

THE NEW COSTUME.

DRY GOODS manufacturers, jobbers and retailers are, no doubt, much interested in the movement now on foot to give woman a new costume. This so-called reform seems to have been gaining ground very rapidly during the past three years, owing to the growing popularity of the bicycle. In Toronto, for instance, there are one hundred women now riding bicycles to every one there was three years ago. In the larger United States cities the bicycles have won the affections of a very large proportion of the ladies.

The idea of a reform in dress, a longing to abandon the clumsy skirts now worn by women, has slumbered long in the minds of the brightest, cleverest and most daring of English and French speaking women. Susan B. Anthony and Mrs. Bloomer have made themselves famous in this connection, while Sarah Bernhardt and Rosa Bonheur, though less daring, had a desire to wear more masculine clothes. The popularity of the bathing suit has prepared the way for the introduction of bloomers and shorter skirts. But it is the bicycle that has given the greatest impetus to the movement. The newspapers, by writings and illustrations, are familiarizing the world with the bicycle costume of knickerbockers, bloomers or divided skirts. Another three years will see a great advance in this regard in Canada.

The new costume will mean a change in the quality and style of the material used in the making of women's dress, and it is to this point that manufacturers and vendors of dress materials must bend their attention. No flimsy material can be used in bicycle costumes, serges and tweeds being indispensable. Moreover, in these only three colors are suitable, namely, blue, brown and gray. In about another year no stock of dress goods will be complete without a full array of blue serges and gray and brown tweeds in their varying shades and combinations.

While there is a decided tendency towards bloomers and tailor-made garments, there is little danger of the dressmaker entirely losing her occupation. There are very many ladies whose figure would look ridiculous in bloomers, and these will retain the skirt. Moreover, for balls, parties and other evening wear, the skirt will be the proper habiliment of the "new woman" until at least the present generation has passed away.

FORTY-FIVE HOURS PER WEEK.

THE question now presents itself: "Is not the Early-Closing Movement carrying us to extremes?" There would seem to be danger in all reforming, lest the reformers should proceed farther and faster than is consistent with desirable and profitable results.

The Early-Closing Movement has been before the people for a long time, and has been principally supported by those of the laboring classes who desire a shorter working day, and by persons of leisure who have a socialistic and philanthropic turn of mind. Early closing of stores is part of the general movement for a shorter working day for all working classes. In our anxiety to avoid the long hours which once obtained in stores, warehouses and factories, we may go too far and place our country at a disadvantage with other countries.

When we shorten the hours of labor we, to a greater or less extent, increase the cost of labor. When we increase the cost of Canadian labor, we place it at a disadvantage as compared with foreign labor. If the laborers work eight hours per day in Canadian cotton mills, and ten hours per day in United States

cotton mills, then the cost of producing cotton goods in Canada is likely to be a shade higher than in the United States. Whether there is a danger from this source depends upon the particular industry or trade under consideration. If the danger does exist, it can only be avoided by not adopting shorter hours, or by adopting shorter hours and keeping up a protective tariff. But the latter method is only available to protect domestic consumption, and cannot be called in to avert the danger of an increased cost on exported manufactures.

It will be seen, however, that a shorter working day for clerks in retail stores is not open to all the objections noted above, because retailing is not subject to foreign competition. All the competition in storekeeping is local, and only this local competition has to be considered.

Throughout Canada there has been a general movement, during the past five years, to limit the working hours of city retail clerks, so that they work from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. for five days in the week, and from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturdays during the winter months, and from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays during the summer months. In the smaller towns and villages stores close at 8 p.m. during the winter, and generally at 7 p.m. during the summer, with, in both seasons, the exception of the evenings before holidays and Saturday evenings. The Saturday half-holiday, so widely observed in the large cities, has obtained little hold in the towns and villages. One or two instances of a Friday half-holiday in towns have been noticed.

The latest move has been inaugurated by the largest departmental store in Toronto, in working from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on all the days of July and August, except Saturdays, when the hours are from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. This makes a 45-hour week, or three hours per week less than the far-famed eight-hour day. During the other ten months the working hours in this store are 54 hours per week.

To say that this is a triumph for the Early-Closing Movement is but to state what is palpably clear. It shows that the people generally are strongly in favor of shorter hours, that shopping can be compressed into a smaller space of time than is usually allotted to it, and that merchants who adopt shorter hours may find it profitable by advertising their good deeds fully and judiciously.

CATCHING THE TOURIST.

The retail merchant, especially in the larger centres, will find that it pays to cultivate the hotel clerk, who often directs trade to particular stores when questioned by guests in the hotel. An intelligent man in charge of the tobacco and news stands has also considerable opportunities for doing the same thing. The travelling public form a good class of customers too. As a rule they do not haggle over prices. They always have some money to spend, and an attractive store can get away with quite a lot of it. This is especially true of the summer tourist season, when thousands of European and American tourists visit this country. In catching this trade, judgment and taste should be displayed in the arrangement of goods. Articles that a traveler is apt to run short of on his journey should be given well chosen prominence. Then, goods, if possible, that are distinctly local and novel in kind and make-up should be a feature. Put yourself into the position of the tourist; what would you likely buy if you were strolling past a well-dressed shop window in a strange city? You can afford to charge a fair profit on sales like these, and you will get it.