

## AMERICAN SILVER AND BILLS.

A prominent banker of Montreal writes to the *Canadian Trade Review* as follows:

"Much attention has been drawn to the subject of American silver and bills of late. Close consideration of it reveals self-interest as the factor urging some to desire to drive the commodities out of the country, and others to continue their free circulation. The money brokers appeal for their depreciation and expulsion, believing that it would coax the coin and bills to their counters for exchange, where heretofore they have gone on deposit to the banks. The storekeepers and other handlers of the commodities remain passive because it means that the distribution of the coin and bills carries with it a profit on sales which in these days of fiercer competition they cannot see their way to forego. It cannot be urged, they argue, that our own Government currency is of equal moment to them. Its possessors are our own local thrifty citizens whose everyday frugality minimizes the profits of the storekeepers, and who ask a full equivalent for what they pay. The foreign coin and bills denote the traveller full of generous and uncalculating outlays, whose custom at this season is the bone and marrow of retail trade.

"Whichever way we view it, quiet sentiment will not avail to alter the situation. If all were on an equal footing none would suffer; but if one accepts the foreign silver and bills which his neighbor has refused he secures a trade advantage over the latter. What is needed is concerted action through the instrumentality of a public meeting called by the Board of Trade, whereat it can be decided that on and after a certain day the silver and bills will only be accepted at such and such a discount. Holders will in the meantime dispossess themselves of what they hold, and the accumulation will find its way back to the United States through the banks and brokers, and then our own currency will have its rightful preference. The border towns, hotel keepers, railway and steamboat carriers and porters, storekeepers and citizens generally can rigorously adhere to the discount for the future, and agree to regard it as an act of disloyalty to their own institutions to give free circulation at its face value to any foreign currency whatever in the future.

"It will be obvious that the duty of the banks is to accept both American silver and bills at par, as their refusal so to do means the continued circulation of both commodities elsewhere in the city."

## SELLING BY WEIGHT.

A San Francisco paper says that one of the peculiarities which the new comer to California finds it most difficult to accustom himself to is the practice of selling all manner of farm produce by weight. It takes time to become reconciled to the innovation, but when once thoroughly grasped, the perfect justice of the method becomes so apparent that one wonders why it should not long since have been adopted all over the country. The frugal housewife, who, at the East, buys potatoes, apples, and what not by the quart, "small measure," peck and bushel, and nine times out of ten finds herself swindled

by short measure and dishonest arrangement of the articles bought so as to make the greatest display, fully appreciates the difference to her purse that is made by the weight system. There are only two exceptions in all the wide range of household necessities which are not sold by the pound here. These are butter and eggs. That the ancient system of selling butter by the roll without regard to weight should still be maintained here seems strange, when one recollects that weights are the methods relied on for the sale of this article at the East. The opportunity that the roll system affords for fraud is seen by the fact that it is the exception and not the rule for a roll of butter to contain the two pounds that it nominally does. Nevertheless the producer sells by the pound to the dealer, while the dealer demands pound prices for rolls that sometimes have as little as a pound and a half, and are always two or three ounces short.

## THE UTILIZATION OF WIND POWER.

There is a windmill in London perched high up on a timber tower erected on the top of a building on the City road, not far outside the old "City" boundary. It has a sail of thirty feet diameter, and is quite a big affair when one climbs to the top of the tower. But what I specially wanted to note was the fact that this windmill is lighting the premises over which it stands.

Its upright shaft, which comes down from the mill, drives a horizontal shaft which carries a large belt pulley, and by this large pulley is driven a small dynamo. The dynamo generates a current which charges a battery of accumulator cells, and these in turn "drive" the lamps. At times, when the wind is low, the speed falls below what is proper for charging the secondary battery. To prevent this being charged at such low speed there is a cut-out held in by a magnet and kept out by a coiled spring.

When the magnet is weak the current is cut off from the accumulators, but when the dynamo is running at a fair speed the magnet is strong and pulls the switch into contact and the charging proceeds. The mill will run and charge all night and all day. It quiet weather it runs much of its time slowly, and therefore uselessly, but it also runs the night through, and I suppose would on an average do eight hours work in twenty-four. *Canada Lumberman.*

## THE COINCIDENT CURSE OF GOLD.

The goldseekers of both America and Australia have a singular but well grounded superstition that the discoverers of hidden treasures are sure to meet with violent deaths. The original proprietors of between thirty-five and forty of the most prosperous gold and silver mines in this country are known to have come to just such ends. Out of the forty or less twelve were shot or stabbed to death in saloon or other broils, five committed suicide, three were engulfed by landslides, five turned murderers or robbers and were caught and executed in various ways, one fell into a boiling spring and had the flesh literally stewed from his bones, while the others have disappeared and no one knows whatever became of them.

George H. Fryer, once the millionaire

proprietor of the Fryer Hill mine, committed suicide in Denver after spending the last nickel between himself and starvation. The discoverer of the great Standard mine, in California, was caught and swallowed up in an avalanche; Colonel Story was killed by Indians; William Fairweather, of the famous Alder Gulch mine, died with the "frenzied horrors" after a continuous two years' debauch. "Farrell, of Meadow Lake," died with a terrible disease in a San Francisco hospital. The owner of that great mine, the Homestake, became a highwayman, and was shot while robbing a stage coach. John Homer tried the same route that Fryer went. "Doughnut Bill," "Ninemile Clarke," "Old Eureka" and many others were killed in saloons.

## TOWAGE ON THE SOUND.

The Commercial Club of Tacoma, Wash., has received the following letter relative to shipping in Puget Sound ports from John P. Best & Co., a prominent shipping firm of Antwerp:

"The great difficulty we have in obtaining offers of vessels for Puget Sound is because whenever we speak to a shipowner of a freight to that port he refuses to go there on account of the heavy expenses. This means, we believe, for towage in the Sound. We have had occasion to speak to several owners on the subject, and their reply is always the same. So long, they say, as there is no competition, in the towage in the Sound to lower the rates, and the ships being almost bound to make use of these tugs at heavy rates, they will not go in this direction, except a considerable higher rate of freight can be secured than to Portland. We are of the opinion that it is certainly in the interest of the different companies round about the Sound to go carefully in this matter and see what can be done. We understand the towage from Cape Flattery to Tacoma and back is \$800, which you will admit is too high for present rates of freight. Perhaps you can get the tug association to consider the matter, as we find their tariff a great obstacle to obtain offers of ships for the Sound ports."

## THE CARPET TRADE.

The New York *Carpet and Upholstery Trade Review* says: "There is the lull in trade usual at this time, most first orders having been placed, while duplicates cannot be expected yet. Prices are firm, as is natural in view of the spread of the cholera abroad and the consequent effect on the cost of imported carpet wools. A further advance in wools is inevitable, and this must be followed by higher prices for carpeting. The Ingrain market is especially firm. Goods are scarce and deliveries are slow, while in many instances orders are expected only at value at time of delivery. The offering of a lot of tapestries by a prominent house at special prices is well known to be simply the result of a change of account and the desire to close out all goods before the spring season opens. Firmness of prices characterizes not only Ingrains but all higher class carpeting. Those goods in which wool is used most largely have of course been the first to respond to the advance in the wool market."