

THE LIVE MERCHANT.

DO not use this argument: "Why should I go to the expense of taking a trade paper, of paying a man especially to dress my windows, of advertising, or any of these other new-fangled notions? It was not necessary when I began business, and I made, I really believe, more money than I do to-day, when expenses are so heavy and competition so keen."

This is not the argument of a live merchant. Times have changed. What suited conditions ten, fifteen or twenty years ago will not do now. It requires a very clear-headed, active and popular man to make a success of a business to-day. There are as many new "wrinkles" in the art of pushing trade now as there are new lines of goods. The merchants who do not keep abreast of the times are dropping behind. Their trade is necessarily dwindling. It cannot be otherwise, and although the prestige of a long-established house, special local conditions or personal popularity will do much to hold trade, sooner or later studied neglect of modern methods will undermine prosperity, and dry rot will set in.

You sometimes hear a wholesaler use the same line of argument as a retailer. That new methods are foolish and fantastic, that the "good old days" when the house saw its customer in person, could discriminate in giving credit, and was under no expense for travelers, etc., were far ahead of to-day. Well, perhaps so. But these arguments are a useless waste of time. They are largely of the nature of fruitless repining. You cannot alter present conditions. You must face them, reckon with them, overcome them.

One must be up-to-date, always ready to hear new ideas and adapt them to one's particular circumstances, or reject them if found unsuitable. But be in the way of getting them, anyway. Any other line of conduct is that of a fossil, and in the year of grace 1895 the museum, not business, is the place for him.

DELAY IN GETTING GOODS.

A feature of the season rather vexatious to the retailer has been delay in the arrival of goods. The jobber feels this equally with his customer, because prompt delivery has been prevented in many cases, and promises made have had to be broken. The rising values, and increase in the world's trade, have kept the mills at home and abroad going at full blast in many classes of goods. The importer, especially, feels the effect of increased demand, because the foreign manufacturer is mighty independent over the big orders that are rolling in, and is quite ready to court cancels for colonial orders. There was a tendency to give small orders this year, and to order often, and repeats have consequently been frequently pushed aside by the maker in favor of larger lots. But delays are not confined to the imported stuffs by any means. The same complaint is made regarding native goods, and in hosiery, underwear and similar lines, some wholesalers have found difficulty in getting their goods forward, one report being that in some cases the first placing orders were not made up yet. This doubtless is an extreme case, but the whole situation is just what might be expected owing to rising markets and renewed activity in trade everywhere. The retailer wants his goods, and the wholesaler wants to keep on good terms with his customer, as both are nursing a grievance.

AN OTTAWA INCIDENT.

The long-suffering merchant! What an admirable example of plodding patience and lack of "Kickativeness" he sometimes is. For a long time dry goods and other merchants on leading business thoroughfares in Ottawa, like Sparks, Bank and Rideau streets, complained of the unloading of bankrupt stocks from Toronto, Montreal, etc., which were being auctioned off after hours when local by-laws compelled regular stores to close up. It is bad enough to have the bankrupt stocks dumped down in the centre of the business locality. But, add to this the privilege of selling after the principal merchants are by regulation obliged to close their stores, and you have a grievance so unanswerable that the wonder is the trade stood it for two nights in succession. Mr. L. N. Poulin finally got up a petition to the City Council, found that the business men favored it, and among the first to subscribe their names were such well-known concerns as these: J. R. McNeill, Bryson, Graham & Co., L. N. Poulin, Switzer Bros., R. Gamble & Co., Macdonald Bros., E. M. Holbrook, R. J. Devlin, L. H. Nolin & Co., T. Nolan, J. B. O'Reilly, A. D. Richard & Son, P. H. Desilets, Cote & Co., A. A. Forest, H. D. Freeman, H. H. Pigeon, Mathe & Co., J. Buchanan, J. M. Quinn, J. Noel & Co., Leblanc & Leay, John Murphy & Co., C. Ross & Co., Mills Bros., P. O'Reilly, R. H. Conley, Adams & Hemppill, Allan, Burroughs & Co., T. Lindsay & Co., J. H. Doherty, Geo. R. Blyth. The petitioners want a civic by-law that will stop the practice. They are entitled to one as large taxpayers and enterprising merchants who have helped to make Ottawa what it is. The municipal elections are close at hand, and this is the season when aldermen usually gaze over the municipal landscape with a "if-you-don't-see-what-you-want-ask-for-it" expression. The petition will probably be successful. It ought to be.

THE POLICY OF SHILLY-SHALLY.

That treaty with France has at last gone into operation. It has no direct interest for the dry goods trade, and we only refer to it as a sample of the unbusinesslike methods of Governments. The treaty was signed at Paris in the month of February, 1893, and this is the month of November, 1895—a delay of nearly three years! The other party to the treaty has not been wholly to blame, our Government and the Imperial authorities having each had a finger in the pie. They pursued a policy of shilly-shally and dilly-dally until, so far as we can learn, the commercial interests affected by the new arrangement became almost apathetic. This is the usual way with Governments. They are so busy wire-pulling to sustain themselves in office that the real business interests of the country are allowed to suffer. Cabinets spend hours to decide who is to have this post office or that collectorship, and matters that involve dollars and cents to the mercantile community are relegated to second place. This will go on as long as we merchants allow ourselves to be party men first and business men next. It encourages politicians, many of whom could not earn \$5 a week in a store, to use us as convenient dupes for continuing themselves in office.

"Prices are still showing an upward tendency," said a merchant to THE REVIEW last week, "and the outlook, unless I am out in the calculation, is for their being maintained at least nine months."