

## THE FOOTWEAR TRADE.

Climatic influences have combined to augment the consumption of shoes for the last fortnight. People in all sections have found it imperatively necessary to be supplied with foot coverings of the most substantial kind. So general has been the demand that it has exceeded the production, and the surplus stocks have been still further diminished. If the pressure upon dealers during the remainder of the year continues as strong as it is now, their superfluous holdings at the end of the month are likely to be so much reduced that the great majority of them will be obliged to procure additional supplies. Winter is the season of the year in which the most shoes are worn. There are three months of it ahead of us, and six weeks thereafter, in which the blasts are icy and it is spring only in name. The weather was mild last winter, and has not been tempestuous for any great length of time for some years. If there should be a continuance of the cold and storms which set in with such severity before they were due, by calendar or precedent, so much the greater would be the quantities of shoes required. But without calculating at all on that suppositious increase of demand, we entertain the idea that there are shoe buyers enough in the country to use up the production sufficiently to restore the industry to a paying basis, and that that is a desideratum which cannot much longer be left unaccomplished. The present disproportion in values is susceptible of remedy in any event. If there has been any underestimate in respect of the redundancy of supply or over-estimate in respect of the requirements of consumers, those miscalculations are only temporary hindrances to the equalization of prices. If hides cost more than they are worth, they will fall; if leather brings more than it is worth it will fall; if shoes do not bring as much as they are worth, they will rise. This process of leveling down or leveling up must be adopted. The only question is, when? It will be put in practice the sooner if it is voluntary. It may be deferred until it becomes compulsory, but we are quite sure there is no fear of that. In this enlightened age things are not allowed to remain out of order for any great length of time. Defects are perceived and corrected very speedily after signs of them appear. The shoe business needs to be straightened out, and it is morally certain it will be soon. —Shoe and Leather Reporter.

## THE WIFE'S OPPOSITION.

A more painful and embarrassing situation can hardly be imagined for a life insurance agent, who has been endeavoring to induce a man to do his duty in the matter of protecting his wife and children from the possible consequences of his untimely death, than to be unexpectedly confronted with the active opposition of the principal beneficiary, the wife of the person addressed.

It is very much as if one had been refused by the owner of property when soliciting him to insure the same. It is but natural that many men should feel that they do not care to compel their wives to receive insurance money which they do not desire to have.

The origin of this opposition should, if possible, be investigated by the agent. In many cases it will be found to be religious in character, a lingering phase of the old idea of the Greek and Roman theory, that it is man's duty to endure and not to resist or attempt to avoid misfortunes, which are to be considered acts of Providence, and not accidents. Women, who retain longer than men their religious prejudices, have been peculiarly open to this superstition.—The Insurance Press.

## AN ANGLO-AMERICAN ORE ALLIANCE.

Commenting on some recent statements by Mr. Carnegie, in which he showed the great advantage of the United States over Great Britain, in its low costs of the materials for iron and steel making, the London Iron and Coal Trades Review intimates that English ironmasters are not so severely put to it in the matter of ore supply and coke costs, as we on this side have been used to saying. Our contemporary would have it understood that it is an error to say that Great Britain cannot make coke under \$2.50 a ton. It admits that the price of coke is high in Great Britain now, but claims that in some of the 14 chief coal-fields of the United Kingdom, coke can be made, "in normal times and with proper modern provision for utilizing waste heat and by-products," at half that figure. But our contemporary, in this unsupported claim, brushes past the fact that the present methods of coke-making in the two countries are practically the same, and that the advantages of saving waste heat and by-products are still open in equal measure to the iron trade of the United States. Any lowering of cost possible in Great Britain thus involves a like reduction from the present basis in the United States, and the handicap against Great Britain would still remain.

More surprising is the claim made as to ore supplies available for Great Britain. Against the unequalled deposits of the Lake Superior region, which are assured the steel trade of the United States for years to come, our contemporary puts up the glittering generality that "the ore-producing world is bounded by no Pillars of Hercules, and that the fields open to Great Britain are at least as numerous, and possibly as rich and abundant as those available to the United States." Magnificent assurance! These rich and abundant possibilities are then indicated: "Large supplies from Sweden and Norway, at a cheap price"—referring to the fields on the Arctic border, visited by the Iron and Steel Institute, last August; "almost limitless sources of ore supply untapped," in Spain, failing the Bilbao supply, as is granted. But as if that were not enough, our boasted monopoly of the Lake Superior ores is demolished in one fell stroke, for, listen! "It has even been proposed to ship Lake Superior ores to Great Britain, and it need not excite surprise should it come about that an all-water route from the ports of Duluth, Escanaba, or Marquette, may ultimately give to this country those very ores at almost as low a price as they are now, via a long railway haul and with broken bulk, delivered to Pennsylvania furnaces."—Iron Trade Review.

## "THE COMING OF THE KILOGRAM."

Mr. Arnold Foster's new book on "The Coming of the Kilogram," is written with two definite purposes in view—instruction in the use of metric weights and measures and conversion to the creed of the decimal. To quote Mr. Foster, his is "an attempt to demonstrate to Englishmen the position in which they stand in the competition of the civilized world," and to show them exactly what it is that they are risking by clinging to their present system of weights and measures, whilst almost every other nation is adopting "another and a saner plan." From the earliest times, those who have had to decide what weights and measures should be used, have aimed at certain things as essential if their denomination were to be of real use. They should be (1) uniform, (2) accurate, (3) easily understood and used, (4) widely known, and (5) simple in calculation. The first three, our present sys-

tem certainly is not, whilst the metric system certainly is. With regard to condition 4, it is the English-speaking people alone who use "the old-fashioned and confused weights and measures," as Mr. Foster puts it. Statistically, countries (Great Britain, her colonies, and the United States), with a population of 113,000,000, use the British system, all other countries from Germany to Hayti, and France to Japan, with a population of 428,000,000 use the same weights and measures, i.e., the metric system.

In reply to the oft-cited argument that it is too deeply ingrained a matter for us to change, Mr. Foster recommends that a lesson should be taken from Germany. Thirty years ago, any who traveled there found the greatest confusion existing, a traveler, in a single journey, passing through perhaps half a dozen states, each like China to-day, with its own system of weights and money. In due time a change was made and one uniform metric system adopted, with the result that "everyone is happy and contented." In a short time, Russia, whose weights are different to those of everyone else, will have adopted the new system, whilst the United States is proceeding in the same way. The law has been passed by which the use of the metric weights and measures for the dispensing of drugs and medicines by chemists has been made compulsory, and a committee of Congress has favorably reported on a bill, the object of which is to introduce the complete system and to make metric weights and measures compulsory in all Government departments. What then is Great Britain going to do? After pointing out that trade with foreign countries is absolutely necessary to us, Mr. Foster goes on to show the manner in which our present arithmetic is injuring our manufacturers. "Who can doubt," he asks, "that the orders will go to the traveler who talks the 'trade language,' which the customer understands, and not to the traveler who talks the ancient and barbarous tongue which the customer not only does not understand, but will not take the trouble to learn."—London Shareholder.

## ORIENTAL TRADE NOTIONS.

The Chinese in America are great fellows for putting on their laundry signs names other than their own, and we learn that it is a common custom among the native traders of India to do business under the name of some distinguished Anglo-Indian soldier or statesman, and such firms as "Havelock & Co.," "Elgin & Co.," and "Outram & Co.," are quite numerous. Even the name of Viceroy-elect Curzon has already been utilized. Recently, a Mr. Greenwood protested against the use of his name by a firm with which he is not connected, and the High Court readily granted him an injunction. On the next day, the judge, having occasion to pass the shop, was astonished to find that the name of Greenwood had been erased from the sign and his own substituted.

—The agent of the Philadelphia commercial museums in Tomsk, Siberia, says that one of the articles which American manufacturers excel in—fire-arms—will find ready sale in Siberia. He also makes a suggestion regarding the working of the gold fields of Siberia, which, he says, are at the present time worked without machinery. With the opening of the Siberian Railway, there will be a sale for mining machinery in these districts.

—The British Museum's catalogue of birds, work on which was commenced twenty-five years ago, has just been completed. It consists of twenty-seven bulky volumes, and contains an account of 11,614 species of the feathered tribe.