

The Outlook in Spring Dress Goods

What Canadian Buyers have to Say
of the Styles and Makers.

"FASHIONS for Spring," says a prominent buyer, just back from Europe. "have been very slow in revealing themselves, but at last the decree has gone forth, and it is a pretty well-assured fact that homespuns and friezes will continue to be popular during, at least, the early part of the season, in the same shades as are at present so much in vogue, with the addition of lighter shades of grey, fawn and brown. Later on, smooth-faced materials, such as box-cloth, sedans, venetians, etc., will cut a prominent figure in much the same range of shades, with the addition of cardinal and grenat, in which may be included the new Indian red.

"Tweeds are already prominent for Spring, and, for them, early orders have been placed by the trade, but it is noticeable that they are almost entirely on plainer, smaller patterns, and that the taste for large checks is on the wane. Speaking of checks, there is an undoubted revival in tartan effects, which, for the last few months, have been slow, but the strong demand for them will be in lines to retail up to 50c. per yard only, and at that price a cloth composed altogether of wool and silk should be secured.

"Fancy blacks must not be overlooked, for, notwithstanding their phenomenally long reign, they are still to the fore, and likely to remain there for some time to come, though small bright patterns promise to supersede almost entirely the large blister effects which have had such a long term of office.

"Following next, as the season advances, will arrive printed wool delaines, which, even now, show signs of early popularity, and are likely to continue and increase, so I should advise orders being placed before the choice of novelties is spoiled, as repeats will be very slow in delivery. Printed muslins are sure of a successful run, and, in them, as in fine prints, mercerized sateens and pongees, foulard patterns, with the new wedgewood blue, will be a leading feature."

R. L. Davidson, dress-goods buyer for John Macdonald & Co., who has just returned from his trip placing orders for Spring goods, reports that the run is chiefly on plain goods, voilles, taffetas, and other soft, clinging materials having the attention of all buyers. Open work goods, such as grenadines, lace-work, etc., are also proving popular. Venetians and other goods of that class are largely in evidence. French printed delaines are showing signs of being a big thing for Spring business. In black goods, a great variety of weaves, such as armures, pebbled effects, etc., are being sold. Mohair figures and silk and wool figures are in favor in blacks. For tailor-made costumes for early Spring there is a certain amount of demand for light tweed effects.

There have been no new developments in the demand for Winter goods. Cheviots and other similar materials in browns, castors, and greys are still in evidence. Plaids are still holding their own in New York, and are bound to have a fairly good sale here this Winter. Next Spring, plaids may not be as popular as was the case this year. They are not as well adapted for Spring and Summer wear in the country as for Autumn and Winter, so the popularity of the past season is hardly expected to continue through another Spring.

Mr. Leslie H. Gault, of Gault Brothers Co., Montreal, has just returned from Europe with a budget of interesting news. He confirms the report that during the month of September the cotton market in England was in a most unsettled state, owing to the scarcity of raw cotton. During the first two weeks of September, raw cotton advanced 2d. per lb., equal to 1/4d. per yard on cloth. But the advances were not confined alone to cotton; coal, chemicals, etc., used in the production, had also increased in value. This caused manufacturers to withdraw their quotations, and many were obliged to reduce their production several days per month, not having sufficient cotton to supply the demand.

In woollen goods, both English and French, there has been a reduction, but as these goods had advanced nearly 40 per cent., it was not unexpected. The Canadian merchants, however, had never paid anything like the market value, and present prices now rule about 15 to 20 per cent. over the lowest point of 18 months ago. The last wool sales opened with a reduction, but not as much as was expected and this had already been discounted on September prices.

In the dress-goods market no special features were pronounced for the coming season. The high-class trade were using cheviots, plain cloths and neat checks for costumes. For the early Spring trade, wedgewood, fawns, and greys, will be fashionable shades. Quite a demand has sprung up for colored cashmeres in these shades. Embroidered flannels will be much in demand for waists, two of the most popular designs being the fleur de lis and crescent.

In the print trade much greater taste seems to have been displayed than usual, and some of the English and French styles in sateens are taking the place of silks, some lovely new designs and colorings being shown. The print season on this account will be a large one. Cardinal velvets, velveteens and flannels are now very fashionable for blouses. White goods for the Summer trade will be much used in lawns, Swiss spots, checks and stripes.

Mr. Geo. B. Fraser, of S. Greenshields, Son & Co., has also returned within the last few days from the European markets. He also brings some new ideas.

In dress goods he reports a tendency towards plain goods, such as bengalines, poplins and voiles in new pastel shades; these will likely be fashionable for Spring. Blacks will again be popular. There is a most pronounced favor shown for printed opera flannels, in stripes, checks, etc., for ladies' shirt waists. Brides' goods, such as mohairs, are again in the running. Plain silks will likely be good for blouses and trimmings; fancy silks seem to be out of favor. Red is the predominating color.

Woollen goods are back to their old prices, and cashmeres and all goods made from merino wools are tending higher. It is generally conceded they have reached rock-bottom.

The craze for gold braid is evidenced by the statement made by one manufacturer in England, to the effect that gold braid had advanced 120 per cent. in value. Gold braids and buttons and trimmings of all sorts are having a decided run. Anything of a military character is popular, and this explains the general call for gold and red.

Linen goods are firm, particularly cotton-warp goods. Mr. Fraser says that if his firm had to buy their linen goods over again, they would have to pay about 15 to 20 per cent. more than what they cost them some time ago. All goods containing cotton, such as velveteens, sateens, etc., are very firm.