

THE STUDY OF COSTUME.

It is sometimes a matter of wonder both in this and the other countries of Europe, how France has succeeded in ruling the world of fashion for such a long period, and how she has been enabled to repulse every attack upon her supremacy in that field, come from whatever quarter it might. The origin of their excellence lies in that foundation of all genius: a capacity for working hard and taking pains with the matter they have in hand, which in this respect is congenial to the national taste. This is preeminently so in the matters pertaining to dress of both sexes, but especially to that of women. The French are assiduous students of the development of costume, says the Textile Review, and having perfected themselves in the true principles in the art of dressing, they are enabled to explore every source of inspiration with the greatest advantage, and always with some considerable show of reward. Thus the fields of Nature, the truest and best fountain of inspiration, are never neglected by them, and in this respect Nature is bountiful to them in the provision of blue skies and golden corn fields and a wealth of flowers, the store of which is annually replenished abundantly in the sunny clime of France. But beyond this the French have another great resource, of which fashion designers or manufacturers rarely make use in this country. We refer to their great devotion to the study of the development of costume. They know well that in the comparatively unexciting lives of the ladies of past centuries, in the time when needlework, embroidery and dress formed almost the whole resource ladies had of whiling away their time, taste in dress was highly cultivated and the finest results were obtained. Of these, many of which have been handed down to modern times in the stained glass windows of churches and the illuminated missals of monasteries, they are the most careful students. They have a literature of this kind tenfold more extensive than ours, in which choicest specimens of the golden days are reproduced in highly artistic and beautifully printed illustrations in the colors of the originals; and out of these studies and these materials are drawn many of the results that charm the rest of the fashionable world decade after decade, and give them the palm of excellence.

THEY ALL DO IT.

"Here you get out of this! Don't let me catch you in this store again!" A little feminine shriek followed this rough salutation.

The writer turned and beheld a beautiful and fashionably dressed young lady in the clutches of a floor walker. He had torn open a bundle which she had just received from the package desk, had forced back her money into her hand, and with considerable roughness was hurrying her to the door. The face of the young woman was a picture. She looked like an angry queen. Her eyes were half aflame and half drowned in tears. Her magnificent teeth showed through the reddest kind of lips, and her clear complexion was like marble touched with the fine scarlet of flowers.

I was tempted to interfere, but the tales of kleptomaniacs and other strange things which happen in our great ba-

zars, and knowing the man, besides, to be a gentlemanly floor walker—for this drama was taking place in one of the most fashionable stores in the city—I withheld my hand.

"Do I know that lady?" said the floor walker, with a laugh. "I should say I do! She is a very grand lady, indeed. My dear sir, she is one of the tricks of the trade.

"That bewitching lady in Paris-made gown and imported bonnet is a sales girl in the store of our enterprising neighbour on the next block. She gets \$11 a week. She came down here disguised as a customer, bought a dozen handkerchiefs as a blind, and proceeded to price a number of our goods in which our enterprising neighbour suspects we are underselling him. This is so as to give him a tip how to mark his goods. In short, she's a spy, and as we are not permitted to hang spies in this warfare of trade, all we can do is to escort them to the picket lines and let them go. Now that this young lady has been discovered, her occupation in this line of usefulness is gone; but our neighbor will have another rigged up in less than no time.

"Eternal vigilance is the price of underselling."

"But do all the big stores keep these spies, as you call them?" I asked.

"Well," said the ungallant floor walker, with a sly wink and smile, "they all of them do but ourselves."—Dry Goods Retailer.

IMPROVED BOOK-KEEPING.

Some improvements are always being made in book-keeping, but the old day-book, journal and ledger still remain nearly the same old time-honored articles. But the Barber & Ellis Co. are now manufacturing a line of ledgers and a mercantile register which are well adapted to work a revolution in book-keeping. The mercantile register, invented by a gentleman named Hill, is a new thing and well worthy of attention. It is adapted to last for six years in any business. It shows in a very simple manner the amount of business done each day, the amount per week and the amount per year in all the various departments. It shows at a glance the actual worth of the firm at any time, the aggregate amount of the liabilities and the aggregate amount of book accounts and bills receivable. It shows the amount of cash received, how received, and how expended. It shows when an insurance policy expires. In fact, it tells a man everything he desires to know about his business at any time of the year. It is not complicated, but the necessity of having the various parts and departments correspond to each other prevents mistakes. This is especially useful in the cash department. No progressive book-keeper should fail to see this new expedient.

Hill's Wholesale Ledger, which can also be used by retailers, shows at a glance cash payments, discounts, goods returned, past due accounts; contains monthly statements of all invoices, notes and drafts maturing, and shows when and how each are paid. This ledger is specially adapted to the needs of retailers by a man who knows exactly what they need, and has spent years of work in attaining perfection in these books. Anything which shows a business man what he is actually doing and where he is standing is great-

ly beneficial to him, as business men very seldom know this, and when a man does not know he is sick, how is he going to apply a remedy. If men knew exactly, twelve times a year, what their financial position is, there would be fewer failures and a more tranquil business world.

CANADA'S TRADE.

The trade returns for the twelve months, with the exception of the figures from British Columbia, are now complete. The exports for the year show the magnificent increase of \$15,228,868 over 1891, the figures being \$110,795,372, as against \$95,566,504. Of course when the returns for British Columbia are received the totals will be changed, but it is more than likely that they will make the final result better even than it appears to-day, owing to the development in our trade with China and Japan. The imports totalled \$110,186,444 as against \$108,553,707, an increase of \$2,922,738. The duty collected shows a falling off to the amount of \$2,901,370, the figures being \$19,122,311, as against \$22,023,023. The returns for the month of June are of a most encouraging character, the imports showing an increase of \$2,000,000, while there is a slight increase in the duty collected. The exports for June were \$14,188,961, as against \$10,993,671.

THE ST. JOHN'S, Nfld., FIRE.

A naval force, under the command of Sir Baldwin Walker, is engaged blowing down the dangerous walls. The safes belonging to most establishments have opened. The bank vaults, court records and savings banks books are in good order. The records of the Crown Lands Department are all destroyed. The manuscripts of the important acts passed during last session have also been destroyed, and there is no copy extant. The largest mercantile establishments had English safes, and they all proved worthless, the contents being completely destroyed. Taylor's safes all came through the fire unscorched internally. In one case there was a Milner and a Taylor in the same building. The contents of the former were destroyed, while those of the latter were intact. Consequently the Canadian safes are now in great demand. Public gratitude to the Canadian people for their prompt assistance is warmly and universally expressed.—The Empire, July 16, 1892 (from their own correspondent).

It has been ascertained that the total amount of the insurance on the property destroyed will reach four millions and a half, but this will not cover more than one-third of the losses sustained. One peculiar feature of the conflagration has been the test it afforded of the value of rival makes of safes. Those manufactured by Milner have been found useless, while those made by Taylor, of Toronto, proved perfect. The test ought to prove of the utmost value to Canadian trade, as some of the most serious losses have been caused by safes proving unreliable.—The Gazette, Montreal, July 14.

During the severe thunder storm Sunday morning lightning struck the telephone wire and set fire to the shoddy mills of Harding & Co., Simcoe, Ont.