

Foreign Textile Centres

MANCHESTER.—The cotton market is not active, and makers of sundry cloths are now beginning to require new business, which, unfortunately, is not offering in any large quantities at limits which manufacturers can see their way to accept. Cotton continues to have an upward tendency, based upon the supply, which is, however, somewhat held in check by the lack of demand from this market, but should business come through again in any big quantities it is difficult to see how it can be restrained from again going up higher still. Yarns are steady but far from active, and there is comparatively little enquiry from prospective buyers. Egyptian yarns are quiet at much the same prices. There is better news from India, and rather more enquiry is resulting, but one does not hear much of orders being placed. It is difficult to arrange prices to suit the consumers abroad, who do not appreciate the rising market. Earlier delivery is now possible for some classes of goods. The home trade demand has been very good, and much cloth has been delivered for the first of the month. A fair amount of enquiry still comes forward in the Rochdale flannel trade, and though all of it does not result in business, orders are still being placed of more or less magnitude. The trade is in a healthy condition, although it is said that profits are only moderate owing to the high price of wool and other materials, still after the bad times of previous years manufacturers are not disposed to grumble at the present position. There is no change to report in prices, which are firm at recent levels, says The Warehouseman and Draper's Monthly.

LEEDS.—Operations in the woollen cloth trade have been fully resumed after the holidays. On 'Change on Tuesday there was about an average attendance, but only a comparatively small amount of business. The tone of trade generally is somewhat firmer, though it cannot be said that a fully confident feeling prevails. The more seasonable weather of the past few days has strengthened business considerably, and orders for pressing requirements in seasonable goods are coming to hand more freely. There is more enquiry for worsteds, and machinery as a rule is running well. Cheap tweeds are quieter, but late rates are maintained. No great amount of business is passing in wool. Holders are inclined to grant slight concessions, but consumers do not readily respond and purchases are made only to meet immediate wants. Little change in rags. There is no change to be recorded in the condition of the clothing trade, which continues to enjoy an uninterrupted run of prosperity. Orders are plentiful, and overtime is being very generally worked. The Easter demand, especially for juvenile garments, was quite up to expectations, and those firms that during the slack season ran their machinery at full pressure in making stock have been well rewarded for their enterprise, as during the last week or two the demand has been so brisk that they have succeeded in clearing out almost every single garment at remunerative prices. Boys' khaki suits are "going strong," to use a now historic phrase, and men's and youths' blue serge suits are as popular as ever. Black vicuna jackets and vests and striped worsted trousers are selling freely, and these are the three leading lines in the clothing trade this season. During the past week or so there has been a poor attendance of woollen buyers at the markets, and producers are badly in want of orders. The spring trade has been spoiled by the weather, and there is an almost entire absence of repeats, and the result is that some looms are standing idle. To secure immediate business and keep their machinery fully occupied manufacturers seem willing to make some small concessions. Makers of specialties, such as popular lines in serges and vicunas, and certain union cloths used by the wholesale clothiers, have a fair number of orders on hand, and refuse

to do business at anything but full rates. But, generally speaking, manufacturers are open to discuss terms, and are willing to meet buyers half-way. South African shippers in this district are no pessimists, but take a rosy view of the situation. They never lapsed from grace, nor uttered complaint about the conduct of the war. On the contrary, they keep accumulating heavy stocks of ready-made garments and piece-goods against the "boom," which they say cannot be much longer delayed. Meantime, some large consignments are being sent out to Cape Town.

BRADFORD.—There is still a quiet tone in the wool market here, and there has been very little business passing in colonial merino wools for some weeks past. There is little doubt that speculation and an exaggerated fear of the immediate effects of the shortage in the supply of pure merinos caused the prices of these wools to advance quite beyond the point where the consumer would follow them. When, therefore, the demand for these wools was affected by the substitution of cheaper wools the prices of the finest merinos commenced to fall rapidly, and to-day could be bought some 20 per cent. below the very highest point touched; but the prices of manufactured goods never advanced to anything like the same extent, so that the prices of these do not show nearly the same amount of fluctuation, says The Draper's Record, London, Eng. The most interesting question to the drapery trade at large is, "What will be the tendency of the market as regards merino wool in the immediate future?" and although it is not wise to prophesy, there are certain facts which affect the supply and demand in this department of the wool market which should not be lost sight of. From two independent and most reliable sources during the past few days reports have come to hand which show that the effects of the continual drought have been most disastrous in some of the districts of Australia specially devoted to the raising of sheep of the merino character. The total shortage for the present season is estimated at nearly 100,000 bales, of which a large proportion is merino, and not only are the flocks greatly reduced, but it is feared that large tracts of the feeding grounds are permanently injured. It seems quite possible, therefore, that the reaction from over-speculation, both in this country and on the Continent, may have carried the prices of merino wools to an unwarrantably low level, and that when the full effects of the shortage above referred to are appreciated, a distinct upward movement in prices may set in. When merino advanced so much its high price quite precluded its use for most classes of Italian linings, some fabrics used for the Eastern trade, and some kinds of worsted coatings; but prices are once more back at a price which is not beyond the reach of these markets, so that gradually an increased consumption will set in. In crossbred colonial wools of the cheaper kinds there has been all the time a very large consumption, and the woolcombers who deal with these wools have been working day and night for many months past, and are still very busy. The prices of these wools are quite firm, and there are numerous inquiries for yarns made from them, both for the continental and home markets, and although buyers' and spinners' ideas of prices do not yet quite coincide, there is every indication of large business in the future as soon as a staple level of prices has been established. In mohair, prices keep quite firm, and there continues to be a good demand for mohair worst yarns, both on home and continental account, but there is a falling off in the demand for mohair braid yarns and also for mohair crepon warps. Prices of most kinds of English wool are unchanged, and even holders of pure lustre wools are more inclined to sell now that the new clip is coming nearer. Manufacturers are finding the signs of the market difficult to read, as, in spite of the healthy state of commerce all over the world, the freedom from strikes and other disturbing influences in the home trade, and the fact that the manufacturing part of the trade in Bradford has shown