

### Comparative Prices.

Wheat fell in March last year 10½¢ a bus. between the first day and the last, although it was 10¢ higher at the end than it is now. It has been argued that the wheat was about out of the farmers' hands last year as it was this, until the Washington report upset the claim. At the end of March May wheat here sold at 76¢, and in Chicago May wheat sold at 79½¢, or at a spread of 3¢, but east wheat here was going at 78 on track, April 1, or as high for track wheat here as in Chicago. Now the difference is about 12¢ in favor of Chicago for May, with about two-thirds as much difference in track prices. It is not doubted that the manipulation in the Chicago market is a good thing for prices of track wheat, and is the cause of the late comparative advance of it, for the manipulation was the cause of the purchase here of large quantities lately to be shipped to that market shortly. When the markets are so low the few cents gained that way are appreciated by the holders of the real grain.—Minneapolis Market Record.

### Competent Help.

The advisability of securing competent and intelligent assistants is being recognized more and more every day by merchants in all branches of trade, and more especially among the retail storekeepers is this essential, where the clerk is brought into contact with scores of people daily. A few years ago the grocer's clerk who could add a fair-sized column of figures and know the number of ounces to the pound, was considered perfectly competent to attend to the wants of the customers; but now he has been superseded by the intelligent and polite assistant, who knows the names of all the regular customers, so that a lady entering the store is greeted with a "Good morning, Mrs. A.," followed with a remark regarding the current topics; or, "Were you pleased with the new brand of flour we sent you last week?" etc. By the interest taken, the customer feels at once that the clerk is directly interested in supplying her with a good quality of goods, and will often seek his advice and rely on his judgment regarding intending purchases.

It is policy, also, in addition to having a competent corps of assistants, that the force be of sufficient number to attend to the wishes of your customers without subjecting them to unnecessary delay. Would be purchasers after waiting in a store for five minutes without receiving the attention of anyone, are very likely to make their exit without purchasing, and you will find that their future orders will be left with your competitor. Our friends when calling on us at home are not neglected in this manner, and why should not this friendly feeling be extended to our customers at the store?

The wide awake grocer nowadays also prepares for the Saturday rush, not only by having a sufficient force of assistants, but sees that the staple goods during the week have been wrapped in packages of different weights, so that when a pound or two of sugar, coffee, tea, or other commodity is called for, it is not necessary then to be weighed and wrapped. In this way a great deal of valuable time is saved, and the regular force in some cases will be sufficient to attend to the Saturday's trade. During the week your clerks will often find a half hour when this can be done, and by observing this rule you will find by the end of the year that you have saved considerable in your expense account.

The system of delivering goods has been adopted by all grocers who wish to keep up with the times. Among the larger stores the order clerk will call during the week on the customers, and receive their orders for Saturday's delivery. A bright device which is furnished housekeepers for recording grocery orders consists of a board about a foot in length by three or four in width, upon which the names of the different articles handled in the grocery trade are stamped. Opposite each item a hole is made in the board, and when the

housekeeper finds the supply of a certain article running short a pin is inserted in this board opposite the corresponding name of the article. By this method a great deal of time will be saved when the clerk calls for the orders. And, again, items which would be very apt to be overlooked by the housekeeper if entrusted to her memory, and consequently be omitted in the list, furnished the clerk, will by this method be ensured. When it is considered that these items will be very likely purchased at a more conveniently located store, the value of this arrangement will be very readily perceived, and among grocers who enjoy a suburban trade, this plan will be found very practicable, also a stimulating factor to increased patronage.—Joseph Horitzgo Ingersoll.

### Local Live Stock Markets.

Cattle shippers have commenced talking about space already, says the Montreal Gazette of March 22. Forty shillings has been offered for space on regular line May boats, and thirty-five shillings for outside boats. No contracts have been made, however, the regular liners holding out for fifty shillings. This was the opening figure of last season, and as the markets on the other side are in even worse condition than at this time last year, the chances are that the steamship companies will not get just what they ask. There seems to be a disposition among the trade, to go along slowly. There seems to be an impression that trade will open up with a rush, but the reverse is more likely to be the case, as shippers are not likely to want to ship on the first boats, the cargoes of which will certainly be slaughtered on arrival.

At the East End abattoir, Montreal, on March 21, there were 400 cattle, 200 calves, 25 sheep and about 50 spring lambs offered for sale. There was a good attendance of butchers, but trade in cattle was slow and very few beasts made 4½¢, the average for the best offerings being 4¢ to 4½¢, while fair to medium sold at 3½¢ to 3¾¢. Calves were more plentiful and lower selling at \$4 to \$8. Sheep sold at \$4 to \$7 each, and spring lambs at \$4 to \$5.

### Long Hours in Country Stores.

A clerk in a country store writes *The Canadian Grocer*, relative to early closing: "The country stores," he says, "seem to have fallen into the custom of keeping open every evening a great deal later than is really necessary. A great many people in the country seem to do all their work at home, and then start for the store, only to find when they get there that the storekeeper or clerk, as the case may be, has just put on the shutters, or is just about to do so. Of course, as a courteous business man, without grumbling, the storekeeper does up a large bill of goods for the customer. Now, business men do not at all depreciate these valuable orders whenever they come, should it be early or late. But I would propose that all country stores have a stated hour for closing. That would imply that all people would do their shopping earlier, thereby giving customer, storekeeper and clerk an opportunity of keeping the body in health and the mind in case."

The subject touched upon by our correspondent is not a new one by any means. It has been more or less agitated in this country, and at the moment it is agitating the minds of the English merchants and clerks, the interest being so great that public meetings are being held to discuss the matter. But long business hours is an evil, and it will bear being threshed and re-threshed, just as long as it exists. Somebody has yet to arise who will champion the cause of long hours. Even those who are the most persistent in keeping their stores open till far into the night acknowledge that it does not pay. Their reason for doing so is that others do so. This is evidence of the power of of illuence. And if one keeps open because another does, why not turn things around, and see if

one would not close if others did? It seems logical, but there are few that have the courage to attempt it. Those who have taken the bold step have not as a rule gone without their reward.

There is no sound reason why stores should be kept open later than 7 o'clock at the outside even on Saturday night. The present late system was not born of necessity; it is the offspring of long years of habit on the part of customers. And before the desideratum of early closing can be enjoyed to its full extent this habit will have to be cured. The task of doing this devolves largely upon the storekeeper himself. Clergymen may preach, speakers harangue and newspapers write till doomsday, unless the merchant does his part. And that part is to educate his customers to the necessity of making their purchases early in the day. The public is not an exacting autocrat. It only wants to be educated to the fact that the habit into which it has fallen is burdensome to the merchant to his clerk, and to his family, and the millennium of early closing will have arrived. The merchant who then keeps his store open till late at night will do so because he loveth slavery better than freedom or long hours better than short.

Fortunately for its advocates, the people are already in the first book on the principles of early closing. During the summer months stores here and there are closed at stated hours in the evening, and others one afternoon during each week. In the country where, if anything, the necessity for long hours is less, the early closing movement seems to be making slower progress than in the cities and larger towns. Legislative enactments will never bring about the desired state of affairs. It has been tried and failed. Neither merchant nor customer will be coerced. But either by open persuasion, and can, by the exercise of tact, be even led. What is wanted as the first step in the direction of early closing is a mutual understanding between storekeepers. This secured, the greatest obstacle in the way of early closing has been surmounted.

The period when the discussion of this topic may be said to be seasonable is approaching, and *The Grocer* invites pointed and short letters from its readers on the subject.

### Where Nothing is Wasted.

In Paris nothing is wasted, not the smallest scrap of paper; that which everyone else throws away here becomes a source of profit. Old provision tins, for instance, are full of money; the lead soldering is melted down into cakes, while the tin goes to make children's toys. Old boots, however bad, always contain in the arch of the foot at least one piece that will serve again, and generally there are two or three others in the sole, the heel and at the back. Scraps of paper go to the cardboard factory, orange peel to the marmalade maker, and so on. The ideas suggested are not always agreeable, and to see a rag-picker fishing orange peel out of the basket is enough to make one forswear marmalade—but there is worse than that. The most valuable refuse—that which fetches two francs the kilo—is hair; the long goes to the hairdresser, while the short is used among other things for clarifying oils.

### Gold Production in Australia.

London *Iron* says: "The yield of gold for Victoria in 1892 was 663,374 or 41,388 ounces more than in 1891. The yield is, in fact better than in any year since 1885, when the amount was 783,761 ounces. The gold returns of Queensland for the last year show that the total yield was 602,753 ounces, being an increase of 26,319 ounces compared with the previous year."

Graham & McKee, blacksmiths, Stonewall, Man., have entered into partnership. They will conduct business in Graham's old stand, the former looking after the wood work, and the latter the general blacksmithing.