

"And do you stick to it?"

"Yes, we stick to it."

After musing a few moments, the bank director, said, "Well, I daresay you are right. *Pay or burst*, that's about the size of it. If a man cannot pay at due date the notes for what he has deliberately bought, he is likely to prove an undesirable or unsafe mark. I admire your pluck, and I think you are on the right track."

Is anybody shocked at this conversation? There certainly are people of the opinion that it is cruel to refuse renewals, and that it is mean to "shut down on" traders who are doing their best to pay, and such abruptness may seem harsh. But *it is business*. Have the people who take so humanitarian a view of commerce ever been in the position of holding tens of thousands in customers' promises to pay? If they have been, and had already given value for such paper, we venture to say they did not excuse the laxity of those signers who asked renewal. When certain folk talk of forbearance in such circumstances, one is reminded of the motto of the *Banker's Magazine*: "No expectation of forbearance or indulgence should be encouraged. Favor and benevolence are not the attributes of good banking. Strict justice and the rigid performance of contracts are its proper foundation." Every word of which will apply to a merchant's business. No man has a right to abuse another because he does not choose to renew notes deliberately given for merchandise purchased. There has been far too much renewing. Too much dating forward, too much credit generally. And any firm that puts down its foot resolutely and says: "We must be paid at due date; we will not renew our customers' paper," deserves the thanks of its competitors and the praise of the community. It is not easy to see anything shocking or deserving of opprobrium in the policy summed up by the bank director as meaning "You must pay or burst."

We are reminded of another house, in another city, in a different line of business, which refuses to accept compromises, or to sell a failed customer again on credit. Doubtless this house has suffered in one respect for its principles, for it has lost some customers through being reputed hard-hearted, whereas a kinder hearted man than the principal is not easily found. But here again, if one will but think over the result of such refusal, he may conclude that by cultivating the trade of people who buy their goods well and sell them close to cash—who do their business rightly and pay twenty shillings in the pound, this house is not only setting a good example by encouraging the substantial and prompt man and discouraging the novice or the chronic bankrupt, he is clearing his own ship of barnacles and top hamper in order that she may sail the better and be more fitted for her cargo.

Importing houses as a rule are doing harm to trade and laying up future trouble for themselves by free credit and renewals. There are retail storekeepers by the hundred who for years have been encouraged by their creditors to sing, in the words of the old dramatist,

"If I can't pay, why I can owe,  
And death makes equal the high and the low."

And they have sung it so long that they have absorbed the reckless spirit of the song. There is another class of traders who have been dilatory so long that they cannot be anything else. With contemplative Izaak they find prompt pay "to be like angling and the mathematics, in that it can never be fully learnt." But there is a considerable number of smart, methodical retailers in this Canada of ours, close buyers, prompt payers, in a word, competent merchants. We shall be surprised if such men do not welcome the plucky attitude of firms who say, "We have had enough of compromising—enough of renewing; we propose to give good value and to be punctually paid in full. We lay down these rules for our business, and we take the risk of offending anyone and everyone who cannot observe them." For such men "*Pay or burst*" has no terrors.

### THE SITUATION AND PROSPECTS OF COPPER.

It was but two years and a half ago, viz., in the fall of 1887, that the famous French Copper Syndicate was organized to control that metal in the markets of the world. The system of gaining control of the world's supply of certain substances is familiar to most. Under these operations the price of copper rose rapidly to an extraordinary price, holding firm at as high as £75 to £80 per ton for Chili bars in London, which means over 16c. per pound for Lake Superior copper in New York. At these extreme figures consumption was retarded, while production increased, with the natural result, the collapse of this enormous undertaking in March, 1889.

The following figures, illustrating the product and consumption of copper in North America, are instructive.

	Pounds.
Stocks of copper in United States	
January 1st, 1888.....	40,000,000
United States production in 1888.....	236,000,000
Available supply .....	276,000,000
United States consumption in 1888.....	120,000,000
Leaving a balance of .....	156,000,000

Of this 156,000,000 pounds there was exported 78,000,000 pounds; held by Syndicate in United States, 60,800,000, and privately held in the same country, 18,000,000. Stocks thus rose in twelve months from a total of 40 millions to 78 millions of pounds of copper in this country. On the collapse of the Syndicate in March, 1889, London quotations dropped from £78 to below £40 per ton, even touching £35, the lowest price on record. American producers, however, stood more firm, and held up prices till a steady rise set in.

The consternation among producers was great, but not so much so here as in Europe. The effect in Boston and New York may be gauged by the fluctuations of the shares of Calumet & Hecla copper mining stock, the shares of which from 280 fell to 220, and later to 210. It was generally thought that the enormous stocks held, and increased production of the metal, would maintain starvation prices generally, but it has not been so. To-day the market is firm, and the outlook is most promising.

Let us compare January, 1889, with 1890,

and for this purpose we take, as we have already done, the statistics of the *Engineering and Mining Journal*:

	1889. Pounds.	1890. Pounds.
Total U. S. product'n.	232,800,000	241,800,000
Stocks first of year..	40,000,000	75,000,000
Available supply..	272,800,000	316,800,000
Exports.....	85,000,000	73,000,000
Consumption .....	112,800,000	178,800,000
Stock end of year.	75,000,000	65,000,000

Thus in spite of the drop in price, production increased by nine millions of pounds in 1889, exports stood well up, and with enormous home consumption stocks were reduced ten million pounds. To-day London quotes well over £50 per ton for Chili bars, and Lake copper sells readily for 14½ to 15 cents per pound. This allows say 13½ cents for ordinary casting brands. On the European continent the stock of copper on March 31st, was 277 million pounds, while on December 15th it was but 224 million, a decrease of 53 million pounds, or 24,000 long tons in nine months.

May we not, then, argue well of the future for the copper industries, given a fair market, and may not the following fact be cited as a further favorable circumstance: A committee of the National Electric Light Association was recently appointed for the purpose of petitioning for the abolition of import duty on copper to the United States. At the time of the last convention of the association, August, 1889, the capital invested in electrical industries in the United States was \$275,000,000, mainly in the shape of plant for 238,000 arc lights, and 2,700,000 incandescent lamps, in all of which copper is largely used for construction. Competent experts estimate that one-quarter to one-third of this total sum mentioned is expended for copper. The electrical industry is as yet, one may almost say, in its infancy; possibly the association is looking ahead in asking for abolition of import duty on copper. It is, however, not very likely to succeed.

And whence comes the world's supply of copper? The following figures are for the year 1888, and should not be far out for 1889, as regards relative proportion.

The United States supplies, namely:—

Lake Superior.....	39,000 tons
Montana .....	43,000 "
Other States.....	20,000 "
Spain and Portugal.....	102,000 tons
Chili .....	60,000 "
Germany .....	31,000 "
Japan.....	15,000 "
Australia .....	11,000 "
Cape of Good Hope .....	7,500 "
Russia .....	7,500 "
Canada .....	4,700 "
Venezuela .....	4,300 "
Other countries .....	4,000 "

Production for 1888 ..... 261,000 tons

The modest scale of the returns hitherto made at the copper mines in the Eastern Townships of Quebec will presently seem small compared with the out-put of the mines at Sudbury, on the Canadian Pacific—that is if one may credit the stories told about the scale on which development is to be carried on. There is no doubt that there is abundance of copper at Sudbury (there is nickel, too, by the way), but its development and treatment are matters to