

READY-MADE WHITE-GOODS.

DURING the past twelve years the consumption of factory made ladies' underwear has increased very rapidly. In fact, all kinds of ready-made garments are experiencing a growing demand, and the amount sold is increasing the cheapness of these manufactured goods. At present there are three factories in this city making this class of goods, but these are almost the only factories in Canada. Montreal had one or two factories, but they are not now in existence. At present these factories are busy making samples and stock for the next season's trade. Among the garments made are chemises, drawers, nightgowns, corset-covers, skirts, robes, barricoats, pinafores, aprons, shawls, boys' and ladies' blouses, combination chemise and drawers, barbers' white coats, etc. These are made in white fabrics, especially in cambrics, but are also made in prints, delaines, cashmeres and silks. R. H. Gray & Sons manufacture some very beautiful silk garments, for which they are having a special demand at present. British Columbia takes large quantities of these goods. The firm also manufactures grey flannel and flannellette skirts and drawers, cottonade, denim and jean overalls, tweed, corduroy, and moleskin pants, and plain and fancy flannel top-shirts.

Blouses of all kinds have been having a strong demand this season, and it is expected by the manufacturers that next season's demand will be much stronger even than this.

The manufacture of these under garments has been reduced to a science, and the great division of labor that has been introduced enables producers to place these garments on the market at astonishingly low prices. At the same time the best of material is used and the greatest care taken to have every garment perfectly made. The cutting is done by experts, and is done in such a manner that from three to seven dozen can be cut at once, thus reducing the price of accurate cutting to a mere trifle for each garment. Then in the case of white underwear, the garments are next trimmed by one person, then tucked by another. Then the various parts of the garment are ready for being put together, and this again is done by one person, with the aid of machinery driven sewing machines. After being thus formed the garment goes to another machine to be buttonholed, then to another to have the buttons sewed on, then to another to be ironed, after which they are labelled, sized and packed in boxes. This extreme division of labor allows each hand to become an adept at the particular portion of work assigned to her or him, and greater proficiency is thus attained.

The amount of these goods consumed in this country may be estimated from the fact that the firm of R. H. Gray & Sons turn out about one hundred dozen articles per day. A large number of girls are employed, and the machines are all driven by steam or electricity, thus lightening the work very considerably. The hours worked are about fifty-three per week, and most of the hands are paid by the piece, some making very high wages.

THE WEAKEST LINK.

In no part of the mercantile round is the true business instinct more in request, or more essential to success, than in the treatment of stock that shows a tendency to become a fixture in the place. The twin tests of a merchant's sagacity, especially a merchant whose purchases must be of a novel character, are his selections in the first place and the condition of his stock at the day of reckoning. In the former respect the best talent finds itself frequently at fault; failure in the latter, however, is oftener due to weakness, irresolution or inattention to important details. Fancy furnishings, for instance, are perishable, but they seldom die a sudden or violent death. They are subject to lingering diseases, the symptoms of which are hardly visible at first, and they need to be closely watched, even when in apparent health. Some goods, like some children, come into the world sickly and never thrive. As soon as the fact is discovered, they should be done for, without waiting for them to mature on our hands—the goods, we mean, not the children.

To sell for cost, or less than cost, goods that possess real beauty or other excellence, is not agreeable to one's feelings, but the merchantable quality is the only one that can be considered in such cases. A dealer cannot wear all his own goods, be they ever so fine or handsome. If they don't sell this week, will they be any more likely to sell next week? Will the price advance, think you, as the season wanes? The sacrifices often made by wholesale men to clean out their stocks would make many a retailer shudder.

Here and there we find a man who can truthfully say that his entire stock is saleable without loss. Every one knows the necessity of keeping clear of old stock, but few really accomplish it. Old stock is a ravenous devourer. Every day it consumes shop rent, clerk hire, insurance, it eats a share of every dollar in the business and gives nothing back; every day its merchantable value becomes less, as the day of its former popularity—if it ever had any—recedes into oblivion.

Some men seem to become so warmly attached to the goods they buy as to be unable to part with them, however old and superfluous they become, unless the prices fixed upon them in the heyday of their youth be realized. Samuel Johnson said, "It is natural for man to listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy and to indulge the illusions of hope." Men who do that, however, would best not monkey with the dry goods trade, but a good many of them do. We have known more than one who walked the broad road that leadeth to bankruptcy, laden like Sinbad with the delusion that he would realize good money some day from his superannuated wares. What ought to be is not always what is. "It is a good thing and ought to sell some time." Have we not heard this over and over? And the good thing is tucked away in case or drawer to await a more appreciative customer, who, alas! never comes. If the frost of public disfavor or indifference has benumbed an article of fancy stuff, or a newer style has put its nose out of joint, the only question is, how cheap must I sell it to make sure of its quick despatch? The thought of its cost must be wholly ignored.

Clearing out stock is not a labor be-

longing exclusively to the close of the season, much less to the beginning of the next. Constant attention must be the rule. It is a work of every day in the year. The accumulation of "hard" styles, "doud" colors, odd sizes, trash, ragtag and bobtail, occupying valuable room and keeping fresh goods out, the bete noir of clerks, the eyesore and weariness of heart to proprietors, must be anticipated and guarded against. If a style, a pattern, a color lags in sale from day to day it must be pushed if necessary by a reduced price at once, but certainly by taking care never to forget or overlook it when there is a chance for a sale.

Every one likes best to show the full box of the newest goods, but to ignore the scraps and sorts is mercantile suicide. All trades are top heavy with an insane glut of varieties, and if one is to keep abreast of the popular drift he must not let his craft become waterlogged with unsaleable duff. —West Coast Trade.

DON'TS FOR CLERKS.

Don't lose your temper. No matter how provoking or ill-tempered your customers are, treat them politely. They will appreciate it, even though they may not appear to. Don't be afraid to show goods, nor act as though you did not wish to do it. Customers will always go where they receive the most careful attention.

Don't misrepresent goods. If you can recommend goods truthfully, do so, if not, do not urge them on your customer. They never forget it, and will never trust you again.

Don't slight the poor customer in reply to wait on the rich one. The poor person's money is as good as any and they feel neglect more keenly than a rich person. Wait on each in their turn.

Don't be saucy. It's neither witty nor polite. Don't be afraid to smile. Everyone likes a pleasant face. Don't under any circumstances comment unfavorably on one customer to another.

Don't tell your employer's business to anyone.

Don't neglect your work when your employer is away. See that everything is as well taken care of and customers waited on as well as though he were in the store. Don't make promises, such as procuring certain goods, etc., unless you are sure you can fulfill them, and, having made them, do not neglect them. Don't attempt to wait on a customer and talk with a friend at the same time. Give your whole attention to your customer. You cannot show goods properly while thinking of something else.

Don't make an old lady or gentleman wait while you attend to others, and don't lose patience with them because they are slow. You would not like to have others treat your father or mother rudely because they are old.

Don't talk too much. Don't attempt to tell your customer what they should buy. They know better than you what they require. But if they ask your opinion give it truthfully and courteously.

In conclusion, I would say, do know your stock thoroughly. Understand it so you can show it to its best advantage.

Do keep it clean! A person, especially a girl, who cannot or will not dust properly is not fit to take care of stock.