

A HANDSOME NEW BUILDING.

The new building in Montreal of the Bell Telephone Company, situated with frontages on Notre Dame, St. John and Hospital streets, has been recently occupied, and deserves attention. In it are housed the head office, eastern and local department offices, electrical and experimenting department, the main operating room, etc., connected with the telephone service. The Merchants Bank of Halifax occupies a large part of the ground floor, and the remainder of the building is divided into offices. Entering the main doorway, a spacious corridor 130 feet long extends through from Notre Dame to Hospital streets. This is wainscoted in Sienna and Tennessee marbles. The vaulted ceiling is supported at intervals by massive marble pilasters with Ionic gilt capitals.

The bank premises are very handsome, and are entered through large double doors with glass panels near the Notre Dame street entrance. The banking room is 122 feet by 36, and down the centre runs a line of massive pillars. The furnishings and fittings are of the most modern, and harmonize well with the general design.

The whole of the second floor of the building is given up to the service of the company. The counter has a front of polished marbles in inlaid patterns; the floor is of mosaic, the woodwork of red mahogany, the railing on counter is of Pompeian bronze. The board room is a good size, 28 feet by 18. At the Notre Dame street end is placed the manager's room, handsomely tapestried. Off the public space is the entrance to the safe-deposit vaults, the workmanship on which does credit to the makers, Messrs. J. & J. Taylor, of Toronto.

THE OPERATING ROOM.

The fourth floor contains really important apartments, namely, the operating rooms for the telephonic service of the business centre of Montreal. Here is a room 36 feet by 110 feet in size, 18 feet in height, with extra large windows on four sides in addition to an immense roof light filled with Luxfer prisms, which diffuse the light to all parts of the room and light it perfectly. In this room is installed telephone apparatus worth in the neighborhood of \$150,000, the destruction of which in case of fire would entail an incalculable loss on the company, and would take years to replace. For this reason, says the architect, Mr. Maxwell, it was necessary to construct the building in as fireproof a manner as modern practice permits of. In addition to the floors, roof and walls being made as incumbustible as is possible, every window opening is provided with rolling steel shutters, the skylight is double, of heavy cast iron and thick glass, and every precaution known to the science of building has been taken to avoid the destruction by fire of the contents of this room.

Opening off this is the girls' cheerful lunch and reading room; a locker room with steel and wire cloak closets, umbrella pans, etc., a lavatory, etc., etc. On the fifth floor are offices which are rented. It is an elaborate and costly building, largely in the Renaissance style. Unhappily the narrowness of the streets it faces on prevent one seeing its proportions to advantage.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD SERVICE IN STORES.

An interesting article appeared recently in the *New England Grocer* making valuable suggestions to retail grocers on how to retain their old customers and at the same time increase their patronage. It states that the grocery business of to-day is not what it used to be a decade ago, and the dealer has now to face the problem of greater competition. Formerly, when stores were not so numerous, and it was necessary to walk a long distance to the next store, the dealer could be as slack and indolent as he pleased, where he now has to be up-to-date and have his store neat and attractive. The success of the dealer depends not more on the quality of the goods and prices attached thereto, than on the courtesy and promptness of his clerks. The majority of the most successful concerns to-day are those which charge stiff prices for their goods and never offer any particular inducements or mark down sales, while in their immediate neighborhood unsuccessful dealers are cutting prices right and left. The successful concern employs high salaried and experienced clerks, and in consequence has to charge good prices and obtain good profits;

the house selling goods at a small profit is obliged, in consequence, to engage less expensive help, and this is the first step toward the failure which is bound to come eventually. High-class trade do not expect the dealer to sell goods away below what others are selling the same thing for, and, though it seems strange, dealers who do this soon begin to lose their best patrons. The intelligent customer realizes that a dealer cannot sell first-class goods below actual wholesale price and exist, consequently they come to the conclusion that they are being imposed upon by being offered inferior goods. First-class trade expect good goods, expect to pay good prices and expect the dealer to make a good profit, and as all high-class grocers know this, they they never try to tempt their customers with "regardless of cost" bait.—*Country Merchant*.

TO FACTORY MEN.

A point of some interest to those engaged in certain industrial pursuits is mentioned in the *Wood Worker*. A San Francisco manufacturer noticed a great difference in the apparent activity of two sets of men working on similar jobs at the vise in two rooms of a large shop, one being in an old building and the other in one of recent construction. In the former room the men stood easily and naturally at their work, and showed no symptoms of a hankering after a seat on the bench, while in the latter the men were shifting their weight from one foot to the other, throwing one leg upon the bench upon every opportunity and showing every evidence of foot fatigue. The superintendent guessed that the difference was due to the floors upon which the two gangs of men were standing. In the old shop the floor was wood, springy to a certain extent and a poor conductor of heat; in the new shop it was of superior concrete, an excellent conductor of heat from the foot of the workman and perfectly unyielding. So the benches in the new shop were raised a couple of inches, and each man received a platform of wood that rested on two cross pieces at the end and had a light spring to it. The foot weariness disappeared almost at once and no further trouble was experienced.—*Boston Jour. Commerce*.

GREECE'S TRADE.

In view of the present distracted state of Greece, a report recently published by Mr. Wood, British consul for the Morea, Acarnania and Etolia, is not without interest. The Corinth canal has, Mr. Wood says, proved practically useless—partly from its narrowness, partly from the occasional strength of the current. British and foreign steamers avoid it and only the smaller Greek coasting steamers make use of it. The British shipping at Patras during the last year was less than during the two previous years. While this decline is attributed to some extent to the reduced currant crop, to the diminution of imports and to the poor financial condition of Greece, its main cause is the strong competition of foreign flags. What is strange is that many of the foreign ships are chartered to British firms doing business in the Morea, where they form the mercantile majority, and it is not from preference that they thus discriminate, but because the foreign steamship owners carry their freight at more moderate prices. They also give facilities in the way of ports of call, etc., which British shipowners refuse. It is on the currant trade that the population of the Morea principally depends, and it has of late years been passing through a series of somewhat trying experiences. The trouble began when, after the replanting of the devastated French vineyards, the demand for the small Greek grapes known as currants (Corinths) was suddenly arrested by the heavy import duty imposed by the French Legislature. This was another blow at Greece's prosperity which was sorely felt in the viticultural districts. The Government met it by a law limiting the export, as a consequence of which, just before the recent troubles, from 20,000 to 30,000 tons of dried currants had accumulated on the Government's hands. They were offered at from \$15 to \$20 a ton, and Mr. Wood thought that as they made excellent brandy, it was a fine chance for British distillers to purchase the whole, or a portion, of the Government's stock. Other countries—including Russia—had been taking large quantities of Greece's

low-priced currants for the manufacture of wine or brandy. Last year the total crop was 150,000 tons. Of these before the close of the year British buyers had taken about a third of the best quality. In consequence of the financial condition of the country the import of British (as of other goods) underwent serious decrease. In one respect, the crisis has not been altogether disastrous, for, Mr. Wood says, "the high rate of exchange and heavy import duties make the drachma prices of all articles imported from abroad so excessive that native industry has been able to step in and compete favorably with many articles which formerly were imported exclusively from abroad. Woolens, cotton and linen stuffs for wearing apparel, all kinds of hats, gloves, glass, hardware and furniture are now all manufactured in Greece, the country providing the raw material." A people so skillful, industrious and enterprising, has no reason to despair—if only its rulers and statesmen were truly mindful of the nation's interests and their own responsibilities. To what extent the disastrous results of the policy of the King and his timid and unstable advisers have already affected the agricultural, manufacturing and mercantile industries of the country may be imagined. When popular passions have wholly subsided, it will be for the King and his ministers to reckon up the cost of their wild miscalculations.—*Gazette*.

BRITISH WINE AND SPIRIT TRADE.

In the commercial history and review of the year 1896, published not long ago in the *London Economist*, that journal, speaking of wines and spirits, describes the wine trade of the year as the most satisfactory for some time past, no year since 1878 having equalled it in the amount of wine clearances from bond. "Not only this, but there is a general healthiness in the tone of business which must be reassuring to all connected with it, and which we think augurs well for the future." In French red wine there has been an increase of 437,000 gallons, and in red of 328,000 gallons imported into the United Kingdom. While in some former years claret was unpopular because of defective vintages, and champagne showed scarcity of supply, the trade in both these shows recuperation. Port held its own, but there was a decline in Spanish white, as in Portugal and Madeira. Rhine wines, Australian wines, and California wines are of good value, and "are meeting with the attention they deserve."

In regard to spirits, there is a decline of imports, entirely attributable to rum, which fell off 108,000 gallons in consumption because of the mild winter of 1895-6. Brandy showed a small advance; so did Holland's gin. As to whisky, Ridley's *Wine and Spirit Trade Circular* perceives a danger of over-production of Scotch, the demand for which has of late been great. In fact "the Scotch market 'rampaged,' both upwards in price for every age of Highland whisky, and also 'rioted,' when the time came, in order for new. The Islay boom was a mere shadow of the liveliness which has characterized business all this year, and prices jumped upwards in the first six months by pence, and leaped and bounded upwards by sixpences in the last six months of the year." Again, "we read of eleven new distilleries, now either in course of erection or planned." No wonder, then, that over-production and an unprofitable business is feared if such extension goes on, and dividends are to be paid on enormous capital. There is, the circular says, a further depression in Irish whiskies on the British side of the Channel. From "other countries" there was imported into the United Kingdom in 1895-6 no less than 4,770,000 gallons of wines and spirits from unspecified countries. Among this must be included some Canadian, for the Ottawa trade returns make known that some thousands of gallons went to Britain out of the 132,000 gallons we exported last fiscal year.

—A. E. Killam, member of the New Brunswick Legislature for Westmoreland county, has been appointed inspector of bridges and buildings on the Intercolonial Railway. He entered on his duties last week, and will of course have to resign his seat.

—"One of the advantages of becoming old," said Prince Bismark at Freidrichsruhe, "is that one becomes indifferent to hatred, insult and calumny, while one's capacity for love and good-will is increased."