



We have been led to believe that the clothing trade has been on the jump this year and that business has been satisfactory. Subsequent enquiries lead us to doubt that things are not so "rosy" as they might be and that business has been discouraging, at least so far as Ontario is concerned. That a large and profitable trade has been done in the Maritime Provinces is generally admitted, but this has been almost counter-balanced by the depression in the West. Possibly some of the wholesale houses expected too much and are consequently disappointed. Some houses have always the same stereotyped answer to any enquiry as to trade prospects, and it is a pleasing sign when they can always look upon the bright side but others are more outspoken. Amongst retailers the same will apply. "We have done a splendid business this spring" is a common saying, but "Business, is very dull and there is little or no profit now as prices are so low" is another not infrequent saying. In the cities competition is excessively keen and "unprecedented bargains" are the order of the day. The ingenuity and skill displayed in the advertisements of the large retail firms to attract custom are evidences of the keenness of the competition of the present time. This has resulted in an inferior grade of goods being put on the market, and retailers should seriously consider whether they are serving their own interests by palming them off upon their customers as superior grade goods. It may put an extra dollar or two into their pockets at the time, but will ultimately react to a startling degree. Last winter a friend of the writer's went into a leading retail store in Toronto and purchased an overcoat. It was described as a superior article sent along with others by a Montreal manufacturer as a sample of the fine goods they were able to turn out. The retail price was \$16 but they would give him a reduction of 25 per cent. as there were only two left and they wanted them closed out. He swallowed the bait but will not be such a fool again. The material was the rankest shoddy, and in a month the coat was unfit to be worn. The retail firm thereby lost a good customer and did not enhance their reputation. "A penny wise and pound foolish policy" never pays. If such cases are of frequent occurrence it is no wonder that the demand for ready-made clothing should decline and the demand for custom-made correspondingly increase. Travelers for the wholesale houses have begun the fall campaign but it is too early yet to speak of the prospects.

FOIBLES OF FASHION.

"The Arbiter" in the N. Y. Clothier and Furnisher says The more conservative men of the fashionable world pretend to see in this revival of the models of 1840 in men's wear a forthcoming renaissance in short clothes, and are deeply agitated thereover. There is no need for alarm, however. If that is to be, it will be done with care and upon the best judgment of the men that control at the time. There surely was nothing more kaleidoscopically picturesque during the epoch of fuss and feathers than the average young man of to-day that disports in knickerbockers. The hue and cry against short-clothes does not seem to me to be a disinterested appeal. Scratch an opponent of knee breeches and you will find a personage with bad legs, take my word for it.

In truth, while somewhat impracticable, the æsthetic side of the question has all the best of the argument upon the question of improving the breed. When men wore short clothes in olden times

they took better care of themselves, for they had a proper pride of personal appearance. Indeed, in the continuance of a regime of attire "that covers everything," is it not a fact that the average in physique has deteriorated? There was no need to keep up to the top-knotch of training that produced the good thighs and well-rounded calves. The shrunk-shanked man was as good as an Adonis in trousers. The showing up of fashionable society would be something remarkable if the edict were to take effect immediately; but should it come it would tend to bring about a better physical development, and the unfortunates in the meantime might have recourse to the formulators whose skilled arts can wreath a mobility of youth about the underpinnings of the most archaic coryphee of spectacular production.

It is rather amusing, moreover, to note these censors of any new departure or experiment in dress applaud the annual spectacle of gentlemen of means imitating as closely as possibly without awakening comparison their own coachmen. The drive of the coaching club is the distinguished equipage function of the year, and the costume of the man on the box seat, who upon this occasion is supposed to look his prettiest, is nothing more nor less than an infringement upon the livery of the professional Jehu.

It will be noticed that the new 'long top coats, while they have a pleat down each side seam, indicating a skirt effect, have no buttons upon the waist line of the back. In place thereof there is a triangle done in self color silk. I long ago advocated the abolition of the two little bulls-eye buttons. They are there for no purpose, they are not decorative. They simply mean that once upon a time when men wore swords and square cut coats the skirts were lapped back with tapes that attached to these buttons.

They should come off, and so should the buttons upon the coat sleeves of the undercoat. They indicate no saving clause of utility; they are not decorative, they do not give the finish that several rows of stitching would. But they have a purpose. Experience teaches that. It is clearly the aim of the tailor that affixes them that the silk sleeve lining of the overcoat should last as short a time as possible. The coat tail and sleeve buttons must go!

TO INCREASE BUSINESS.

There are various ways of stimulating trade, says the Chicago Apparel Gazette, chief of which is successful advertising in its various branches, but there is another way of doing more business, and that is by increasing its scope. It is from such a method that the great department stores have come, by the additions of departments and branches of business, more or less allied to the original character of the store. Many dealers deprecate the spreading of a business beyond its original lines, but the notion is old fogish and the proof is that these department stores pay.

We will suppose the store to be originally confined to clothing. For a time the business grows, but there comes a time when the increase is small, and this in spite of the most careful, systematic and energetic pushing. The territory has been worked out; all the business in it than can be attracted to a store of the character of the one just described has been secured. What comes next? There is room, help can be readily secured, the business has been profitable and capital is plenty, but the dealer finds a limit to his trade has been