

**METROPOLITAN MERCHANTS.**

THE EDITOR'S VISIT TO AND REVIEW OF LEADING BUSINESS HOUSES OF PORTLAND.

NUMEROUS ESTABLISHMENTS OF INTEREST TO WOMEN; SEVERAL OF INTEREST TO MEN—EMPORIUMS OF TRADE, FASHION, AND ART.

Foremost among the old established and successful wholesale houses of this city may be mentioned the well-known jobbing house of

FLEISCHNER, MAYER & CO.

An immense three-story brick, with elevators and all modern improvements, extending from Front to First streets, in the center of the block between Ash and Vine, and stored from basement to attic with complete assortments of everything to be desired in the wholesale millinery or furnishing trade. This extensive business was inaugurated over a quarter of a century ago by Mr. Jacob Mayer, in a little well-kept store on First street, where Mrs. Mayer, an estimable lady and thorough business woman, assisted her husband, and by her judicious dealings with customers and her sound judgment in all matters pertaining to their rapidly increasing business, proved an invaluable and enterprising helpmeet in laying the foundation for the immense trade enjoyed by the present firm.

Portland continued to improve rapidly in trade and commerce, and the profits of Mr. and Mrs. Mayer's business as rapidly increased, enabling them to enlarge their stock and add new attractions yearly. With the increase of business came the added care of a large and growing family, to which Mrs. Mayer finally devoted her time, proving that she could be quite as successful as a domestic manager as she had been as a business woman.

Years passed, and the retail trade grew into wholesale proportions. The smaller store was given up for a larger one, and a numerous band of clerks were required to perform the duties of an establishment which soon, to a large extent, controlled and regulated the prices and profits of the retail trade of both Oregon and Washington.

Mr. Mayer clearly comprehends the judicious use of printer's ink, and so thoroughly has he been advertised through these columns during the past eleven years that thousands feel personally acquainted with him who have never seen his face, and other thousands have extensively patronized his business who but for this journal would scarcely yet know of the mammoth house which is the subject of this sketch.

As the years rolled on, the rapid growth of Mr. Mayer's business required the cooperation of other capable and enterprising merchants. In the year 1874 Hon. Sol. Hirsch was admitted to a copartnership. This gentleman occupies a high position in State politics, with fair prospects for greater promotion in coming years. He has served several terms in the Legislature, and was honored with the position of President of the Senate during the session of 1880, an office which he filled with credit to himself and satisfaction to others. He had years before exhibited his native good sense by becoming a son-in-law of Mr. Mayer, and so came into the firm under favorable auspices. The business still increasing, it became necessary to establish connection with a New York house, and Messrs. Schlusel and Fleischner united with the firm, which has since been known under the firm name of Fleischner, Mayer & Co. Mr. Schlusel resides in New York, and regular transit between the New York and Portland houses is established. This union puts the firm on a still better footing financially, at the same time enabling its members to greatly oblige their patrons by placing in their hands the latest orders direct from Eastern and European manufacturers. The proprietors are especially urbane and obliging, and the clerks involuntarily imitate the innate gentility of the firm.

Mr. Mayer, on account of his long and thorough experience in buying to suit the wants of the Oregon and Washington trade, was unanimously chosen to represent the firm as buyer, and for several years has spent at least half his time in the Empire City, superintending the manufacture and purchase of everything likely to be demanded by the firm's numerous customers in Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana. He is now in New York, ordering and selecting goods for the coming Spring.

The reader will now be introduced to the interior of the three-story building in Portland, already mentioned, where he will encounter long rows of tables, extending through the building, stocked with many tons of staple merchandise. The tables on the north end are given up to a fine display of fancy goods, consisting of silk handkerchiefs and neckties, lace fichus, sample ribbons and numerous unnamable knickknackery. The adjacent shelves are crowded with boxed goods, gloves, hosiery, buttons, napkins, towelings, trimmings and novelties.

We reach the second story by a broad staircase and enter the department devoted to millinery and other light goods, including bonnets, hats, frames, feathers, flowers, plumes, gimps, braids, ornaments, linen goods, cotton goods, fringes, veillings, tissues, ruchings, parasols, umbrellas, plushes, silks, satins, Surahs, furs, velvets, handboxes, etc., etc., and encounter in the center of the extensive apartment long rows of boxes filled in appropriate seasons with prints, cambrics, ginghams, lawns and white goods. One department is given up to bed quilts, comforts, blankets and sheetings; another to gentlemen's furnishing goods, and still another to curtains, Nottingham laces, counterpanes and Cretonnes. But the crowning attraction for ladies is found in the millinery department, as this is the mercantile branch in which they are generally engaged, and as Fleischner, Mayer & Co. do only a jobbing business, retail shoppers are not interested. The purchases for this department are made under Mr. Mayer's personal supervision in New York, which insures the latest styles and freshest invoices of goods to meet every requirement in its turn.

The third story of this immense establishment is filled with innumerable cases of staple goods, of which sufficient quantities are ordered in advance to meet any of the new demands which their constantly increasing trade is regularly creating.

Mr. Mayer will return from New York early in February with advance stock for the Spring trade,

selected with his usual good taste and sound judgment in supplying the wants of the firm's numerous customers.

**LEWIS & STRAUSS' "WHITE HOUSE"**

Is the next first-class mercantile establishment which the reader is invited to visit. Its location, No. 123 First street, near Washington, is central, and it does a large wholesale and retail business. Mrs. Lewis, the founder of this well-known house, is a thoroughly accomplished lady, well skilled in mercantile pursuits, and possessed of a naturally amiable disposition that easily wins the customer's confidence and always retains it. Mrs. Lewis, formerly Mrs. Levy, like a sensible woman, grew weary of single blessedness in due course of time, and accepted in marriage Mr. D. L. C. Lewis, a gentlemanly, intelligent and capable business man, who has frequently been honored with positions of emolument and trust in connection with the municipal affairs of the city. The business was still further augmented in power and importance by the admission to the firm of Mr. Jacob Strauss, brother to Mrs. Lewis, also a thorough business man, and a great favorite with the firm's many patrons.

The White House is a commodious two-story brick, with nothing pretentious about its exterior, if we except its pure white front and attractive show windows, the latter draped in choice lines of display goods, including the latest novelties in millinery, laces, scarfs, dress goods, silks, satins, cloaks, etc., etc.—never too much in sight, but always enough to entice the beholder to look further.

Upon entering the store, the customer is pleasantly and politely greeted by one of the proprietors or one of the clerks, who are always ready to show goods, but never officious in forcing a sale. Everything you may want in dress goods, cashmeres, foulards, basket cloth, alpaca, serges, pongees, moutie cloth, ladies' cloth, silks, satins, *moire antiques*, Surah silks, plushes, plaids, velvets, shades, stripes, figured goods, plain goods, bunting and other varieties too numerous to mention, can be found on the shelves or displayed on the counters. Goods are never misrepresented in order to complete a sale. A child may go to the store with an order he cannot read and the person sending him may rest secure in the knowledge that the order will be filled to the letter and the prices charged will be the same as if he had made the purchase himself.

This firm makes cloaks and cloak trimmings one of the many elegant specialties of their very reliable business. Some of the fur-lined plush and satin cloaks now on exhibition in their windows and sales-rooms are so exquisitely beautiful, and withal so suggestive of warmth and comfort, that they tempt the bottom dollars in the beholder's pocket. Others, less expensive, but equally serviceable, are exhibited, their prices ranging from \$10 to \$25 or \$30.

The real laces offered for sale by this firm are a great attraction, consisting of a complete variety of patterns in guipure, Spanish, Maltese, Dutchess, Valenciennes, Chantilly, Point d'Alecon, cluny thread, woven and bugled styles, of which all are exactly as represented, and honestly worth the best-rock prices at which they are sold.

Paisley shawls, broche shawls, single or double Bay State shawls, chenille shawls, and shawls in plain or mixed or shaded colors, or in plaids or stripes or neutral tints, are on sale in endless variety.

Zephyr nubias, scarfs, hoods, mittens, tippets, muffs, pockets, wristers, raglans, leggins, sacques, cloaks and underwear for children form another superior attraction.

Ladies' underwear, of every style and price, in merino, silk, flannel, or muslin goods, is carried in extensive varieties. Gloves, handkerchiefs and hosiery comprise one important line, and prints, ginghams, sheetings, table linens, napkins and towelings another.

Passing through these tasteful arrays of attractive and useful commodities, we ascend an easy flight of well-lighted stairs at the rear of the first sales-room and enter the wholesale and retail millinery department. Miss Capps, who has for several years presided over the extensive retail branch, is a tasteful trimmer, always ready and willing to oblige the numerous customers of the firm.

Great advantages to millinery dealers in country towns are offered by this house, as its own retail trade often enables the firm to make use of the broken gross or dozens which small dealers cannot afford to purchase because of the limited extent of their sales at home. Large dealers also do well to patronize this firm, the well-known character of the goods purchased for the trade by Mr. and Mrs. Lewis always insuring satisfaction, even if bought for neighborhood trade by country merchants who are much better prepared by experience to judge of the quality of the butter, eggs, poultry and dried fruits they receive in exchange for merchandise, than of silks, satins, laces, gimps, flowers, ornaments, plumes, tips, feathers and ribbons, of which farmers' wives and daughters are often excellent judges and always passionately fond. No better proof of the excellent taste displayed in this department need be cited than the enormous city trade it commands. Enter the store at any time during the day, and you will meet a goodly array of shoppers intent upon examining and purchasing goods from the excellent assortments always on hand.

Messrs. Lewis & Strauss are always alert in perceiving the advantages to be gained from the introduction of reliable novelties, their superior taste and skill in this direction being universally admitted. As an evidence of this gift to attract and please, we call special attention to their late extensive importation of "Artificial Window Plants," which are exceedingly appropriate for holiday presents, and can be had in great variety, so true to nature that their artificial character can only be ascertained by the closest scrutiny. Geraniums of all classes, lilies, heliotropes, roses, acacia trees, japonicas, fuchsias, camelias, begonias, jonquils, hyacinths, mignonette, pansies, and other varieties await the purchaser, who has but to place them in pots like natural flowers and put them in the windows and let them alone. They will need neither warmth nor water, will never freeze nor fade, and will require no back-breaking services in lifting and carrying to expose them alternately to the sun and rain, or shield them from the frost and snow. If ladies would use these plants for windows and spend the time usually occupied in caring for window gardens in the open air exercise required to cultivate flowers and plants outside, they would have a sunnier, sunnier home, healthier bodies and happier hearts.

With these reflections, accompanied by a lingering covetousness that almost tempts us into pur-

chasing more than we can afford to pay for, we leave the White House and saunter up the street.

**JOHN CRAN & CO'S**

Magnificent retail house at Nos. 131 and 133 First street attracts us—a large, light, convenient and commodious double dry goods store, where the customer may at all times find a complete and full assortment of staple and fancy goods and millinery and novelties of the latest styles and best qualities. Besides the side counters, an oblong double one runs through the center of the building, terminating in an oval curve near the front entrance, elaborately fitted up with show-cases, in which a magnificent collection of laces, barbes, handkerchiefs, ties, scarfs, collars, fichus and fancy ribbons are attractively displayed, inspiring you with a wish to purchase that is almost uncontrollable.

In bygone years, Mr. Cran, who is yet a young man, held the position of head clerk in the now defunct house of Clarke, Henderson & Cooke, an establishment which, during his connection with it, was considered the most fashionable emporium in the city. Sound sense, a clear head, courteous manners and honest intentions are requisite in all business, and these qualities are possessed by Mr. Cran in an eminent degree. His store is arranged after the same plan as the one mentioned, but is better managed, and in every way a great improvement on the old one. The windows are always tastefully filled with attractive staple and pleasing novelties, of which Mr. Cran is careful to secure the first in market. The visitor is always favorably impressed with the appearance of this store, which has ample room for the best possible display of every article in its appropriate place. The appearance of the stock betokens the thrift, energy and good judgment with which the large business is conducted.

Everything to be desired in fashionable, convenient, beautiful or comfortable clothing, or for the adornment and use of the human form feminine, is to be had here in its season. Laces, so filmy as to be stirred by a breath, and so rare that they resemble the artistic tracery of moonlit skies, shawls from India looms, containing the delicate tints of Springtime sunsets, with the gorgeous but mellowed hues of Autumn's foliage; dress goods as rare in colors and texture as Winter rainbows; cloaks of the best and latest styles and material; staple goods of every description; and last, but by no means least, a first-class millinery department, presided over by Mrs. Steers, a capable and obliging lady who thoroughly understands her art, will greet you with a display which will cause you to pause and wonder whether you are in Paris or New York. You are not surprised when informed that the rush here in busy seasons is enormous. But your wonder is constantly increased as you watch the great rush of business in all departments, and note the superior character and quality of the goods displayed and sold. Surely the "hard times" complained of in Oregon must be a myth, for in all the stores we have thus far visited, the same rush is noticeable, and everybody who comes to buy has money.

Cran & Co. carry no old goods. Everything in the store bears the imprint of thrift, progress and fair dealing. You can purchase anything from this house that you may want from a pair of blankets to a paper of needles; from a silk dress to a roll of tape, or from a fashionable bonnet to a cambric handkerchief, and go away satisfied that you have purchased a first-class article of its kind and have not been overcharged in the bargain. The clerks are affable, ready and obliging, and though acting on the principle of "no trouble to show goods," will not press you to purchase, if, after investigating, you are not inclined to buy.

**PRENTICE'S MUSIC HOUSE.**

The first-class music emporium of D. W. Prentice & Co., No. 107 First street, is next entered. Here we find a fine assortment of elegant pianos, and would specially commend the Nugent upright, a new instrument of moderate price and superior workmanship and finish, celebrated for its beauty, tone, cheapness and durability. These pianos range in price from \$350 to \$500, and are warranted first-class in every particular. Mr. Prentice also has the Weber piano, a higher priced instrument, that is preferred by some customers, which can be purchased in the grand, square and upright styles.

Mr. Prentice deals largely in the famous Estey organs, which are celebrated the world over for their superiority in tone, finish and style. The Orchestra organ is admirably adapted to churches or concert halls, and the pipe organ is also in great demand for the same purpose. The Organette, a little instrument costing only fourteen dollars, a gem in its way, is sold by Mr. Prentice, with music prepared specially for its use, which can readily be reeled off by turning a crank. The music of the Organette possesses the advantage of always being played in time and never making discord.

The largest and best assortment of sheet music in the city can be found at Prentice's; also, a fine collection of cornets, flutes, tuning forks, guitar and violin strings, and everything else usually found or called for in the best music stores in the East.

Mr. Prentice has extensive dealings throughout the Northwest, and never fails to give satisfaction. Customers may rely implicitly upon his representations in relation to instruments of all kinds. He sells at reasonable prices on the installment plan, and gives remarkably cheap bargains for cash in hand.

Some years ago, when Mr. Prentice began business in Portland, some rival firms shook their heads knowingly, predicting failure from want of room for increased competition. But their prognostications have been summarily defeated, as is abundantly proven by his large and constantly increasing business, which embraces large and rapidly increasing orders from all parts of the country. During the first years of his enterprise, Mr. Prentice was almost always in the field, calling the attention of customers to his business, and making the personal acquaintance throughout the country which has proved a valuable auxiliary in enlarging his trade. He very readily convinced the people with whom he came in contact that it was more unsatisfactory as well as much more expensive to deal with Eastern or San Francisco houses than to patronize firms nearer home. His available reputation as a teacher of vocal music, a profession in which he was eminently successful for a number of years prior to engaging in trade, enables him to judge accurately concerning the merits of the musical in-

struments in which he deals. Those living at a distance who order instruments from him may rely upon the selections being as carefully and conscientiously made as though they were present to superintend the purchases in person. Organs and pianos thus ordered from his house have been sent to Lewiston, Mt. Idaho, Moscow, Colfax, Palouse, and many other Washington and Idaho towns. They are found in Jacksonville and Ashland in Southern Oregon, and in many towns along the coast. They enliven numerous farm-houses all over the country, and appear as harbingers of advancing civilization in many out-of-the-way districts. In no case have they failed to give satisfaction or to meet every claim made for them. Such a record brings its sure reward as the years advance. Catalogues are sent, on application, to any address.

**VAN BEURDEN, THE JEWELER.**

The fine display in the elegant jewelry establishment of Mr. J. Van Beurden, No. 107 First street (in same building with Prentice), is the next to receive attention. This gentleman has acquired a reputation second to none on the coast as a skillful and tasteful jeweler—always up with the times and always ready to fill any order, from a complete set of diamonds in rare and costly settings to a plain gold ring or a silver thimble.

Mr. Van Beurden's Christmas display is especially attractive this year. At least twenty thousand dollars' worth of diamonds of the purest water may be seen in his windows and show-cases, not to mention the many which have already been hidden away for customers, set in rare and curiously wrought devices of solid gold, or golden flagree, selected from his stock by munificent gift-makers, in anticipation of the near approach of Christmas Eve. Bracelets in Etruscan gold, in braided bands, or coiled to resemble serpents, diamond-mounted and delicately chased, gleam at the beholder from satin-lined cushions. Brooches, in new and chaste devices, some of them with a large diamond flashing from the center, with clusters of smaller ones here and there; others resembling pansies, with glittering centers of the same costly jewels; ear-rings, from which elegant chasings depend in tremulous vibrations, holding in their strong but tender clasp the iridescent, tremor-like purity of a pair of well-matched brilliants of exquisite beauty; rings with diamonds in clusters or set as solitaires, and hair-pins and shirtstuds of equally elegant designs and faultless workmanship, mounted by the same unrivaled conceptions of the beautiful in nature and art, are all viewed in turn and altogether.

The beholder is next attracted by a complete display of jewels of lesser note, such as rubies, pearls, garnets, amethysts, cameos, sapphires, emeralds, and onyx stones, many of them set in costly chasings, where they form the chief ornaments in rings, brooches, ear-rings, pins, bracelets, sleeve-buttons, studs, charms and lockets. Watches are seen of every desirable style and quality, ranging in price from \$60 to \$500. Chains in every imaginable style are exhibited. Cloaks of rarest designs are shown, some of them encased in French plate glass, with all their workings visible; others resemble globes, surrounded with golden belts like the rings of Saturn, and one that the writer particularly noticed was encased in a box-work of crystal, its pendulum moving by a sort of doubled-and-twisted, reversible, back-and-forward action, as ingenious as novel. This clock attracts crowds of spectators, and will be a taking Christmas gift for some lucky recipient.

Mr. Van Beurden's business has always been conducted upon the strictest principles of integrity and honor. Fair dealing with all customers insures the continuation of their patronage, and adds large numbers yearly to his hosts of friends. Much experience in filling orders from a distance enables him to give general satisfaction in supplying goods whenever the choice in selecting depends upon himself. All articles are bought directly from the manufacturers upon a strictly cash basis. He pays no commission to any broker or dealer, and keeps no rolled gold or plated jewelry. Of course, it is understood that silver tea sets, knives, forks and spoons, of which he has a full line of the best quality, are not classed as jewelry. Mr. Van Beurden manufactures his own diamond mountings, from Eastern and European designs, and by doing a strictly cash business is enabled to offer excellent bargains.

**MELLIS BROS. & CO'S**

Immense wholesale and retail establishment next claims our attention. It extends through the block from its First street entrance, No. 126, to its Front street entrance, No. 127. This firm, though established among us only about three years ago, with a force of only three persons, has grown to such large proportions that it now employs over forty assistants. They have branch offices in New York, Philadelphia and San Francisco. Their country order department is a *fac simile* of the city post office. Numerous orders arrive daily, accompanied by money orders and large numbers of postage stamps, country buyers having learned by experience that honest merchants at the metropolis can suit them better in prices, styles and quantities than they can suit themselves elsewhere. This firm makes these orders one of their leading specialties, a large force being required to attend to its details alone.

The millinery department is also extensively patronized, as the firm deals only in desirable goods, which they sell at the popular prices that insure steady demands. Their motto is one price to everybody, from which there is no deviation. Each steamer arriving in Portland brings them numerous packages, boxes and bales of goods, ordered expressly for the Portland trade from their New York and San Francisco houses.

Mellis Bros. & Co. comprehend the value of judicious advertising. The NEW NORTHWEST circulates extensively among their numerous patrons, and the senior editor is frequently entrusted with orders for their house from the different and distant localities which she visits annually. They publish a semi-annual "Fashion Magazine and Dry Goods Prices Current," which is mailed post free for 25 cents per year. Orders are filled promptly to the letter, and if goods are not perfectly satisfactory they receive them back and refund the money.

**WM. GRAY & SONS**

Boot and shoe dealers, No. 146 Front street, between Alder and Morrison, next receive a call from us. Every honorable business that is carried on in a legitimate manner succeeds in Portland,