleasant feelings. Architects make allowance for such conditions in planning the lines of a building. They know that abrupt corners give a feeling of sharpness; straight lines, a feeling of hardness; curves, a feeling of softness. When

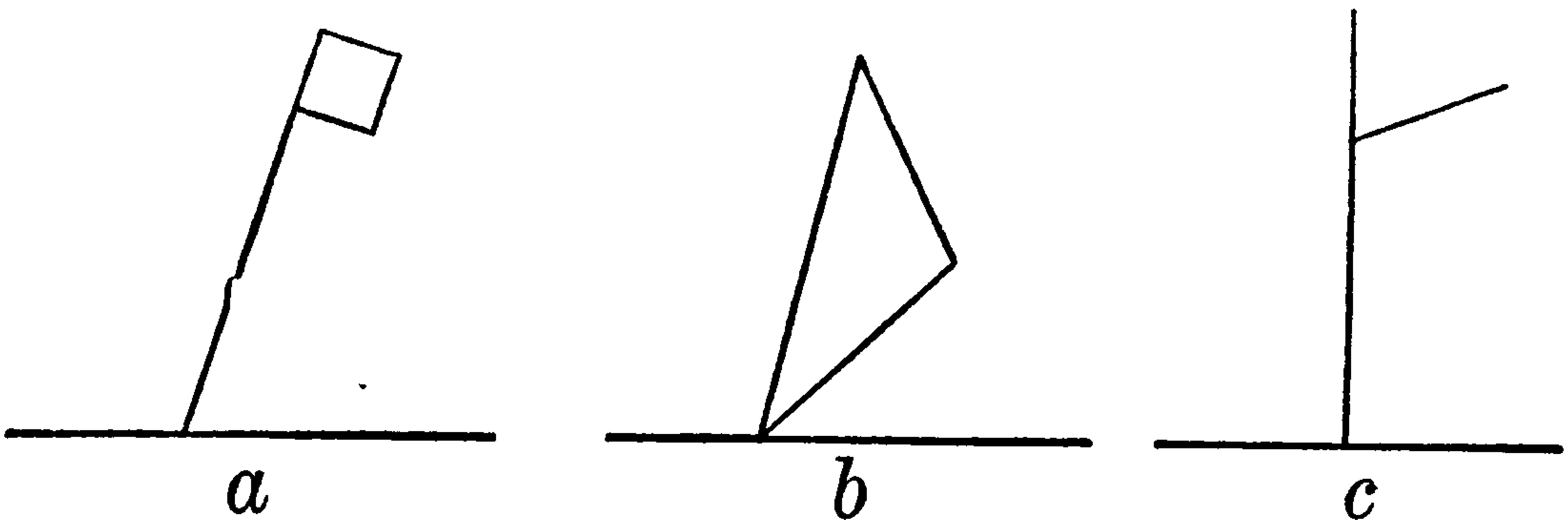

Fig. 8.

building an unsupported marquise over the entrance of a building, they usually tilt it slightly upward as in Figure 8, c, rather than build it on a horizontal plane. For they know that if it were horizontal, the observer, with his empathetic tendency, would feel that he ought to support it to keep it from falling. If it is already tilted upward, however, he does not feel obliged to push it up any higher. Sellers should observe this empathetic tendency in human nature and should make allowances for it in presenting their wares. Particularly important is

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STAGE THREE—DESIRE

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made through such an investment. He virtually takes a piece out of his past and projects it into the future, in relation to the new object. We described this relation between the new and the old in Chapter V.

3. This forward projection of the buyer's past is quite likely to be in terms of the images discussed in Chapter VII. The buyer creates pictures of himself bowling along the boulevards in the motor car, no longer as passenger but as driver. He imagines the things that he will do with the dividends from his oil-stock.

4. These trains of images are pleasantly toned (see Chapters VI and VII). And generally speaking the greater the pleasantness the greater the desire. We might lay it down as a rule that one who wishes to strengthen the buyer's desire for an object should arouse within him strong feelings of pleasantness. The mechanism for arousing these is the use of the imagery discussed in Chapter V (paragraph 3). Call up vivid images from the buyer's past, being careful that they be markedly pleasant. Then mix them into a picture showing future possibilities. Paint a definite picture of the buyer driving his family into the country on Sunday

and enjoying a picnic dinner in a shady grove. Embellish every selling point with definite clean-cut images as directed in Chapter VII. An extraordinarily effective example of this is the slogan "Like mother used to make." Here are all the elements that go to produce strong desire: visual images of the fat, browned mince pie of childhood days; gustatory images of sinking one's teeth into the mass and allowing the flavor to permeate the mouth; olfactory images of the spicy sweetish odor as the pie comes smoking from the oven; and above all the image of mother's gentle smile as she cuts the golden object and dispenses it around the table. Everything connected with this picture is pleasant in retrospect. It is, therefore, a capital segment of experience to project into the future in relation to a new kind of mince meat.

5. So vivid are these images, and so alluring, that they lead the buyer to make movements toward the object about which they center. These movements are a very important part of the desire. They are always there. An infant evinces a desire for a watch by reaching toward it. An adult also has an impulse to reach out and touch the object of his desire. True, under the repressive in-

fluence of civilization he often inhibits the outward signs of movement; still he moves if only by twitching his muscles. Many times he acts in ways unknown to himself, through some of the hidden muscles and glands mentioned in Chapter VI. Imperceptible though they are, these faint, incipient movements constitute a vital part of desire.

When the movements of the buyer are gross enough to be observable, the seller may use them as indices to determine how highly developed the desire is. For in general as the buyer becomes more desirous of the object he makes more violent movements toward it. He grasps it with firmer grip; or makes more minute examination of it; or sits down in it with an air of proprietorship.

6. If the first movement toward an object results in its purchase, desire does not last very long. Usually, however, the first movement does not bring about the attainment of the object. It is blocked in some way. The obstruction may be material: an intervening window glass; distance from the object pictured. Or it may be mental: an idea of some other object which is still more strongly desired.

7. This obstruction is accompanied by un-

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the blocks to the buyer's movements, the seller usually employs reason, suggestion, and other mental aids discussed throughout this book.

c. The pleasure following the fulfillment of desire is that same mental condition which in Chapter XIV we shall call "satisfaction."

Though these cross-references and duplications may seem a trifle confusing to the reader, they are unavoidable; for we are making longitudinal- and cross-sections of a complex stream which does not lend itself readily to sharp clean-cut divisions.

Summary. We shall conclude this chapter, at the risk of undue repetition, by characterizing desire as a stage in the mental stream akin to interest but a step beyond. A stage in which the buyer fastens certain past experiences upon a framework of future prospects, relating them all to the object for sale. He likes the ensemble so well that he reaches out after the object with either actual or incipient movements. At first these movements are blocked by physical or ideational impediments. These the seller must remove. He may do so by calling up action-impelling images in the mind of the buyer, and images that are clothed with exceedingly pleasant feelings.

STAGE FOUR—CONFIDENCE

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to create public confidence in "57 varieties." The large money values which are sometimes estimated to inhere in confidence (sometimes called the good will of a concern) are further evidences of its large place in business. In arriving at such an evaluation, one accountant writes: "Good will is a legitimate asset in an industrial enterprise, and the most accepted method of computing the amount of good will is to take the total profits for the last five years and deduct from them five years' interest on the capitalization at 7 per cent per annum; the balance is good will."

Confidence and good will are habits. In business inventories confidence, or good will, is usually spoken of as one of the "intangible" assets of a firm, and is thereby classed as something that is only theoretically existent. It is our purpose in this chapter to show that though it is intangible it is nevertheless real. That in the process of the sale it occupies a place second to none of the other processes we are describing. If any one were to ask us where lurks this invisible asset, where it makes it habitat, we should answer, In the mind of the buyer. It exists there as a system of habits which the seller has built up by dint of much labor and cost. These

habits consist of acts or tendencies that are favorable to the seller and his commodity. The good will belonging to a certain haberdashery dealer consists psychologically in my habit of turning in at his door rather than that of his competitor when I wish to buy collars. The good will of a certain firm of collar manufacturers consists of my habit of asking for their brand rather than another, and of recommending it to my friends. These habits, while in a sense belonging to me, belong just as truly to the seller; they are paid for by the money which he has used in advertising and by the pains he has taken to serve me.

It shall be our purpose in this chapter to describe the processes through which these habits of confidence and good will are built up.

Genesis and development of confidence. It is possible for the seller to build up confidence because of a certain fundamental trait in the buyer's mind. To find its roots we shall be obliged to probe far back into the days of infancy. There, at the time when the mental life of the individual is first unfolding, we shall find the roots of that which blooms forth as adult confidence. When we thus examine

the mental life of the infant, we find as the first forerunner of confidence a simple, inchoate mental attitude which can hardly be expressed by any more definite term than a "feeling of simple-reality"; this is attached to every object of experience. In every act of perceiving the infant implicitly says, "Ah! I sense something here; I guess I can rely upon my senses." He feels that if he can sense the object it must really be there. Existence is, for him, simply presence. Whatever is, is real. There is no hint of disbelief in anything he can sense; there is no reason for anything but confidence in its existence. This feeling, crude and positive, which attaches to the objects of infantile experience, may be inelegantly called a feeling of "thereness."

This primeval predecessor of the confidence-to-be has been called by one psychologist (Bain) "primitive credulity." Bain says that the mind is so constituted that it tends to accept as true every statement made (see page 45). Every impression made upon the mind of a child tends to receive credence, and is accepted unless it is offset by a contrary impression. Now in the mind of the child most impressions come without any contradictory

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and failing, makes him doubt the statement that Santa Claus enters through that passage.

After a number of such experiences, coming more frequently as adulthood approaches, the individual forms the habit of suppressing his innate tendencies to credulity. He tests every one of his feelings of reality with his other experiences. He tentatively acts upon them to see if they bring the response to be expected, and he places alongside them the ideas gained from former experiences. If his movements do not result in satisfactory response, he doubts. If the new impression is belied by his past experiences he doubts. Only if the new object gives full and expected respouse to his testing movements, and agrees with his previous experiences is his doubt resolved and changed into confidence.

When such a test results favorably it brings satisfaction and appeasement of desire. In order to understand how great may be this satisfaction after the resolution of a doubt, one has only to read the "Meditations" of some of the church Fathers, who, after having been racked and torn by religious doubts, came to a state of perfect belief and trust. There too one may secure illuminating understanding of the psychological conditions attending

full confidence. After reading these descriptions a seller may understand more clearly what a powerful ally he has in the mind of a buyer who maintains implicit confidence in his (the seller's) goods.

Such in outline is the genesis and development of confidence in the lifetime of the individual. From a crude, primitive, almost animalistic "sensation-coefficient," as one psychologist (Baldwin) puts it, it develops by a process of testing of thought with externality, into the refined and substantial force that we call by such meaningful and solemn words as belief, trust, credit, faith. To create this is a life-time task. Now we see why it often requires a long time to build up public confidence in certain commodities. For example, it took a long time for the public to develop confidence in the business of advertising as such; because in the early days of advertising, the buyer, trusting his first impressions tinged with "primitive credulity," attempted to act upon them and was deceived. He found unreality where he had attributed reality. For a long time, then, whenever he was tempted to act on an advertisement, he recalled his first unpleasant experiences and they contradicted the statements he was read-

ing. So he exclaimed, paraphrasing the disgruntled scriptural writer, "All advertisers are liars; I will not believe any of them." If within recent years the buying public has developed more confidence in advertising it is because advertisers have learned to make statements which agree with reality and which, when acted upon by the buyer, bring satisfactory responses.

Confidence is stable but fragile. One peculiarity about confidence is that after it has passed through the stage of doubt and has secured the right to exist by means of a long agreement between impression ("simple reality feelings") and fact, then it stands square and solid. We say of an individual in whom we have great confidence, "I would trust him with my last dollar." And this solidity endures as long as the feeling of reality can attach itself unimpededly to the object. But let one slip occur and the structure is ruined. Paradoxical as it may seem, confidence is at the same time very stable and very fragile. Nowhere is this demonstrated more forcibly than in the business of banking. The confidence which people may hold in a bank for generations may be shattered over night.

Confidence, the goal of bank advertising. The

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is justified. For what banks seek through advertising is first confidence, then deposits. They are obliged to keep confidence as their chief aim. They know that at best it is a precarious and fragile entity, which ever so slight a thing may disturb; hence they refrain from employing any methods that may by their eccentricity shock it.

Two devices for instilling confidence. From the foregoing analysis of confidence the reader is prepared to see what usually passes in the mind of the buyer when he is developing confidence in a commodity. Due to his "primitive credulity" the buyer tends to believe the first statement made about the commodity. Soon, however, he thinks of some past experiences which controvert the statement, which arouse within his mind disbeliefs, and which act as inhibitions to the purchase of the commodity. These the seller must batter down. He may use two psychological aids:

The first is repetition. An assertion repeated often enough will go far toward creating belief in it. This is the psychological justification for the constant use of such slogans as, "Ask the man who owns one"; "There's a reason"; "99 44/100% pure"; "An apple a day keeps the doctor away"; "The ut-

most in cigarettes"; "The most beautiful car in America."

The second is to arouse and maintain a feeling of satisfaction within the buyer. Throughout our discussion we have called confidence, both in its primitive state and its refined state, a feeling. We have done this designedly. For confidence is marked by something warm and pleasant—it is a true feeling as we defined the term in Chapter VI. As we stated in that chapter, feeling is ever an animus to action. A seller may give ever so convincing arguments; he may bristle with reasons why the buyer should purchase his article; but if he fail to create confidence he will not make the sale. We may paraphrase the old adage to read: "A man convinced without the feeling of confidence is of the same opinion still."

Summary. We have here laid down the dictum that confidence is inevitable in the sale. Though it need not always appear as stage four, where we have placed it in the logical outline of this book, still it usually comes here in the sale of a new commodity. Wherever it comes, it must exist in some degree of strength, the greater the better. And we cited some commodities to which it adheres with the solidity

of Gibraltar. Though it may be strong and well-grounded, however, it may, under very slight provocation and lack of faithfulness, crumble in a moment. Therefore the seller must exercise constant watchfulness to see that he keeps his pledges and fulfills the expectations of those who trust him and his goods.

Though confidence is usually regarded as an "intangible" asset, we showed that it has real existence; and that its value may be reckoned in dollars and cents. Psychologically speaking we described it as a set of habits inculcated within the buyer—motor habits of responding to the seller's appeals with acts of purchase. We showed the simple innate trait upon which it is based, and related how from this elemental germ it grows to a high plane of refinement and constancy.

As specific psychological aids in the molding of this into perfect form we recommend repetition and the maintenance of pleasant feeling. The form which this latter should take is the complete satisfaction of the needs of the buyer.

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CHAPTER TEN

THE POWER OF REASON

Reason and the will. After passing through the stages just described, the buyer is ready to perform the act of purchase. His condition of mind at this moment is unique. It is called by such names as decision, resolution, will, volition, psychological moment. We shall discuss its most critical aspect in Chapter XIII under the caption, The Psychological Moment. Meanwhile we shall discuss several subordinate mental processes that may immediately precede it and influence it: reasoning, instinct, suggestion. These, we hasten to admit, may be used effectively at earlier stages of the sale; but they are the battery of forces which the seller usually reserves for the crucial moment of decision; hence we have waited until this point to discuss them.

Analysis of reasoning. When a person reasons, he goes through four rather clearly-marked stages. In his mental stream we may distinguish four divisions: (1) the awareness

of a difficulty; (2) the location of the difficulty; (3) the search for a solution; (4) the solution.

By way of illustration let us imagine a sale in which the buyer decides to buy an automobile tire through a process of practically pure reasoning. Let us suppose that our tire features a device for preventing rim-cuts. How shall we direct the reasoning processes of the buyer so that he will make a purchase?

Recognition of a difficulty. First we should lead him to see that one of his great automobiling problems is the short life of his tires. He will doubtless readily admit this to be true. Though there might be circumstances under which the buyer would not have such a clear consciousness of the problem; in which case the task of the seller is to picture the problem in extraordinarily vivid terms. We shall revert to this point in a later paragraph.

Location of difficulty. Our second task is to locate the difficulty by showing the cause of such rapid deterioration of tires. We shall locate this difficulty in the wearing by the rim. We might demonstrate this graphically by picking up an old tire and showing the buyer how the walls of the tire have been broken down by the sharp impact with the

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graphic terms so that the "buyer" will respond readily when shown that the way of salvation is the solution to his problem. Indeed, a successful evangelist is perforce an excellent salesman; and he can teach the seller of secular wares many things about the mind of the buyer.

Presentation of solution. Our third task is to offer solutions of the difficulty. If other solutions than ours have been tried unsuccessfully we might refer to them and show how they failed. Here we might present figures showing the average lifetime of a number of tires of standard make; then figures showing the average length of life of our no-rim-cut tire. Thus we show that the latter is the solution of the problem.

During this stage come the "arguments" with which a train of reasoning is usually conducted. It is at this stage that the buyer may become an active opponent instead of a passive listener to our encomiums. He may bring up objections, consisting of cases from past experience in which our commodity might conceivably fail. He may put forth ideas of his own and test them out against our proposed solution. The situation at this point may be likened to a court-room scene in which

evidence is submitted and arguments are presented for and against. As each bit of evidence is submitted, the judge (buyer) must test it; must weight it and check it up against experience.

As we (the seller) defend our product we must produce exactly the evidence necessary to refute every objection. We must show by actual demonstration how strong are the fibers in our fabric; how numerous are the layers; and how we have padded with indestructible material the strategic spot at which the cuts occur.

All this implies that the salesman has exact and complete knowledge of the processes by which the tires are manufactured, and it emphasizes again the statement made in Chapter V, that the seller should be thoroughly acquainted with his product.

Correct solution of the difficulty. But we have reached the last step of the train of reasoning without noting it explicitly. It is here that the buyer recognizes that our tires will solve his problem. The moment announces itself by being prefaced with "therefore." If the train of reasoning has been skillfully conducted it will bring a conclusion tinged with finality. It will come clothed

with confidence and belief. Here we should like to repeat all that we asseverated in Chapter IX.

Points for special attention. In appealing to the buyer through reason, the seller should guard himself with particular care in several respects:

The first is to delineate the problem of the buyer with exceeding sharpness. To do this he must study the buyer's needs beforehand. Some one has remarked that a successful salesman must know more about the buyer's business than the buyer does himself.

The second is to avoid wandering from the point at issue. The temptations to talk aimlessly are great, especially at stage three of a train of reasoning. In order to avoid this the salesman might well outline a "sermonette" beforehand according to this pattern:

1. Problem: Your tires wear out rapidly.
2. Location and difficulty: Rim-cuts.
   Demonstrations a, b, c, d.
3. Various solutions have been tried:
   a, b, c, d. (The buyer will suggest some of these. The seller should know in advance what they are, and be prepared to meet them with counter-arguments, but he need not bring them up himself.)
4. This tire meets the need and solves the problem.

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his decision by reason. He uses it as a sop to his rationalizing conscience. Experienced salesmen have discovered this fact about human nature, and they often use "reasonable" arguments principally as a means of justifying the choice which they know the buyer has already implicitly made through feeling.

Aside from this vicarious rôle, however, reason plays a serious and often decisive part in the sale. Particularly is this the case when selling to such routine buyers as professional purchasing agents. To know how to conduct a reasoned sale properly should, therefore, be made a matter of serious study by every intelligent seller.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

INSTINCTIVE FACTORS

Introduction. Broadly speaking, the actions of the buyer have two sources: habits formed in his own lifetime and inheritances from previous generations. We have considered the first with considerable detail in our discussions of repetition, imagination, interest, desire, reason; pointing out devices by which to evoke the so-called habitual actions. We have touched only lightly, however, upon the sources of the second class though we have been obliged to take some notice of them, particularly when discussing attention and feeling. We shall now atone for this neglect by devoting an entire chapter to them.

Definition of instinctive action. We call these inherited factors instinctive, defining the term as follows: An instinctive act is a series of acts of an hereditary nature, having a definite though non-conscious end, and accompanied by a characteristic feeling. Let us

analyze this definition and point out the characteristics of instinctive action.

Characteristics of instinctive action.

1. It is very complicated. It is not a simple, single act like the wink of an eye. Rather is it made up of a number of simple acts. Observe the bird as she goes through the instinctive act of nest-building. She performs a series of simple actions: picking up a string here, a twig there, a hair yonder; and laying them in the nest. In the same way the instinctive actions of humans consist of separate acts chained together, though this linkage should be interpreted according to the following paragraph:

2. The word "series" implies not merely multiplicity of acts but sequence as well. The separate simple acts comprising an instinctive act almost invariably occur in the same order, and as we shall show presently, without being planned by the individual. A striking example of this will be furnished by the following description:

"A certain bettle of the genus *Sitaris* lays its eggs at the entrance of the subterranean galleries excavated by a kind of mason bee. From these eggs the larvae are hatched in autumn as active little insects very different from the ordinary type of beetle grub, having six legs each armed with a sharp curved hook. In the winter they become

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bee because experience has taught it that such a procedure brings with it satisfactory consequences. At no stage of the complex process can intelligence, based on individual experience, be admitted as a factor. If there be experience, it must be the inherited experience of ancestors who have, each in turn, done much the same."

This illustration shows the invariable sequence with which the simple components of a complex instinctive act follow each other.

Upon superficial examination one might conclude that instinctive acts cannot be differentiated one from the other, because several may contain identical elementary acts. This is true, but we shall find on closer examination, that though the elementary components of several instinctive acts may be identical, still in each instinctive pattern they are linked together in a unique order. For example, though the simple act of flushing in the face may occur in connection with several complicated instinctive actions, such as acts of shyness, embarrassment, modesty, even of pugnacity; still it comes surrounded by other elementary acts which give it in each case, a different setting. We thus say that each instinctive act has a distinct pattern regardless of the cloth of which it is made.

3. Our definition next emphasizes the fact

that instinctive actions are inherited. There is a volume of significance in this for the seller, which we shall point out presently. For the moment, let us elaborate upon the meaning of the term inheritance in general.

a. Let us note first that anything inherited may come not merely from immediate parents but also from all preceding generations in the line of descent. Some of the things we inherit may have originated millions of years ago.

b. An act which has passed down through so many generations is thus to be found in all the members of the species. For example, all human beings tend to act in about the same way when afraid.

c. An inherited act is firmly fixed. It has been ingrained within so many generations and transmitted so faithfully from generation to generation that it is quite firmly embedded within the organism of the last inheritor.

d. It may be quickly aroused. This follows from the fact that the pathways for it are well marked out in the nervous system. Now to wear down a pathway for non-inherited action requires considerable time. To do so through reasoning processes, for example, requires the time necessary for the nervous impulse to travel to the brain, perhaps

calling up several idea-systems in turn, while the individual cogitates about the matter and debates for and against the suggested action. Instinctive action, however, being already inherent in the organism, requires no appreciable time for organization. We shall presently point out the practical significance of this in selling.

4. Our definition next describes an instinctive act as one which the individual may perform without knowledge of the end. For example, when one turns pale in fear, he may be aware of the fact, but may not see any good purpose in it. In fact, he may regard it as detrimental. Now, though the end of paling in fear may not be apparent there is probably an end there, or there has been at some time in man's history. It probably serves in some way to preserve life. How can paling be connected with the preservation of life? Let us reason it out, following Darwin, on the basis of the distribution of the blood. At time of fear, what is the politic thing to do? Run away. But to run requires a sudden access of strength in the muscles of the legs. To bring this strength, blood is needed there. Nature provides for this by withdrawing blood from portions of

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possesses a feeling peculiarly its own—usually called an emotion. Consider, for example, the instinctive act of running away from a fearsome object—and this includes all the motions, large and small, that aid in the flight: the locomotive actions of the legs; the acceleration of the heart-beat which pumps more blood into the legs; the quickened breathing which furnishes more oxygen to the rapidly flowing blood; the actions of the internal glands which pour strength-giving substances into the blood. This mass of correlated movement that we call the instinct-pattern, flight, is accompanied by the emotional cast of feeling which we call fear. The instinct-pattern that we call pugnacity is accompanied by the emotional cast of feeling which we call anger. The instinctive action of protecting one's young is accompanied by the emotional feeling called parental love. Thus each great instinct-pattern has its characteristic feeling.

Classification of instinctive actions impracticable. At this point we should like to make a list of the fundamental human instincts, but we can hardly do so with confidence. There are several reasons. The situations when instinctive actions are evoked are sometimes

complex, so that more than one of the instincts are called out. The resulting action is a product of all; hence we can hardly secure separate, clean-cut patterns. Furthermore, our instinctive actions become interpenetrated, during the course of individual experience, with acquired acts, especially with habits. Since we rarely see the pure manifestations of instinctive action, then, we cannot tell exactly how many instincts there are.

Though we shall not presume to give a complete list, we shall probably be safe in recognizing the existence of some of the great classes denoted by current terms like self-preservation (variously called locomotion, obtaining food, shelter, play, sleep); reproduction; mating (including acts of coyness and coquetry); protection of the young; flight; pugnacity; repulsion.

Again, "we may do best to make a general classification with reference to the end that the act subserves, rather than to the specific character of the particular instinct. One of the most convenient divides instincts into three classes: (1) those which preserve the life and provide for the welfare of the individual"; such as flight, pugnacity, hoarding,

curiosity. "(2) Those which provide for the continuance of the race and family"; such as, mating, protection of home and of young. "(3) Those which make for the welfare of the tribe or social unit"; such as gregariousness, imitation. "Some of the acts belong to more than one class—in fact, no one of the second or third would be possible without the first—but the division is convenient in general and may serve as a guide through the maze."

Its value in the sale. Out of this discussion of the characteristics of instinctive action, modified by the acknowledgment that adult instinctive action is usually associated with acquired forms of action, the reader may emerge with at least one clear idea, namely, that the actions of a buyer have two sources: individual experiences and racial experiences. Though the two are not separate in their effects upon human conduct, still those of the second class are probably the ones upon which the seller may depend more firmly in moving the will of the buyer. Their superior strength lies in the following facts:

Relatively more certain. Instinctive action, being the imprint of thousands of experiences upon thousands of ancestors, is firmly fixed within an individual; hence, the appropriate

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out into various tracts, representing "idea-systems," while the ideas are being weighed and balanced according to the involved, intricate procedure outlined in Chapter X. After a long delay, lasting an hour, a day, week, month, or year, the action follows. In instinctive action, however, the pathways are shorter and already marked out. When the stimulus comes the act follows readily.

Instinctive action marked by feeling. The last advantage lies in the fact that instinctive action is intimately connected, fairly suffused, with feeling. Now to feeling belong certain possibilities for strengthening action which are not attributive to reason. For example, observe the way in which an evangelist appeals to his audience to be converted. When he uses reason he finds his hearers respectful (if not somnolent), but cold. When he takes up the wand of feeling, however, he quickly secures results. The seller who desires to use influential methods of appeal will learn a lesson from successful evangelists. For after all, both preacher and seller have the same problem psychologically—to induce action. And both need to use the same psychological means in inducing it.

In these last few pages we have spoken as though there might be two kinds of action, instinctive and reasoned. As a matter of fact, this is an artificial partition, justified only by the necessities of literary exposition. Actually a bit of human conduct may contain at the same time both instinctive and reasoned factors. The object of our comparison has been to show that probably a seller may work more easily through the former than through the latter.

Summary. We have now completed our treatment of the hereditary equipment—instinct—for action residing within the buyer. We found it resistant to satisfactory analysis because it usually occurs in connection with some obscuring and complicating acquired action. Also because it originated far back in days before our ken, and is not always congruous and understandable in its present-day setting. This very trait of inheritance, however, endows it with value in the sale. It is thereby firmly fixed; universal (present within all members of the species); prompt; and rich with the vivifying power of feeling.

CHAPTER TWELVE

SUGGESTION IN THE SALE

Suggestion is regarded as mysterious. Much has been said during recent years about the psychology of suggestion and the possibility of using it in selling. So much mysterious potency has been claimed for it that many sellers believe that they have only to learn the laws of suggestion and then they can impose their wills unimpededly upon the helpless, submissive buying public.

This aura of mystery surrounding suggestion results from the dramatic instances which have been recounted showing its power in influencing human beings; particularly in the healing of disease. People suffering or alleged to be suffering from various diseases have been treated by nothing but suggestion with astonishing results. Consequently the public has concluded that there is some vital force inherent in suggestion which can be employed in all conditions of life. Still further awe is attached to it because of its close associa-

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this. We simply use the methods already described in the chapter on attention (Chapter II). The object thus forced into the mental stream need not be physical. It may be a correspondence course in Business English that we are trying to sell, or a seat on the Stock Exchange. Whatever it is we must push it into the mental stream with as little ado as possible. There it finds elements of past experience which are akin to it, and which "absorb" it, as related in Chapter V.

The next event—the production of muscular efforts—is more difficult to describe, and to achieve. It is here that the greatest amount of mystery centers; and here that the greatest amount of skill is demanded of the seller. How can a psychical thing like an idea change over into physical energy and assume the form of a motor act? And how can the seller facilitate such transformation?

The answer is contained partly in the law of ideo-motor action: "An idea in the mind tends to express itself in movement." An experiment performed in the psychological laboratory demonstrates this dramatically. The experimenter fastens a recording device to the top of a person's head so as to record the slightest movement. Then he asks the

subject to think about a nearby object. After several moments the record shows that the subject has begun to lean toward the object about which he has been thinking.

We cannot enter into a discussion of the brain mechanism by which this transformation from idea to movement takes place. It is inherent in the association of brain pathways already mentioned on page 45, where we said that when an act has been performed once, involving two or more pathways in the brain, thereafter when the first pathway (the idea pathway) is aroused, the second (the movement pathway) follows.

If we examine closely our daily life we may see numerous examples of ideo-motor action. A housewife, may be figuring her household accounts, directing her mental stream urgently in one direction; when suddenly a vague idea enters her mind that her hair needs adjustment. Automatically her hand moves up to her head and tucks in a hair-pin. She continues her work uninterruptedly, and probably does not know that she has made the movement.

In this same "unconscious" way we all perform scores of actions in the course of a day. We may possibly thus make some unim-

portant purchases. For example, the idea "base-ball score" may enter our mind as we leave the office at five in the afternoon, and may be strong enough in its own right to lead us without further locution of thought to reach into our pocket for a coin and buy a paper.

These illustrations show that there is a real motive power resident within an idea.

If this is the case, why is it that a seller may inject an idea into the mind of the buyer and still not produce the desired response?

The answer is that the idea may be prevented from achieving its motor consequences by the presence of another idea. As we showed on page 38 there are always many things in the mind—sensations, ideas, feelings, in great profusion. Now each of these has its own motor consequences, and if left alone will probably produce them. Mixed as it is, however, with others, all struggling for expression, it can only express itself as modified by the others. Some of them help it and some hinder it. The task of the seller is to encourage those ideas which are favorable to his pet-idea and to suppress those which are contrary to it. In accomplishing this there are several laws to be observed:

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withstand every contradictory impulse. Make the suggested course of action appear inevitable.

3. The inevitableness may be enhanced by another important law: Make the suggestion simple. If you wish to arouse an action, suggest only that one. In writing an advertisement, for example, it is a violation of this

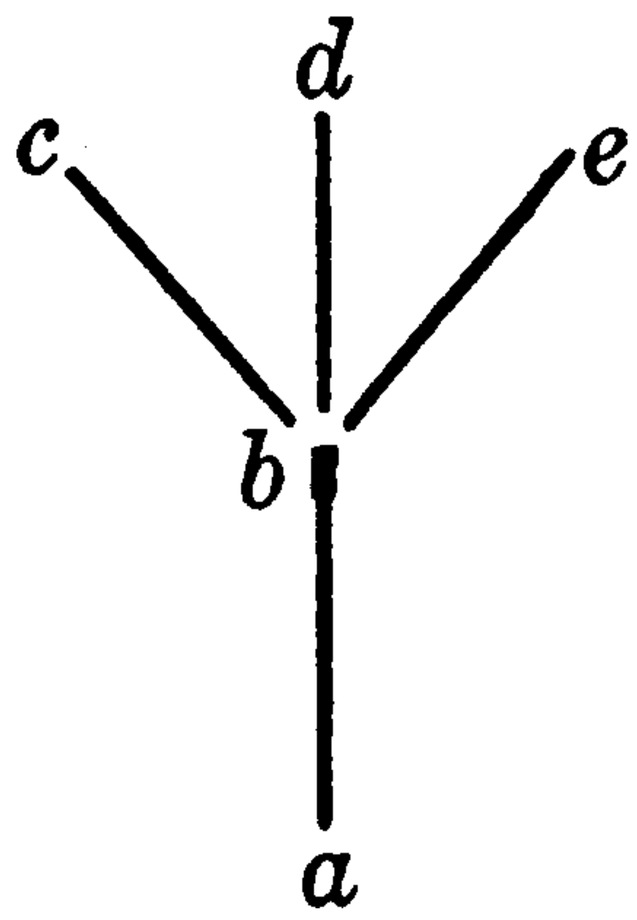

FIG. 9.

principle to suggest: "(1) Ask your dealer for it; (2) or if he does not have it send us his name; (3) or send us fifty cents for a sample package." Such alternative directions are psychologically faulty. For each of the three ideas arouses some ideo-motor activity which is immediately obstructed by that which follows. The situation may be represented by Figure 9; where the first idea arouses a motor impulse over pathway abc; then comes

the second idea sending forth the motor impulse abd; then comes the third idea starting up motor impulse abe. By this time the precious nervous energy that was available for the action is exhausted and dissipated, and it starts up no action at all. The correction for such a situation is to make only one suggestion at a time.

4. Make *positive* suggestions. A negative suggestion is one containing "no" or "not" and should be avoided. Violations of this law are exceedingly numerous in selling, particularly in the manufacture of business slogans. "Don't say ——; say ——," is a favorite form. "Accept no substitute," is another.

The psychological offense in negative suggestion is that the real motive force of a phrase lies in the idea of the action, not in the way the action is modified verbally. In the slogan "Accept no substitute," the real idea is "Accept substitute." To negate it does not materially weaken its force. The phrase really suggests to the buyer that he should accept a substitute.

A very little analysis of selling phrases from this point of view will show that many of them do not put into the mind of the buyer the idea intended by the seller. Let us, by

way of illustration, analyze a well-known selling-phrase which may lead the mind far afield from the direction desired by the seller: "Eventually, why not now?"

The adverb "eventually" implies a verb and subject; in all likelihood: "You will use Gold Medal Flour." This part of the phrase is not wholly reprehensible; yet it has one faulty implication, namely, that the buyer is probably going to delay the act of purchase. It is as if one said to the housewife: "I know you are using some other flour now. Keep on using it; after trial you will change to another brand; after it to another. Eventually, however (after perhaps twenty years), you will come to ours." Upon such analysis, which is surely not far-fetched, the first part of the slogan is seen to contain implications that were surely never intended by the seller, confirming the housewife in her present use of another flour.

The second part of the slogan is open to still more serious objection. If we follow the subterranean conversation between seller and buyer, we shall find that the seller says by implication: "I know you are not going to buy now." The buyer replies, "No! I am not." The seller asks, "Why not?" What

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fountain clerk, "Give me a glass of coke." The manufacturers did not like this; for it permitted the clerk to substitute some imitation of Coca Cola which might call itself "coke." Furthermore the abbreviation is reminiscent of an undesirable drug habit. How break the public of the habit of using the obnoxious appelation? To advertise, "Don't say coke," would be to give a negative suggestion, entailing all the undesirable cousequences mentioned above, namely, by repetition of the name "coke" the people who used it would be tempted to use it all the more; some who might never have used it might get the habit; and worse, the real idea conveyed would be "Say Coke," despite the negation.

As a solution to this quandry, the manufacturers adopted the phrase, "Ask for Coca Cola by its full name." This suggestion is free from objections. It conveys the desired meaning; it is positive; and if people follow it they will be doing what the company desires. This illustration shows that no matter how strong the temptation to use negative suggestion, if the seller studies his situation carefully and takes sufficient thought, he will be able to avoid the enervating and mislead-

ing negative and express his suggestions in the positive form.

The above discussion suggests another fact about suggestion: The ideas involved in a suggestion, especially in an indirect suggestion, are of two kinds. Some are on the surface, explicit; others are hidden, implicit. In the suggestion, "Ask the man who owns one," the implied portions are, "If you want to know how our car satisfies" [ask the man who owns one]; "He will tell you that it gives perfect satisfaction." The reader will find interesting exercise in thus analyzing the many suggestion-slogans before the public, and will derive much benefit therefrom in the task of strengthening the force of his own selling suggestions.

5. The recognition of the explicit-implicit nature of suggestion leads to the consideration of another law: Normally an indirect suggestion is more effective than a direct one. We might paraphrase a definition of direct suggestion by stating that it is a suggestion in which you say what you mean; an indirect one is one in which you say one thing and mean something else. Not necessarily the opposite. The distinction is rather that in indirect suggestion one says part of what one

means, then leaves the other person to complete the meaning. We might illustrate as follows: Direct suggestion: "Use Prince Albert Tobacco." Indirect: "Ty Cobb Uses Prince Albert Tobacco." We may picture the effect of these upon the mind of the buyer by employing the filling-in method of our last illustration. There is little to supply in the direct form. Everything is said. In the indirect form, however, there is much to supply. All that is said explicitly is that "Ty Cobb smokes Prince Albert Tobacco." Implicitly, however, a good deal is said. The argument runs as follows: "Ty Cobb smokes Prince Albert; he must like it. He is a man of good judgment (in baseball). The chances are that he is also a good judge of tobacco. Therefore Prince Albert must be a good tobacco. I'll smoke it."

It is evident that there is room for considerable illogicality in indirect suggestion. As indicated in the parenthesis above, in order for the thought to flow along smoothly in the channel desired by the seller, certain assumptions must ordinarily be made. The assumption in the present instance is that the famous ball player is as good a judge of tobacco as he

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psychological analysis like the above would soon give a basis for voting them fraudulent and deceptive.

Direct vs. indirect suggestion. In asserting on page 163 that indirect suggestion is normally more powerful than direct suggestion, we did not mean to condemn the latter entirely. Direct suggestion has certain weight. Probably it is most useful with people who "don't know their own minds." There are undoubtedly individuals who like to have their decisions made for them, and who welcome unconsciously a direct suggestion, indeed, a command. Psychologists who have experimented in this field, however, assert that even with such individuals, the desired act may be instigated by means of indirect suggestion. For example, when the time comes for closing the sale, the salesman may suggest indirectly that the customer has already made his decision, by starting to wrap up the article or by asking, "Do you wish it delivered to-day?"

The great advantage claimed for the indirect mode of appeal is that it does not have such a tendency to offend those persons who do know their own minds, and desire to feel that they are masters of their fate.

Counter-suggestion. Thus far in our discus-

sion we have mentioned several kinds of suggestion: abnormal, normal, positive, negative, direct, indirect. There are two other kinds which belong in any thoroughgoing treatment of the subject. The first is counter-suggestion. In this the individual making the suggestion has one desired act in mind but suggests the performance of its direct opposite. A type of mind has been discovered which reacts oppositely to every suggestion. "Cranky" husbands sometimes exhibit this tendency; and their wives move them by suggesting the opposite. Obviously a seller does not meet with this type very frequently, but when he does, he may use counter-suggestion with success.

Auto-suggestion. The last kind of suggestion we shall consider is auto-suggestion. This is, as the name implies, self-suggestion. The seller does not use it upon the buyer but upon himself. A salesman has great need of having certain ideas injected into his mental stream. He is ready prey to thoughts of failure, discouragement and weakness. Let him study the effect of suggestion in general and remember what a strength there is in ideas. He may be cheered by the fact that he is just as certainly susceptible to the in-

fluence of suggestions as is the buyer. Consequently if he wishes to perform a certain act, let him put into his own mind the idea of the act, following the laws of suggestion laid down in the foregoing. Almost every successful salesman could give startling proof of the power of auto-suggestion in his own life. In making use of it he avoids negative suggestion by banishing from his mind and conversation all thoughts of failure. He nerves himself for an important interview by positive suggestions such as, "I will win." He employs direct suggestion by asserting, "My goods come up to every claim I make for them." He gives himself indirect auto-suggestions by straightening his spine, squaring his shoulders, and whistling—all signs of strength and courage. In brief one of the most important lessons the seller may take away from this chapter is the thought that suggestion will operate upon himself as well as upon the buyer.

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a World War. It occurs when the astute evangelist feels it proper to urge his hearers to hit the sawdust trail and when the seducer feels that he may, without fear of rebuff, press his victim to take the first drink. No kind of affairs appears too sacred and no kind too profane to be exempted from the "psychological moment." As evidence of the aptness of the term to cover a multitude of situations we find it applied to affairs in which there is no psychical factor whatever, such as a rain so timed as to save a corn crop or to the eruption of a geyser.

From these instances we see that the term is a very useful one, playing a large part in the speech and thought of the day. True, it smacks somewhat of esotericism, but such connotation is belied by the fact that it is employed with equal glibness by the savant and the man of the street. Shakespeare referred to it in the well-known lines:

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune."

Napoleon pointed out its importance in deciding the fate of battles:

"In all battles, a moment occurs when the bravest troops . . . feel inclined to run. That terror proceeds from a want of confidence in their own courage and it only requires a

slight opportunity, a pretense, to restore confidence to them. At Arcola I won the battle with twenty-five horsemen. I seized that moment of lassitude, gave every man a trumpet, and gained the day with this handful. You see that two armies are two bodies which meet and endeavor to frighten each other; a moment of panic occurs, and that moment must be turned to advantage. When a man has been present in many actions he distinguishes that moment without difficulty; it is as easy as casting up an addition."

The matter is not so simple as these lines imply, as any salesman will testify. It is rather a matter for serious psychological analysis. In making such analysis of the salesman's moment we must regard the sale, following the pattern used throughout this book, as a series of mental changes on the part of the buyer, leading to an act of will which culminates in satisfaction.

An idea precedes. An idea must precede decision and action in the sale. We have said this in many ways throughout the preceding chapters of this book. And we have shown that the seller is not so much a distributor of goods as he is a manipulator of ideas. In order to bring out a new phase of this thought we shall for the rhetorical purposes of this chapter, personify the Idea and speak of it in capitals; though the reader is warned that such practice is strictly frowned upon in orthodox

psychological circles. We shall take this liberty, however, for in these days when the psychological aspect of business operations is only dimly recognized we should be pardoned if we state things with slightly bizarre effect in our efforts to show their importance. But apart from such claims to anthropomorphism, the Idea is important enough on other grounds to deserve capitalization, for sometimes It is able to set off our actions almost automatically. Through a kind of action technically known as "dynamogenesis" (see page 154). It occasionally may pass over into action immediately and result in a sale. For example, the Idea, "baseball score" may be strong enough in its own right to lead one without further deliberation to reach into the pocket for a coin and buy a paper. Such a purchase is so shorn of voluntary characteristics as not to furnish us with an illustration of the psychological moment. But not all sales are of this "hair-trigger" type, and most Ideas even though carefully implanted in the mind do not lead directly to purchase, but require manipulation. Indeed, such is the case with all our deliberative sales. An analysis of the fortunes of the Idea,

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would resemble a full-moon containing a central circle, freckled with numerous circlets of different sizes representing the ideas with their different strengths. It will be seen that these ideas bear different relationships to the central idea, some being hostile, others sympathetic. Whether they hinder or help they must be reckoned with and must be manipulated to the glory of the Idea, which must be nourished and expanded to such a degree that its bulk will crowd out all the other ideas. This task of nourishment confronts every salesman; indeed, from the psychological standpoint the salesman is not a vender of automobiles but a manipulator of ideas. His task is to fan the flame of the Idea until it becomes to the buyer the consuming interest in life. Beside It, everything must shrink to nothingness—the about-to-be-ravaged bank-account, the heart-rending burden of upkeep, the mortgage on the house, last year's unpaid coal-bill—all must be forgotten in the overpowering compulsion of the Idea. And the Idea must remain the greatest thing in the world long enough for the purchaser to sign his check or sign the pay-as-you-use contract.

To a superficial view the task of the salesman might seem to be that of taking hold of

these unwelcome ideas and thrusting them into outer darkness, but such a conception is erroneous and will lead to egregious error. If the mind of the buyer contains the idea of another car the proper procedure is not to dilate negatively upon that car in the effort to drive it out of his mind. Every word uttered about that car acts as food for the unwelcome idea and causes it to wax stronger and stronger. The practice of criticizing or condemning a rival commodity is being recognized as poor business ethics, but we may go still farther and say that to speak either in praise or blame of rival goods is poor psychology, for every word makes the undesired idea still more troublesome.

What are the methods, then, by which the undesirable ideas may be forced out of the mind and the desired One enchanced? The answer is to force attention upon It; when this happens, the strength of the undesired ideas automatically decreases. The psychological situation may become clearer when described in terms of brain energy. The brain, according to some psychologists, is organized into a number of ideational systems, one for each idea that exists in the mind. Any ideational system may be roused into action

by the drainage into it of brain energy. Now the energy of the brain may be distributed in various amounts over different systems, the amount in each system depending upon the strength of the corresponding idea. In the case of our sale, if the main Idea is to grow in strength Its brain-system must draw off from the other systems the brain energy resident within them until the energy of the brain is all drained off into the one system, which means the triumph of the Idea.

Reverting to our psychological description of the sale, we might pause at this stage and elaborate upon methods of strengthening the Idea, but that would require a digression from our main interest—the psychological moment. Suffice it to say, the process consists in using concrete material with which to embellish the Idea. The salesman must dilate upon the specific virtues of the car, upon the power and smoothness of the engine, the luxurious ease of the springs, the elegance of the upholstery. Then he must attach as allies to the Idea, the subsidiary ideas that lurk sympathetically in the background of the mind of the buyer, showing how the car may be used to transport oneself and family to sylvan spots, how it may assist one to radi-

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a baby's cry, an accident in the street. Anything, however unrelated to the commodity, may spoil the sale. Any salesman can describe a score of such catastrophes which make him assert that the psychological moment is the most critical stage in the sale. And he does not overstate the fact. The experience of sales managers goes to show that the salesmen who fail are deficient most frequently in ability to get past the psychological moment. They make a good approach, arouse interest in the goods and create strong desire, but are unable to make a good closing. They err in two ways—in trying to force a decision too soon, before the Idea has had time to reach Its maximum dimensions, or in delaying to press for a decision until after the Idea has ripened and decayed. In either case, their error lies in a failure to recognize the psychological moment.

How recognize it? How may one recognize the psychological moment and how may one cultivate a sensitiveness for its approach? Undoubtedly there are signs that accompany it, for successful salesmen sense it readily. Their awareness of it, however, is not a vividly self-conscious matter, for they cannot tell how they recognize it. If pressed for a

description of their method, they would probably say, by intuition, and this may serve as well as any other word. But the process of intuition may be further analyzed into a process of conscious apprehension through sense avenues which we all possess. Many of the things that warn of the approach of the moment in the sale are small involuntary movements on the part of the buyer, such as slight inclinations of the head and trunk, minute contractions and relaxations of bodily muscles. Even so slight a change as that in the size of the pupil of the eye may serve to indicate to the practiced salesman that the portentous moment has arrived. Other more obvious signs may consist of verbal responses of the buyer, for the skillful salesman does not do all the talking in engineering a sale; instead he throws out frequent feelers in the form of questions, and by the warmth of the response, can judge how nearly a decision has been reached. A hundred cues such as these are present and are automatically used by the expert salesman in identifying the psychological moment.

How meet it? Upon recognizing the moment what steps may the salesman take to see that it is passed most auspiciously? Our psycho-

logical analysis just completed will suggest measures. Stage the sale so that there will be no disturbances while it is in progress; for any disturbance, no matter how trivial, may mean the introduction of a new idea into the mind of the buyer and a dislodgment of the balance of brain energy. In view of such danger, the salesman should carefully isolate the buyer and separate him from things and people. This is the great psychological advantage of using a show room.

Another prophylactic measure is to have conditions favorable for the immediate consummation of the sale. As we pointed out on page 177 there should be no awkward delay when the moment arrives. The contract should be ready and the writing utensils at hand. All should move as smoothly as a theatrical performance. Indeed, a sale in many ways resembles a drama and may be rehearsed with equal propriety.

As a third way of meeting the moment, the following plan may be recommended: Assume that the sale is made—that the purchaser has decided to buy—and this will be true if the salesman has judged the moment rightly. Then ask, "What color of upholstery do you prefer?" or, "Do you wish immediate

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STAGE SIX—SATISFACTION

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margin of his thought-stream; and when he encounters a similar article he recalls his previous experience. If it was satisfactory he willingly makes a repeat purchase.

Again, the buyer carries about with him the visible evidence of the quality of the article every time he uses it. It gives him either pleasure or displeasure. If it wears well and fulfills all the claims made for it he feels satisfied and gives a repeat order.

We might state parenthetically, that the satisfaction we are talking about must be a real satisfaction. It should represent the fulfillment of some real need which the individual has in his battle for existence; not a fancied whim or a detrimental desire which has been created and fanned into strength by some unscrupulous seller.

Evidences of new ideals in trade. That the best of modern sellers are recognizing the truth of our doctrine that satisfaction is the true goal of the sale, is being evinced in several ways. During the past two decades numerous symptoms have appeared: changes in methods of publicity; of approach to the customer; of post-sale tactics; of policies; of ideals—changes in the very philosophy of trade.

In proceeding to limn these changes we do not mean to imply that they have taken place suddenly. They have gradually evolved. Moreover they are not yet completely realized; they are still evolving. The things we shall undertake to describe are merely trends, indicating the direction of the evolution. Speaking statistically, we mean that the practices and ideals to be mentioned are becoming more common than formerly.

Some of these changes have significant ethical consequences portending progress toward certain moral goals that society hopes to reach. There are important economic consequences involved, also, which are of great interest. We shall not attempt to trace these out, however, being content for the present merely to point out the changes in styles and fashions of selling. We shall show that whereas certain practices and ideals were prevalent a score of years ago, others are now coming into vogue.

New conception of value. The first change we shall note is a new attitude on the part of the seller toward value. In the previous period it was customary to give the buyer as little as possible for his money. In the modern period the ideal is to give as much

as possible. Perhaps the clamorous cries of "profiteer" now (1920) filling the air temporarily prevent us from sensing this more merciful tendency of the seller. Nevertheless if we can disregard our momentary irritation over the high cost of living we must recognize the general improvement in conditions.

An objector might question this statement on the ground that it implies abrogation or suspension of the economic law of competition in which seller and buyer struggle for advantage. In rejoinder, we might reply that there is a growing tendency for the seller to identify his interests with those of the buyer. He is coming to see that whatever benefits the buyer may in turn benefit himself. We shall develop this further in another connection. For the present it is sufficient to point out that this lessens (though it does not entirely eliminate) the antagonism between seller and buyer. Second, it may be that competition is growing stronger among the various venders of a given commodity; as competitors become more numerous each one is obliged to shade prices as low as possible in sheer self-defense. Third, the seller is enabled to carry out the ideal stated above

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of the new order consist in the practice of stamping the price of shoes on the sole; the publishing of standard prices for hats, tires, and the like; the agitation for legislation requiring the manufacturer's price to be stamped upon the goods before they reach the retail market.

2. Another form of subjectivism in the old *régime* was the amount of entertaining and subsidizing that the seller carried on. He was expected to treat the buyer with cigars, wines, dinner and theater. To one acquainted with modern selling practices no proof is needed of the obsolescence of this custom. One characteristic feature of the new era is the rise of the professional purchasing-agent who owes his job to the skill with which he can keep himself clear of entangling alliances and can buy in the open market with objectively demonstrable advantage.

3. Other evidences of the growing tendency toward objectivism may be discovered by comparing the tactics of salesmanship employed during the two eras. The differences in advertising are strikingly brought out in these two advertisements. The first appeared (with name changed) in *Collier's* for 1900:

"Aloysius B. Strongman teaches by mail, with perfect success, his original and scientific method of physiological exercise.

"It is the only natural, easy and speedy method for obtaining perfect health, physical development and elasticity of mind and body.

"It absolutely cures indigestion, sleeplessness, nervous exhaustion, and revitalizes the whole body."

The corresponding advertisement for 1916 (same magazine) runs as follows:

"The Strongman System of Purposeful Evolution gives unusual health, unusual energy and unusual vitality.

"For information address: ALOYSIUS B. STRONGMAN
"New York City."

The measurement of truthfulness in advertising. Advertisers assert that they are growing more truthful. Proceeding upon the general hypothesis that whatever exists may be measured, and that if truthfulness in advertising is on the increase we ought to be able to demonstrate the fact mathematically, the author set out to devise a method.

It was first necessary to adopt a criterion of truthfulness which might be stated in units of amount. For this was chosen the use of words in the superlative degree. Terms like "best," "latest," "finest," "perfect," "absolutely unsurpassed," have been used much in advertising, and are frowned upon as viola-

tions of veracity. For certainly not every brand of breakfast food, dyspepsia tablets, automobile tires and flour can be the best.

If the superlative be adopted as a fairly satisfactory criterion of truthfulness, or rather untruthfulness, our task of measurement is quite simple, requiring us merely to count the advertisements containing superlatives and compare the number with the total number of advertisements appearing. This the author did, using the files of three mediums covering the period 1900-1919: *The Indianapolis News*, a typical newspaper; *The Cosmopolitan*, a typical general magazine; and *House Beautiful*, a typical home magazine. No classified advertisements were used. Results are presented in Figure 10.

From these results we may conclude that untruthfulness in advertising as represented by the use of superlatives is decreasing. Whereas in 1900 the percentage of advertisements containing superlatives was twenty; by 1919 it had decreased to two. In terms of probability we might assert that whereas twenty years ago the chances that an advertiser was telling an untruth were twenty in a hundred, to-day they are but two in a

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hundred. We may accept these amounts with considerable confidence because they appear in all three of the diverse mediums examined.

The graph shows that the greatest regularity in the decline of untruthfulness comes after 1912. This is approximately the date of the adoption of the motto, Truth, by the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World. Previous to this had come the Congressional pure food and drug laws of 1906. For some years thereafter advertisers were not certain how far they might go in their descriptions. As the curves show, they oscillated back and forth between superlatives and weaker statements. By 1912, however, they either had come to take the spirit of the law more seriously or had become more scrupulous, or had discovered that truthful advertising pays. Probably under the influence of all these causes they settled down to a growing regard for the truth, reducing the ratio of exaggeration rapidly to two per cent.

The author does not advocate the use of the superlative as an absolute test of truthfulness in advertising. At best it can serve as only one measure. Other measures may unquestionably be unearthed with industrious research. Nevertheless this method has given

such clean-cut results that it deserves serious consideration in relation to the important question of truth in advertising. It may be used to measure the differences in truthfulness between mediums; to aid the Vigilance Committee of the A. A. C. W. in securing objective basis for the annual award of the Truth Trophy; and to assist the Better Business Bureaus in measuring the results of their efforts to police and to educate their communities.

Surely these tentative results give us ground for hopefully continuing such investigations, and anticipating the time when we may set up definite ethical standards for the advertiser and help him to measure his progress toward his goal.[1]

The sale a continuous process. The mercantile transaction of former days was tacitly regarded as an affair of the moment only. Buyer and seller were as two ships that pass in the night. The attitude was that of the typical horse-trader who never expected to see his *vis-à-vis* again. To-day the sale is coming to be regarded as a continuous process. Ideally considered, no sooner is one

[1] For assistance in gathering the data for this investigation the author is indebted to Miss Jeanette Stockton and Mr. Victor Deitch, students in the Psychology of Advertising, Indiana University.

transaction concluded than another is begun. The seller of a piano does not regard a sale as completed with the installation of the instrument. He realizes that he may have an opportunity to sell another one to the same man, or his son, or his daughter, or his brother-in-law. Accordingly he endeavors to keep the

I

VI II

V III

IV

FIG. 11.

(Reproduced by kind permission of J. B. Lippincott Company, from the author's "Manual for the Study of the Psychology of Advertising and Selling.")

buyer continually in a buying attitude. How he does this we shall recount in another connection. For the present we may note the continuous cycle of changes in the sale; the satisfaction (Stage Six) engendered by one purchase merging into the attention and interest of another. See Figure 11.

Commodity defined as service. In acting upon this conception the seller tries to keep the commodity in first-rate condition. He gives elaborate initial instructions regarding the

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have treated them as distinct trends, we must recognize that they are not entirely independent of each other. For instance, in admitting that a true sale must give satisfaction to the buyer we recognize the continuity of the sale. To say that one sells service is to admit the truth of the other propositions.

We should not make the mistake of assuming that these ideals are completely realized or universally adopted. Still they indicate the direction of the main current of thought and practice, and to a shrewd observer, they presage the nature of the developments that are likely to come in the future.

Summary. In this chapter we have advocated the adoption of the view that the real end of the sale is the satisfaction of the buyer. As one line of evidence we have pointed to the growing use of satisfying practices on the part of progressive sellers.

We might talk about these improved ideals and practices in ethical terms and say that clearly sellers are becoming converted to a higher standard of ethics and are *for this reason* making the changes noted. Though the ethical ideals of trade have been growing more elevated, we should probably be in error to ascribe them as the cause of the reforms we

have noted. Ethical formulations constitute euphonious terms in which to describe our actions. To be really truthful we should say that these practices have been accepted because they have paid economically. Sellers have discovered that it *pays* to give first consideration to the welfare of the buyer. That they have made this discovery only lately is due to the fact that they have just begun to learn how to use the methods of science in measuring the success of their various tactics. The ethical uplifter might take a hint from this and conclude that if he wishes to see high ethical ideals advance in business he should teach the seller how to use scientific methods in measuring the results of "good" and "bad" selling methods.

If these practices can be justified ethically and economically they can probably be justified psychologically. And it is this justification that we have tried to furnish throughout this book. If our message is rightly understood the reader will lay down the book with the conviction that the satisfaction of the buyer is the keystone that supports the arch of the sale. Though a seller may study psychology assiduously; learn all the laws of memory, reasoning, suggestion; apply all the

formulas for arousing interest, desire and confidence; and fail to keep as his goal the welfare of the buyer, his words will be as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. And though he may go far toward success by applying the subtleties of psychological lore, he will go still farther if he places one rule before all others —the old-fashioned unselfish doctrine embodied in the Golden Rule.

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