

FOR RETAILERS TO CONSIDER.



CAYS the Dry Goods Economist: It would be an admirable plan for the retail merchant once or twice a year to put on his hat and go shopping, not for a few hundred cloaks, a fine assortment of umbrellas or a complete line of cashmeres, but for the ordinary day's shopping of an ordinary woman. Let him try to select a dress, keeping in mind, as the ordinary woman must, its adaptability to a certain complexion, purse and needs. Then let him buy the various details of linings and finishings the woman will require, and the trimming, which is often more important than the material of the frock itself.

In the effort to match this and at the same time find something unique and desirable in trimming he will probably have to go from one shop to another, to compare the different selections and prices. As he does this he will see that some shops are much more frequented than others, and if he is observant he will see why it is that women go to one place as a first impulse and to another only as a last resort and because they cannot find what they seek anywhere else.

It is to the ordinary women with their ordinary wants and their limited purses that the retail merchant must look for the mass of his customers. There are a thousand of these where there are ten who do not have to count the cost and who only require something that no one else has. The stores that are crowded are the stores that supply the various tastes of the average woman and that keep up to her changing whims and fancies. As soon as an establishment gets a reputation for exclusiveness the average woman shuns it. She always feels sure that its prices are higher and in nine cases out of ten she is right.

Men often wonder why women flock to the crowded stores, following one another like a pack of sheep. It is a fact that they do, but there is more method in this madness than is generally supposed. The very fact that so many other women think it a good place to buy is an argument to them to go there. It is on the old principle that nothing succeeds like success. Then the crowd of buyers makes a constantly changing stock, which is always interesting to women who love variety. There is no stimulus to the shopper to go into a place where she expects to see the same old things on the shelves and counters.

There is a store in New York where last fall one of the wax figures was attired in a rather elaborate tea-gown and placed upon a high showcase. The gown attracted admiring comment at first, but that particular figure wore that particular tea-gown all winter. As time wore on its colors lost their freshness and its frills and pleats their crispness. The whole floor seemed to acquire a sort of passe appearance from that slightly battered garment, and its effect was well voiced by a lady who remarked, "Well, if they have had all their ready made things as long as they have that old tea-gown I would rather get mine somewhere else."

Then the crowd signifies to most women that they can find what they want. They know that out of the hundreds of shoppers no two seek exactly the same thing, and that where there are so many buyers there must be many different things to buy. Every department the retail dealer adds to his establishment means so many more customers, each one of whom brings others, so that their number swells in geometrical progression.

Another great reason why women choose the crowded stores is because each one feels that she individually is lost in the crowd and that her motions are not under any special observation. Broad aisles and counters, and a clean, open, airy effect are very agreeable, but we have heard women say they never went into such shops for that very reason. One feels as if under a microscope when walking down one of those broad aisles under the eyes of a few floor-walkers and a double file of clerks. Only a very hardened shopper can do more than walk straight to the department which she sought, make her purchase and walk straight out again, looking

neither to the right hand nor the left. While in a crowded store she could go in, examine the quality of the table damask, the price of the surahs, the handles of the new umbrellas, the colors of the chiffons or any one of a dozen other points and walk out again without attracting the least observation if she doesn't wish to buy anything.

This reflection tempts her to enter, and having entered how often can a woman leave one of the big, glittering bazars with its attractive display of everything conceivable and inconceivable to spend money for without buying anything? Let her husband's bank account answer this conundrum!

MISTAKES IN WINDOW DRESSING.

Window dressing is one of the fine arts, and one which, properly attended to, is a very important aid to success in business, says an English contemporary. The subject is a very large one, and may be discussed in a variety of ways. We do not, however, intend on the present occasion to discuss the topic in all its theoretical or practical bearings, but simply to point out a few mistakes of which, in our humble opinion, some tradesmen are guilty. We think it is a mistake to place goods flat against the glass. We hold that there is not only a decided sacrifice of effect in adopting this plan, but there is also a palpable deterioration of the goods. Silk neckties and similar articles are especially liable to soiling by being so treated. Panes of glass in a shop window are seldom perfectly dry inside, and it is evident that delicate fabrics must be injured by the contact. Place your goods at least six inches back, and they will be better seen and better preserved. Another very common error in the arranging of windows is the placing of masses of dark material at the back. This turns the window into a mirror, and the display of colored goods in front is ruined by being mingled with the reflections of surrounding objects. And, furthermore, many passers-by will direct all their attention to the reflections of their own faces, and not bestow a glance on your goods. There are a few golden rules for neophytes before they have developed that window dressing instinct which will enable them to make the best of the materials at their disposal, even though they themselves may scarcely know how it is done. First of all, don't overdo it. Let your first displays be simple, and carefully avoid overcrowding. Take care that there is an aspect of lightness and airy elegance over the whole display when you have finished. Don't try to do it without fixtures. Have a good supply of them, and, if possible, have them good. At any rate let them be as brightly polished as possible. Shabby fixtures will take off from the effect of the best display of goods, and actually make them look of less value. After all, of course, your window, however beautifully and tastefully arranged, will not please everybody. But never mind the fault finders. Study to do your best, and use every opportunity you can get for observing the effects produced by those who are successful in this matter. Thus your taste will be educated, and without slavish copying of details you will be able to produce similar effects in your own case. Don't be discouraged if your window is small or badly constructed. Make the best of it, and carefully think out what kind of display will best suit the circumstances. You need a very small space to prove your taste and originality, and make it a show which people will cross the street to look at. Lay it down as an indisputable rule that windows properly dressed make trade. Avoid the mistake of being too glaring, too flashy, but at the same time avoid being too tame, too commonplace. Neatness is a point that always pleases, and is always attainable, even where there is no possibility of getting up a striking effect.

Toronto Fringe and Tassel Company

Manufacturers of

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POMPONS, TASSELS, UPHOLSTERY,
and UNDERTAKERS' TRIMMINGS

27 Front St. West, TORONTO.