

the number of members holding shares at 4,374. It issued tickets to subscribers to the number of 28,834. Its sales for the six months reached £706,256 9s 9½d, the net profit for the half year being £8,198 17s 7½d. Its assets are put down at £367,575 4s 4d.

A new society, designed to supply ladies' dress goods and wearing apparel of all kinds, called the Ladies' Dress Association, has made very rapid progress within the past two years, and from its report for August, 1879, claims a membership of 4,411. Its sales in fourteen months reached £93,953 12s 3d, this being an increase of over eighty-three per cent. over the same time a year before. Since that report its business has greatly increased. A society on the same plan is in contemplation in New York, and will, no doubt, soon be ready for business.

Naturally, it is now asked why this rebellion began, who is to blame for it, and what is to be the end of it all? Moreover, it has extended to this country, and seems likely to reach greater dimensions here than abroad. These questions are not British alone—they are international. The British shopman chiefly, and the American retailer in a lesser degree, are alone to blame.

In the first place, there are too many shopmen. This has resulted in a great number of small stocks in many little stores, with the consequent increased rent, insurance, labor, advertising, waste and inconvenience, all of which the dealer must offset by charging higher prices. Secondly, these stores have given credit, which implies book-keeping, the expense of collections, and the loss of bad debts, for all of which the consumer must pay in higher prices. Thirdly, there has been misrepresentation and adulteration, which quite naturally has alienated what little regard the buyer may have had for the dealer. Lastly, the British shopman, if not his cousin, has been unplea-

santly insistent on a purchase, and has had two prices.

The co-operator seeks to remedy all this by massing many stores under one roof, by reducing the labor of distribution, and by insisting on cash payment. Happily, the American dealer has scented the coming conflict from afar, and is trying to forestall the complaints of the shopper. There is an evident disposition to merge many small stores into one, and thus reduce rent, labor, insurance, and to save time and trouble generally. In such bazaars, lower prices are quite possible, as the shopping public has already learned. The one-price system is peculiarly American, and needs no comment. Cash is getting to be the general rule in large cities, and it should be insisted upon everywhere. Why should the buyer, with money in hand, be forced to pay more to compensate the foolish dealer for the faults of a purchaser who can not or will not pay his debts?

It seems to be recognized that the co-operative store, on either the Rochdale plan (which seems to be the best) or the Civil Service system, is destined to get and keep a firm foothold in this country. Once started, it will grow with ten times the speed of its sturdy British predecessor. Only the dishonesty, ignorance and want of method of those who have hitherto attempted such experiments have stood in the way. Now it is understood, and, in new hands, it is plain that it will command the respectful attention of the shopping world. Whether the co-operative stores grow fast or slow, one thing is certain: the retail trade will be greatly modified and greatly improved, both by the force of necessity and example. Whatever happens, the shoppers will gain, and their vigorous rebellion will be of the greatest benefit to all concerned.—*Scribner for April.*