

tion is the advance of Swiss competition in this country. Switzerland, the land of natural born watch makers and cheap labor, has no intention of allowing herself to be driven from the markets of this continent without knowing the reason why. Although for a time she has been out-distanced by the improvements in American watch making machinery, she will surely overcome this disadvantage by adopting the same helps to manufacture. When they do then it will be "Greek meeting Greek," and although neither may be forced to go to the wall, the result of the competition will be a large increase in the supply and a consequent reduction of prices all along the line.

We do not know that a reduction in the price of watches would add anything to the prosperity of the retail trade, as we have shewn, such a reduction is generally the result of hard times when goods are cheap because they cannot be easily disposed of. On the whole we think we would prefer, and it would be better for the trade, to have the good times continue, for they could then sell the goods they bought at a fair profit even supposing they had to pay a slightly advanced price for them.

Correspondence.

"A GOOD SUGGESTION."

Editor *Trader*:

Sir,—In looking over your valuable journal, which I think, without flattery, is certainly most creditable to Canadian enterprise, I have often been struck by the fact that the jewelry trade, for whom it is principally intended, do not take more interest in it. It seems to me that we have in *THE TRADER* a medium for the interchange of ideas bearing on our business that we should not fail to take advantage of, and that if the editor of *THE TRADER* would allow us a certain amount of space in the columns of his paper, it might develop a good deal of latent talent among our jewelers that they never before suspected.

I see no reason why we in Canada should not be fully abreast of our craftsmen in the States and England in this particular, and we all know that jewelers in both these countries not only write for their journals, but write well on nearly every subject connected with the trade. I would like to know, Mr. Editor, what you think of this idea, and if practicable,

would you give us the small amount of space we could use regularly? Trusting to get a favorable answer from you, and that the trade in Canada, generally, will fall in with this idea of mutual improvement by interchange of ideas.

I beg to remain, yours truly,

"HAMILTON JEWELER."

Selected Matter.

THE DIAMOND DRUMMER.

The diamond drummer, according to a recent writer, is a real genius. He is said to be less encumbered by baggage than any of the drummer fraternity. Every ounce that he carries is worth a good deal more than its weight in gold. He is the aristocrat of the drummers. A sharp and experienced member of this profession is quite sure to be a partner in the house he travels for, or to receive a handsome salary and expenses, and a liberal commission on his transactions. The best diamond drummer does not expect to rely on regular customers for his trade. He is a sort of guerrilla, who instinctively knows where to find the best purchasers for his goods, which presupposes an accurate knowledge of the business and its possibilities in all parts of the country. He must be a thorough expert in gems, having a full knowledge of their production, the fields where they are found, their cost, color, shape and lustre, and be able to detect the slightest variation in the shade of precious stones. A rare diamond which he has once seen he will never forget, no matter what change may have been made in its setting. He can tell by its cutting whether the work was done by an American or a European lapidary, and some experts can even recognize the cutting of special artists, in the forms and fashions which distinguish the work.

But the diamond expert is also proficient in the fashions and styles of jewelry. He must know the most appropriate settings for all precious stones, for these add greatly to the saleable value, especially of the diamond. The diamond setter should be an artist of great taste and powers of discrimination. An ordinary jeweler is apt to destroy the beauty of the stone by clumsy workmanship, or to hide its brilliancy by an attempt to display his own skill. The real artist who knows and loves the diamond for its rare brilliancy and purity, will surround it with such delicate yet luxurious mater-

ials and colors as shall enhance its perfection and beauty. By virtue of such knowledge as this the diamond drummer is often enabled to buy a rare stone, which appears absolutely ugly in the setting that some blacksmith has given it, but which in another garb shines out resplendently, challenging the admiration of the world. In regard to prices of all kinds of gems he is never at a loss. He does not need to place a diamond on the scales to determine its weight; a single glance at it will establish its quality and value.

The diamond drummer's chief customers are jewelers and the diamond dealers out of town. New York is the centre of the American diamond trade, but there are several dealers in Chicago who make a specialty of this business, and several experts are employed here. Some diamonds are imported direct to Chicago, the wearers of diamonds being on the increase here. A considerable number of Chicago ladies have very valuable sets of diamond jewelry, in which they have invested not alone for display and dress purposes, but for the safety of their property. It is a prevalent idea that diamonds will always bring their value in cash; and this is true to a certain extent, though subject to trade modifications. "Mine uncle," for instance, while charging interest on money he will loan on a thousand dollar set at five or six per cent. a month, will value the property at not more than \$500, and it is sometimes difficult to find purchasers for expensive stones. The drummer, who actually knows the market, is the useful middleman in such transactions. From the local dealer he receives orders for special sets of single ornaments which they have been commissioned to procure. This special order business is a very important feature of the trade. It often takes months to fill one satisfactorily, and one drummer spent two years in getting a match for a solitaire ear-ring for a lady who had lost one of hers, obtaining in the end what he had every reason to believe was the identical diamond she had been bereft of. Most drummers carry a little sack with all the way from \$10,000 to \$50,000 worth of unset stones in it, for the purpose of matching lost ones and furnishing sets to satisfy the caprice of ultra particular buyers.

The sales to jewelers are generally of mounted gems of the newest fashions. Commonly the jeweler buys these for