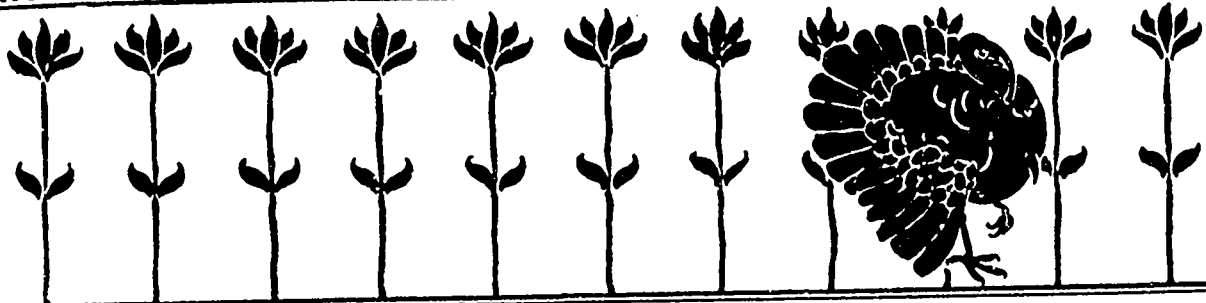


# THE DRY GOODS REVIEW

IN THE INTERESTS OF THE DRY GOODS; MILLINERY; CLOTHING AND HAT TRADE



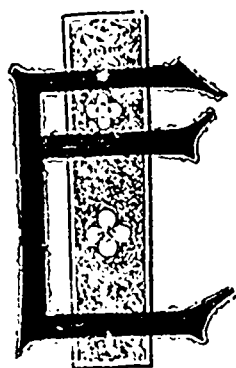
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## THE OUTLOOK.

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VERY manner of work has its periods of enforced idleness, when, after personal work has done its best, there remains but to await results. The physician watching by the side of his patient knows it; the lawyer in the courts waiting for the verdict knows it, and so on through each business and profession there come times when actual work ceases. If experiences were asked from them they would agree in this: that the varying emo-

tions of hope of success and fear of failure, that alternate as the time goes by, are far harder to bear than the actual work just done. To the dry goods merchant every day brings a series of such situations, and at each turn of the season he is subjected to an unusual strain. Amid all the active preparations for the approaching fall or spring season, as the case may be, there has been no point nor circumstance with which he had to deal that has given so much anxiety as this latter period, when his labors are in a sense perfected and the results placed before the public on their merits. In numberless individual cases he has had no past theory or principle, except experience, to guide him; he has been virtually his own master, and though it be natural to question personal actions rather severely, there are reasons for this concern.

Beyond the fixed line of utility he knows fashion is fickle and tastes differ, and it remains to be seen whether his best judgment is also the opinion of the buying public. Though he has chosen with the greatest care both at home and abroad, there sternly meets him an inherent element of chance, that lurks in all situations not yet tested and proven. With these, consider the fact that the monetary loss or gain of the six months' labor is borne by himself, and do not the first days of a new season become the focus of interest to an ambitious merchant? What then is to be done? Is it possible to work out success where it depends on many uncontrollable items? In times of war we know of generals who, after calculating the strength of their several forces, adopted the plan of cam-

paign that would yield the most effective results, and virtually had the victory before a shot had been fired. Can the dry goods merchant in some analogous way not calculate and operate his forces and decide upon a plan of campaign that will also produce as certain results? It ought to be much more easily constructed, for the elements of dishonesty and treachery which enter as a part of war, and may sometimes succeed, do not enter, cannot succeed, and need never be taken into the problem in trade matters.

Laying down the principle that the only way past chance is through it, and adding the fact that wise plans in any pursuit will repay effort by increase, we find ourselves convened into a committee of ways and means, approaching a decision by first reckoning some of the chief influences that exist and will be prominent during the coming season.

There are ordinary characteristics that exist in the trade of every season; for instance, there is never wanting a number of changes in style, color and shape, and the fall season of 1895 has brought its share of all three. Along with them come other conditions peculiar to the season, all of which will yield a direct influence on the volume and character of the dry goods trade.

Unusual causes are followed by unusual effects, and the past years of commerce have been strikingly unusual. From present indications, it is predicted that better business times are just ahead. In the total effect this will be a gain; modified, however, by the tendency to rush to extremes (which is to so great an extent both the cause and the effect of seasons of business depression) and requiring from the merchant decisions as to what is real, and what fictitious, in value and demand. Specially is this important with the strong upward tendency in the price of all classes of materials, for if he is to get his fullest share of prosperity, he must use courage, almost to the degree of speculation, in buying staple articles. Still another feature (new as to its personnel but finding a prototype in Germany after the Franco-German war) claims attention. The war in the East has been a huge advertisement for the manufactures of Japan and China. Possessing the advantage of silver coinage, Japan can compete and undersell, in any market, and Canada is one of her most convenient markets. The popularity Japanese goods have already attained presages the extent to which they will replace goods of a similar nature heretofore imported from other countries. There will also be a