

TRADE REQUIREMENTS.

(Continued From April Number.)

ACCEPTING the invitation at once, we passed from the private to the general offices, which are handsome, very conveniently fitted up and comfortable in every way; then into the warehouse, through the prints—English, American and Canadian—stopping to admire the Tokio Pongees, Ceylon Satens, Fabrique Plisse, Plisse Royal and Empress Flannelettes that had just been received, on to the art muslins and cretonnes, the side shelves being filled with waist, skirt and sleeve linings, fronting linens, etc.; our attention being called to several of the new ideas for sleeve and skirt linings; then to the Linen Department. Here we spent a few minutes with pleasure and profit. Since starting business they have had a steady annual increase in their linen trade. Now we come to the entry room, which is commodious, well lighted, and has excellent shipping facilities, two men being able to load a G. T. R. double team in a few minutes. The order and entry clerks have their desks on a platform four feet above the floor, and no matter how rushed or crowded the room may be, they are not inconvenienced or interrupted.

Stepping on to the elevator, in a moment we were in the basement. Here the receiving facilities are equally convenient to the shipping on the floor above. Passing through into the Goods Department, we are among the denims, ducks, ticks, checked shirtings, cottonades, grey cottons, and other heavy staples. The same order, cleanliness and system prevails here as elsewhere throughout this warehouse. Their manner of keeping white cottons is one we commend to the trade. They can show twenty different qualities in as many seconds, and need not move a piece to take stock, which can be done at a glance, almost. Not a speck of dirt is seen upon them. Their plan of keeping white cottons was original with the firm.

Returning to the elevator, we are quickly on the fourth floor, glancing at sunshades, parasols, umbrellas, ladies' "Distingue" waterproofs and men's standard coats. We come face to face with our Toronto friends, the B. and C. Corsets, for which the firm are agents here.

Now comes the Underwear and Top Shirt Department. Trade requirements are carried out here as elsewhere, and their sales have doubled in the past twelve months. White shirts, collars, cuffs, ties and scarfs follow, and we pass to lace curtains and curtain nets; then down to the third floor. To enumerate the thousand and one lines kept here would take a special number of THE REVIEW; we must, however, say a word of praise for the Hosiery, Glove and Mitt Department. Brophy, Cains & Co. are proud of it, and deservedly so; it would be hard to imagine or find a better one.

Passing now from show case to show case, admiring lawns, embroideries, insertions, laces and ribbons, all kept under cover in glass cases, so that the retailer may receive them perfect, we pause for a moment to watch an order clerk looking out ribbons. He does it so quickly that we ask: "How does he know that he has the right shade?" "Every rangé has its own number, and every piece has the shade or pattern number on it, and the numbers run consecutively," is the answer, "and he knows the moment he lifts the case cover if any number is out."

Down, now, to the Dress Goods, to see what our readers have often read about: "the highest class of black dress fabrics for gentlewomen." We pass from table to table, admiring silver

crepons, cream silk and wool crepons, and black, cream and white crepons. These, the head of the department says, are "Parisian dreams," displaying at the same time silver and black silk and wool effects. Here are tiny shepherd plaids, not in black and white only, but half a dozen colorings.

We almost break a commandment and "covet our neighbors' goods" when we look at some of the beautiful French costume tweeds, serges, estamenes, covert and cape cloths, all-wool and silk warp henriettas, mohairs, alpacas, soleils, crapes and crape effects, second mourning goods, worsteds, pantings, Canadian tweeds. All are passed in succession; and here is a pleasant corner filled with velvets, velveteens and silks, we admire poplins, bengalines, peau de soie, surahs, blouse silks, fast dye punjums and chine silks, and think how happy we would be had our lot been dry goods instead of DRY GOODS REVIEW.

J. B. M.

A RETROGRADE MOVEMENT.

ONE fact, which everybody must lament, presents itself for consideration. This is the tendency on the part of retail dry goods merchants to remain at home and depend for their knowledge of styles on travelers' samples and the trade journals rather than to gain this knowledge by regular visits to the large wholesale centres. This cannot, to our mind, be regarded as other than a retrograde movement.

The traveler has a work to do and so has the trade journal, and both are indispensable. But the retailer should not depend on them entirely. The broad knowledge to be gained by walking through all the various departments of two or three large wholesale houses, and also through two or three large city retail establishments, is not to be lightly regarded nor unblushingly rejected. The contact with the central figures in the trade, both wholesale and retail, must brighten and sharpen the men who ply their trade—

"Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife."

The peaceful life of the ordinary small town may be some what of a pastoral romance, but it has a rather deadening effect on the men who control the businesses that are found in the midst of it. To counteract this, a visit to the primary markets is almost indispensable.

But there are other reasons. Travelers never carry samples of all the lines that are in stock at their respective warehouses. There are numerous lines of which the stock is low, which it will not pay to sample, and these can then be picked up at very reasonable prices. Moreover, new goods, of which the quantity is limited, are not shown in the traveler's samples. These are left to be picked up by the shrewd city merchant or by special customers who will have special notice thereof. "Snaps" are procured only by those who visit the markets weekly or fortnightly.

The brightest men in the retail trade to-day are the men who keep in closest touch with the markets by reading, conversation and visits. Occasional leave of absence from the dreary routine of counter or office brightens their faculties and renews their physical and mental strength.

Visits to the wholesale centres pay in a saving of money on certain lines, pay in the benefit of personal contact with the wholesaler and his buyers, and pay in the pulling of a merchant out of the ruts into which his regular, monotonous duties have run him.