

WINDOW DRESSING.

CHRISTMAS DISPLAYS.

THE Toronto dry goods retailers are now in a battle of holiday window designing. Nearly every window on King, Yonge and Queen streets has been the object of extra attention during the past two weeks.

One very noticeable feature is that windows without plate glass are passed unnoticed. Another is that plate glass must be shiningly clean to do justice to even the most brilliant display. The store with its shining, glittering panes is much more attractive with a poorer display than its neighbor with a better display, but with dingy windows. Another noticeable point is that plush floor cloths are used to a great extent. These are made up and kept for use in the windows, and, although the investment is a neat item, yet the length of time it lasts makes it a small yearly expenditure. It is wonderful what an effect a rich background like this has on a window. It adds at least 25 per cent. to the richness of its appearance.

Sprigs of holly and of evergreen, natural and artificial leaves, and flowers have been very much used, but in very small bunches. They are used only to touch up sombre displays, not with brilliantly colored goods. Moreover they are used so as to draw attention to the goods rather than to themselves. This is a point which is too often overlooked by window dressers.

Many of the designs are crude but original, and for that reason striking. One of the best to be seen was that of a double bridge, built high up so that the top was considerable above the spectator's eye. All the frame work that was needed was of single board thickness, the thickness of the bridge not showing. One archway was at an angle of about 30 degrees with the front of the window, and the second span at right angles to that, and almost parallel with the side of the window which bordered the entrance to the doorway of the store. A white boa fastened on the dome of the archway made a neat fringe, and gave a thick appearance to the structure. The solid part of the structure was covered with silk handkerchiefs, tacked by their centres, and hanging in close and graceful folds. On the top of each bridge was a large toy train, thus adding a sort of reality to the representation. On the floor and half way through the main archway was a ribbon bedecked bicycle, astride of which were two beautiful dolls. On the floor of the window were piled heaps of different articles, such as gloves, toys, handkerchiefs, etc., each surmounted by a motto card. The effect was striking. Not that it showed fast selling goods, but it drew attention to the store. This is not the aim of window dressing at all seasons of the year, but it is at this particular season. Then to a certain extent it showed goods especially advertising the lines heaped on the floor of the window.

Another design was the large sails of a schooner, covered with fantastically arranged gauzy and other fancy handkerchiefs. The boat was represented by a board running diagonally across the window floor, and covered with

plush, the mast rising from the centre.

Another design was a marriage ceremony, with pretty pages of all sizes and descriptions. It was used to draw attention to various lines of presents which were exhibited in the window.

Many of the windows were beautiful with an abundant display of holiday novelties of all kinds; staple goods being relegated to the shelves for the time being. The more gorgeous the displays the greater crowds they seemed to attract.

A GOOD PICTORIAL WINDOW.

"It Sells Goods," is the test which The Dry Goods Economist uses in deciding upon the merits of any window decoration idea. It is not always necessary that prices should be given on the goods which you have in the window, but it is necessary that everything which goes into the window as a part of the make-up should be first class. A lace window, with a sign that shows age and ragged edges, is not allowable. If the goods in the window are the most fascinating creations of the age, you will "botch" the whole thing by having dusty or rusty rods, dirty window casings, either inside or out. Don't wait until all the putty has cracked away from the glass before you repair it, but examine everything every time you enter the window to trim it, and make good any unsightly appearance at once.

Realistic windows may be employed in selling goods. The fancy goods and art department should have a display once in a while.

Do not attempt to make it too much of an affair. Use one-half the depth of the window. You can use some rich shade of China silk or Canton flannel to make your window smaller in appearance, and bring such a display nearer the glass. Artistic placing and proper companionship are sure to produce an effective window of fancy articles.

If anything is to be criticised in this window it would be that there is too much in it. Don't try to show too much, but preserve a daintiness which permits each gem to produce its own result in attracting. If this is done, the window which has but ten pieces in it has an aggregate of ten attractions.

SOME ABUSES.

A writer in the Dry Goods Economist criticises complicated designs, and from his remarks the following is taken:

When we pass from the large cities to the smaller towns, there we occasionally meet strange freaks. Mr. K. is possibly listening to a very dry sermon, and his mind goes wandering about seeking for some good idea to stir up business. It occurs to him that a model in his window of the new city hall or post office or soldiers' monument would be a drawing card, so he hears no more of the sermon. By Monday morning the idea has full possession of his mind, and for the next two or three days he is at the back of the store busy planning the great design. Thursday, Friday and Saturday are devoted to the building of the model and its accessories. A whole week has been devoted to this great work, during which every interrupting customer felt he was an annoyance to Mr. K. He could see it in his eyes and in his teeth, although he smiled in his most lavish manner; they knew that

he was mad, and they felt aggrieved, at least they were angry enough to make up their minds "not to trouble Mr. K. any more; there were lots of other stores in town, just as good as Mr. K.'s." Business generally neglected and customers snubbed is the history of the first week of the great work.

Second week, Monday A. M. The curtain is drawn and the great display is now in progress of being finished. Everything is now subordinated to that great work. Spools of cotton, linen, silk, etc., etc. are gathered, grouped and regrouped, built up and knocked down, built up and knocked down again, but on goes the work. Every clerk is now excited, and their faces plainly say to customers, "Oh! why do you bother me; don't you see I am busy." The work progresses and possibly Thursday morning the curtain rises, and "The New Post Office," "City Hall" or "Soldiers' Monument" appears in all its button and spool glory. Mr. K. and his clerks are now all smiles. "We did that" is plainly written on their faces, and the crowd stands on the sidewalk and admires it. Not one of them offers to buy it and carry it home and put it up in the parlor. Mr. K. would be surprised if anybody offered to, for it was not made to sell; it was made to be looked at—"only that, nothing more."

Mr. K.'s neighbors avail themselves of this opportunity made for them by Mr. K., so they display in the most fascinating manner possible, millinery, clocks, dress goods, hosiery, gloves, etc., even spools and buttons, but all to entice people to buy. So Mr. K. has the crowd of admirers on the sidewalk, his neighbors have the people inside, tempted there by the practical enticements of their window displays.

What are the net results to Mr. K.? Loss of a week and a half of attention to business, and loss of many customers by want of proper courtesy and attention. Has the great work paid Mr. K.? Certainly not.

If it seems that I am writing against professional window dressers, it is only a seeming, for they are now necessities in all large houses. My object is to call attention to practical and unpractical window dressing.

CORRESPONDENCE.

We solicit letters from our readers on business topics. A practical merchant's views are always of great value to others in the same business, and we should be pleased to have our paper made the medium of exchanging such opinions and experiences.

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