

fabrics, and it is in this particular line that within recent years Canadian manufacturers have made most headway. The statistics of Canadian trade with the United States have always been difficult to interpret unless the events of the periods under consideration are closely watched. It is, as a rule, of more importance to study industrial conditions in the United States than in Canada, when explaining the trade in manufactured goods between the two countries. This country has been and remains the favored ground for the disposal of surplus stocks by the manufacturers of the Eastern States, and the enormous imports of 1896 were brought into this country during severe industrial depression which existed in the New England cotton districts.

For some months vigorous attempts have been made on the part of American agents to unload several large blocks of cotton goods in Canada, and several transactions in shirtings at very low figures were recently reported. It is probable that this movement will be short-lived, as reports indicate that the effect of the prolonged strikes at a number of the New England mills is daily becoming more apparent in the condition of stocks and the increasing reserve of sellers with regard to forward engagements. In Eastern coarse yarn brown goods, in the finer grades of bleached cottons and in wide sheetings, these features are particularly noticeable, and in all these the outlook favors an advancing market. Printed fabrics have recently been steady with a better movement, while ginghams are in good condition.

When the discrimination against the United States and in favor of Great Britain is increased next July to 25 per cent., there must, of necessity, be a material increase in the imports of British goods. In the print trade the consequences will be watched with special interest. The patterns in both British and American textile centres, coming from a common source, Paris, are somewhat similar, and yet there is a marked difference in the fabrics of the two countries. The New England manufacturer has established a reputation for fancy cloths that can be sold at low prices, while the mill owner of Old England puts his best efforts into the production of good plain cloths. The tastes of the Canadian and American people are very much alike, and if the British manufacturers desire to control this market they would do well to study the methods of their competitors on this side of the Atlantic.

The textile manufacturers of Great Britain are, however, notoriously slow in adapting themselves to changing conditions in the colonies and foreign countries. As a prominent London, Eng., drapery journal recently remarked, their attitude is somewhat like this: "Here are our goods, excellent in style and quality (our style and quality), and you may take them or leave them, and our terms of payment are so-and-so, and cannot be varied, and we do not care to sell small parcels, it must be grosses or nothing." With the depression that exists in the India cloth markets, and being crowded as they are by the competition of Germany in foreign countries, the British manufacturers are paying more than ordinary attention, at present, to the trade of the colonies. Their best efforts should be directed towards studying colonial tastes and requirements, and not in an effort to bring the colonists to their way of thinking.

SPRING MILLINERY.

Never in the history of the trade were the wholesale millinery houses crowded as they are during the present "Opening" week. The cut railway rates on the C.P.R. and G.T.R., and the prospects of an active season, have resulted in an unusually good attendance at the Canadian

centres of fashion. All the visitors are happy in the consciousness of the fact that 1898 is to be a "milliner's season," or in other words, that there is such a multiplicity of ideas, and so rich are the designs, that crude and unskilled hands will be lost in an attempt to trim headgear for the coming season.

Medium size hats appear to have the preference. Turban effects are popular, while tam crowns are also favorites. Straw braids are shown, but the open patterns have not maintained the position held in former seasons. A shredded wheat pattern in silk is used with good effect in making crowns. On the whole, it may be said that there is nothing radically new in shapes; the crowns may be a trifle larger, while the brims are scarcely as broad as last season. Pretty leghorn effects are seen in all the warehouses.

In trimming hats, as well as the fronts of blouses and the necks of dresses, pelisse goods are leaders. This fabric is formed by gathering or drawing in the material, which gives a honeycomb appearance. It is constructed of different textiles, from the delicate chiffon to the fairly heavy silk. Pelisse is used in one and two tones of color, and on some of the trimmed models is twisted on the crown or brim often in the shape of a fan-like ornament. A large quantity of veiling material is used in producing color effects, and coarse silk nets promise to be of great service in the milliners' art. Fine laces are not without their admirers, those of French manufacture standing first in popularity.

The selection in ribbons was never so good as now, nor were designs and shades ever more delicate and pretty. The brilliant coloring of last year is gone. The newest feature is a ribbon of gauzy and light silk texture. Weavings of white on colored chiffon or gauze grounds, as may be imagined, are very attractive to those who admire the delicate. The only ribbons of pronounced appearance are those with the bayadere effect, the design consisting of stripes running across the ribbon in contrast to the Roman patterns. It is true some plaids are still seen, but they are apparently giving way to small checks, and the newest of these show the favorite delicate tints.

It is to be a flower season, so say the authorities. The New York buyers, early in the season rushed after feathers, but the representatives of Toronto and Montreal houses found little to encourage them in following this lead. Foliage, in the construction of which, by the way, great improvement has been made during recent years, must be counted in an enumeration of the specialties. Grasses are likely to be popular. Flowers in yellow, the popular coque de roche and turquoise blue appear to be in the best taste. Heather and the small flowers find an appropriate place on many of the season's hats.

THE MUTUAL RESERVE FUND AND THE MASSACHUSETTS BENEFIT.

The Massachusetts Benefit Life Association had a most prosperous year in 1895, after it took in the Canadian Mutual Aid of Toronto. But it disappeared from view in 1897, and its remains are now in process of distribution. The widows and orphans left over will get, it is supposed, about fifty cents in the dollar, though the Canadian claimants may get more. Many thousands of widows and orphans, however, who became such after the failure, will get nothing but disappointment, and a bitter memory of what "might have been," for all the hard cash saved up and paid in.

The Mutual Reserve Fund Life Association, of New York, which also took in a Canadian assessment association