

THE MONTH'S TRADE.

DURING the latter half of July and the first half of August trade has been quiet in the wholesale houses, but orders received from travellers have kept everybody busy. The feeling among dealers is good, and increasing confidence has been the result of the harvest prospects and their realization. In Ontario the crops are pretty well housed at present, and the yield has been above the average of the past few years. In most other portions of the Dominion the harvest seems to promise well, and every trader expects a splendid fall and winter trade.

On August 4th the collections were excellent for this season of the year and quite satisfactory. The retailers have very little chance to gather money, unless they are previously prepared for their August payments. Collections ran from 60 to 70 per cent. of the accounts due. This is quite remarkable for this season. In fact, the last three months have shown a much greater movement for cash than last season, with the same volume of trade, thus showing that retailers are booking less. It is exceedingly gratifying to find such an improvement.

The prosperous state of trade is still further shown by the fact that retailers are now commencing to do their own banking more generally. That is, instead of making their notes payable in the city where they do business, they have them made payable at their own bank, and thus become responsible for their payment. This saves the wholesaler a great deal of trouble in lifting notes, and also makes the retailer more independent, or rather more dependent on himself.

Another change to be noted in the methods of dry goods business is the fact that the wholesalers have more regular trade than formerly. This is due to the fact that retailers are adopting more and more the hand to mouth system, and heavy season orders are becoming a thing of the past. There are no really small months as there used to be, but the trade is more regular and each month has a more or less continued demand for some classes of goods. At all times the demand is more or less general and spread over nearly all available lines.

At the time of writing the placing order season is about over. Nearly every merchant has been visited by the traveller with fall and winter samples, and the large orders are almost all placed. Jobbers seem perfectly satisfied.

In domestic flannels the season has been very good with an extra demand for fancy lines. Flannelettes are increasing in the amount of their sales, and to some extent they are displacing heavier goods. In cottons the trade has been fair at medium prices. Just now samples of all kinds of domestic cottons for the spring trade are in the hands of the agents. There is no change of prices, but the wholesale prices may be expected to be firmer than during the past season.

Canadian tweeds have had a very strong demand, and in style and finish there is considerable improvement over former seasons. In fact the improvement is such that only a practical man can tell the difference between some grades of imported goods and some lines of Canadian tweeds.

Prices are well maintained in wool-

len underwear. Fancy striped goods are firm and hard to get, owing to the burning of one or two mills. Still the demand will not likely exceed the supply.

In woollen hosiery black continues to lead the trade and the demand has been good. Domestic goods are monopolizing the market in this class of dry goods.

Blankets are in fair demand at easy prices.

THE RUBBER COMBINATION.

The combination on rubber garments has broken. The manufacturers in the agreement were the Gutta Percha Rubber Company, the Granby Company, and the Canadian Company. Prices have nominally declined 33 1-2 per cent. but there seems to be no bottom to the market. Manufacturers claim that they are losing money on every sale they make. Buyers are holding off and will not take any more than they require to fill immediate orders.

It is hardly known outside the firms themselves why the combination has been broken, but accumulation of stock seems to have been a strong reason. Some of the companies are said to have had very large stocks, and it was necessary for them to unload, and the only possible way was by breaking the combination. Still this may not have been the immediate reason. A great deal of dissatisfaction has been showing itself for some time, and one firm, at least, was very anxious to be free to make its own terms in an independent manner. The result has been the break in prices, and the end may not be yet. The wholesale dealers may lose slightly by having to sell stock at much less than invoice price.

THE DECLINE IN SPOOL COTTON.

Spool cotton seems to be demoralized at present, but only in one line—viz., 200 yards 6-cord. The M. E. Q. was the first to drop, then followed Clark's Anchor, and then came Chadwick's. Last of all came Kerr's, and only Coate's remains steady. In our June issue we explained how the cottons sold by the Central Agency were allowed to fall in price as soon as their sale fell below the minimum line. The conclusion that one must draw from this lowering of prices is that sales for this cotton are slow, or that Coate's cotton is supreme. As far as can be estimated the 200-yard spool is selling in as large quantities as ever, hence there seems to be no generally lessening of demand. The Coate's make of this size spool seems to have driven its other competitors below the minimum line, and now they are enabled to lower their price, so as to gain back what the Coate's brand has taken away from them. The cotton manufactured by the Coates Bros. is said to be a very superior make and to deserve its popularity. There have been two successive and decided drops in the prices. At the first drop the two Clarks & Brooks dropped to \$3.50 in the central agency, and Chadwick's price was lowered in sympathy. Then these all fell to \$3.20, and Coate's was lowered to \$3.50, at which prices they have remained for nearly two weeks. There seems to be some trouble among the manufacturers, which thus causes goods to be sold below

their manufacturing cost. The trouble extends only to the Canadian market, that is, where the agency operates. Manufacturers at present will not accept orders for future delivery at these prices, or even guarantee the prices. Hence the market is in a very unsettled condition.

FUTURE FABRICS.

Changeable effects in winter woollen goods are meeting with favor, and it is expected that this effect will be met with in next year's dress fabrics. With regard to the cloths for next spring, the Berlin correspondent of the Economist says:—The direction of fashion for next spring is still in the dark and each manufacturer has different samples. It seems, however, as fashion would show much eclecticism next season, and on this the success of the coming spring season is likely to be based, as a little of everything will probably be disposed of and the firms who have the greatest variety to offer are likely to secure most of the orders. One thing seems certain, and that is, that light colored dress fabrics will be favored.

In dress fabrics the changeable style has to be reckoned with. Wool and silk will be much used together. Plain tissues and ribbed poplin fabrics are likely to be much used in the changeable effects. Velour Russe fabrics, with fine relief cord stripes and colored velvet-like effects, will be used, although they will not be so dear for spring as they have been for fall, and qualities of 5 to 7 francs per meter will make room for cheaper grades. Roubaix manufacturers are already offering velour Russe for spring in half-wool qualities at 2 1-2 francs per meter. Plain and changeable fabrics, and ribbed fabrics with satin stripes, will be worn. Attempts are being made with changeable crepe grounds with stripes and small broche designs.

In black stuffs for the ready-made trade samples in longitudinal and diagonal ribs are being prepared. Heavy ribs are being made, which in the finer qualities resemble the well-known Ottomans. Ribbed stuffs in imitation of the formerly well-known "Solids" are another variety; all these effects being also made in foule goods. Black corkscrews will have to make room for coatings which are being made in cheap qualities. Fine vicunas are seen with fine broken stripes.

Dust cloak fabrics in worsted are seen in twisted and napped finish, on plain and melange ground. Small checked worsteds in mode with white and brown, in gray with black and white or blue, are patterned into large squares by means of narrow and broad stripes. Mixed beiges with Jacquard figures and Jacquard stripes are again being made.

Cloths of wool yarn in mode shades, plain and mixed and twisted, and plain with fine twill, will be used for spring jackets. Similar effects are also seen in light colored worsted corkscrews, which look especially well in light color mixtures. The same fabrics are also seen in Panama effects. These fabrics are provided with a woven lining in light stylish squares, or plain in lively shades.