

BUILDING A MODERN STORE.



It is difficult to advise merchants who intend rebuilding, as circumstances in each case usually determine what is to be done. An article in *The Economist*, by McNeill & Tuttle, architects, contains a plan and some hints which may prove useful.

The most noteworthy feature of the accompanying plan is that the columns supporting the floors above come in the middle of the shelving, and not in the aisle or on the edge of a counter. They are in the least annoying positions, and yet are spaced for an economical arrangement of girders and floor beams of the tiers above. The two columns at the front and the two at the rear are the only ones standing in open floor space; but they are turned to advantage in both instances. In the millinery department there are seats around them, and at the front of the building they form centres for special display.

They are treated as military masts with fighting tops, covered with lace curtains, rugs or tapestry, draped to hang down to within 7 feet of the floor.

Directly opposite the main entrance there is a counter for special sales, which challenges every customer that enters the store. At first sight it might appear that it blocked the central aisle, and for this reason was a disadvantage. This is not the case, for it serves an important

use by deflecting the crowd immediately to the two side aisles, and those who do not pass down the centre aisle pass the sweeping curves of the counters immediately in the rear which display the goods so effectually.

Another good feature is the placing of glass cases in the corners back of the show windows on either side of the store. As their position is one that receives no direct daylight, electric lights are concealed above the glass and throw a flood of light upon the goods.

The counters do not continue to the door, but stop six feet short on either side to give access to the show-windows, to increase the space around the entrance and to allow room for two large radiators, which counteract the cold air at this part of the store in Winter. The remainder of the store can be amply heated by foot coils running in front of the counters.

The counters have no sharp corners, and, with the shelving, are of simple design. Carving and elaborate brackets serve to hold the dust, and are not as pleasing as the simple curves of plain moldings. The carved ornament and ornate design should be reserved for the special display cases.

As the floors above and the basement beneath are used for selling purposes, all the stock carried is not provided for on the ground floor. There are two elevators in the middle of the store, and they are rendered even more accessible by the broad aisle which

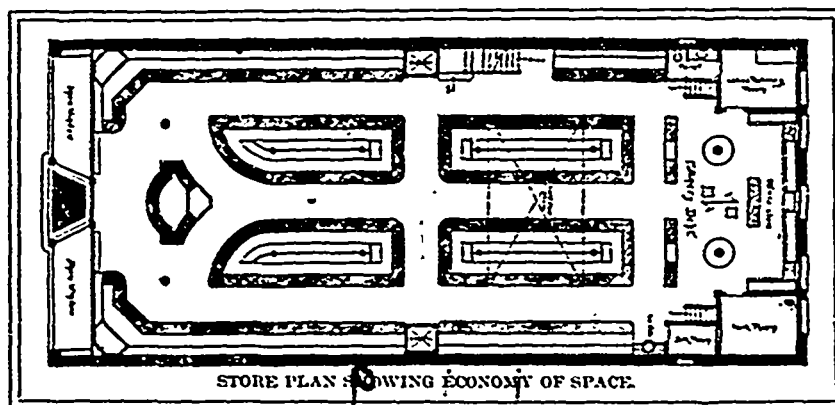
connects them. The position of the elevators, like that of the columns, is a most important one, and should not be selected at random before the plan of the counters has been determined. As the structure of the building depends upon their position, it is difficult to alter it after the building is completed; and, in the majority of cases, the price paid for not considering this detail at the start and laying out the plan of the counters at the time the building is designed is a makeshift arrangement, and sacrifices needed room.

With elevators in a building the stairs do not need an important position, as they are used only in case of an emergency. In the position we have shown them they are accessible and do not interfere with the direct planning of the floor space.

The silkroom, where goods can be seen by artificial light, makes good use of the darkest corner of the store, and is not far removed from the section under the skylight, which is devoted to the sale of dress goods.

The millinery department is flanked by the ladies' retiring-room and the millinery workroom. Both of these rooms have good light from the large rear windows.

This department is very happily arranged. Long, narrow tables separate it from the rest of the store, and, upon these untrimmed hats, sailor hats and the cheaper class of stock can be carried. In the centre of the room is a large cheval glass with adjustable mirrors on either side, and two small tables to hold a bonnet that is about to be tried on.



AN NOVEL COUNTER

The same authorities describe a counter with shelving, which would not occupy too much space; that could be increased or diminished in size at will, and would look well when either partially or entirely filled with goods.

The counters are built in three sections, any one of which can be removed and placed elsewhere in the store. The curved lines add grace, and they also allow more room in the aisle, for sharp corners obstruct easy passage.

When it is desirable to keep the cost low, hardwood, except for the counters, cannot be thought of, and what is sacrificed by using a cheaper material must be used in the color scheme. On this as much depends as on any other item. Pine, whitewood and cypress are all cheap woods, quite as much on account of being easily worked as on account of a low market price.

If hardwood is used it is always pleasing. The grain of the wood, when carefully brought out by an expert, is a decoration in itself, and the high polish which is possible keeps the furniture freer from dust and makes it easier to clean.

There are many combinations in the treatment of hardwood that are pleasing from an artistic standpoint. A rich effect is obtained by making the main portions of cherry, stained to imitate mahogany, and the counters of dark oak, or quartered oak, can be used throughout and stained green, while the high lights of the ornament are touched with gold.

Another idea is the use of dark bottle-green with the trimmings of silver. The silver must be carefully applied and not used too plentifully. If it appears on the high lights of the ornament and in an occasional line here and there, it will suffice.