

GONE OVER TO THE PATRONS.

LESSONS are not always heeded. Time and again has THE DRY GOODS REVIEW pointed out the fallacy of merchants undertaking to do business on the conditions stipulated by the Patrons of Industry in order to secure the trade of the members of this organization. Supplementary to what we have said is the evidence adduced by the failure of those who have entered into the compact.

And yet merchants there are who are still willing to subscribe to the conditions for doing trade that the Patrons of Industry have set up. Among the latest to do so is a firm of general merchants doing business at Granby, Que. This firm, according to Bradstreet's, is the possessor of a fair capital and good credit. It is a pity it is not so well enriched with good judgment. The basis on which this firm has agreed to supply goods to Patron customers is:

All heavy goods and unbroken parcels, 5 per cent.
Groceries and shop goods, 10 per cent.
Dry goods, etc., 15 per cent.

Here is an all-round profit of 10 per cent. How the firm is to manage to make both ends meet at such a rate is outside our ken. Some will no doubt contend that they cannot. Others have tried, and failed; and some of them have had a better margin to work upon, too. Wholesalers are just as keen as any class of merchants for business, but, knowing the risks that are entailed by selling merchandise on the basis of profits laid down by the Patrons, frequently deny them further credit the moment they are aware that the alliance has been made.

Were there no ruins of Patron storekeepers on the way to stand out as warnings, it is obvious to every business man that a merchant cannot sell his goods at an advance of 10 per cent. on the invoice price of his goods and pay 100 cents on the dollar. It is scarcely more possible than to draw blood from a stone.

Of course, there are a variety of ways by which, through the practice of deceit and dishonesty, a merchant may be able to make a living profit—yes, and a handsome one—out of his alliance with the Patrons.

False invoices is one favorite and well-worn method. Light weight or short measure is another. We know of one Patron storekeeper who always stuck on an exorbitant profit where and whenever he thought it would pass muster, and who when asked to produce his invoice would, knowing his customer, pick up an invoice, perhaps of a different line of goods from that which he was selling, but which contained figures approximate to that which he was asking, remarking as he hurriedly passed the document before the customer's eyes, "There, you see, I'm actually giving it to you below what I should." "To most of those people," he subsequently remarked, "an invoice is an enigma, and it is no trick to fool them."

Those catering to Patron trade in this way may deaden any pricks of conscience they may have by pleading that they are only fighting the devil with fire. True as that may be, dishonesty is not made honest by it.

Country merchants should realize one thing: the Patron organization is a dying concern. And the sooner legitimate business men cease supplying such props as the Granby firm has just put in position, the sooner will its final collapse take place, at least as far as its meddling with storekeepers is concerned.

MR. BURTON'S ARTICLE.

Bimetallism is discussed in a very clear article in this issue by Mr. Burton, of Caldecott, Burton & Spence, Toronto. The article is lucid, elementary and interesting. In this connection we would advise our readers to again look over the article in our last issue entitled, "Where is the Gold?"

Demonetization of silver has certainly affected the creditor classes by aiding in the general lowering of prices. For example: I am a farmer. In 1875 I buy a farm for \$5,000, pay \$2,000 cash, and give a mortgage for \$3,000. I estimate I can pay that off by raising 3,000 bushels of wheat, this grain averaging \$1 per bushel at that period. I have reverses, however, and invest my surplus money elsewhere. My \$3,000 mortgage remains. During the past years, wheat has averaged 60 cents a bushel; therefore, to pay off my mortgage I must grow 5,000 bushels of wheat. That is, I must now grow 2,000 bushels more than I needed to have grown to pay the same debt in 1875. To be sure, I can harvest the grain a little more cheaply now, but that makes no material difference. The argument retains its force.

As to Mr. Burton's argument regarding the competition of the "Yellow Man with the White Money," it is exceedingly plausible, and is based on Mr. Burton's studies and observations while traveling in the commercial centres of Europe.

THE CROPS IN MANITOBA.

Mr. J. Harris, formerly grain inspector at Toronto, but now living in Winnipeg, is in the "Queen City," renewing old acquaintanceships. He is looking well.

"The crops," he said, in reply to a query of mine, "are excellent. The only question now is the securing of them."

"Some reports state that the crops are further advanced than they were at this time last year," I ventured.

"Well, they are not," he rejoined, with some emphasis. "And I learn from correspondence I have received to-day that they have had a great deal of rain up there. That will tend to make the grain grow instead of ripen. But the acreage is larger and the yield promises to be much more abundant than last year. On the whole, therefore, the outlook is good."

A TRADE PICNIC.

The sixth annual picnic of the Montreal Retail Dry Goods Association was arranged to take place yesterday (July 31) to Iberville, Que., on the Richelieu River, opposite St. John's. The members of the association and their friends, numbering several hundred, traveled by C.P.R. to the Whitfield Park, Iberville, where a programme of games was arranged for. Many handsome prizes, which were exhibited last week in Le Monde window on Notre Dame street, were offered to the competitors of the various events. The association alone spent \$150 in prizes. The judges were: Messrs. Jos. Archambault, J. A. Normandin, Arthur Gagnon; and the starters, Messrs. O. Lemire, P. E. Beauchamps. A programme of dances was arranged, and the Blazi orchestra secured for the occasion. Mr. Chagnon, the courteous president of the association, was the head of the committee making the arrangements. The aim of the association is not to make money out of these picnics, but to employ them as a means of promoting good fellowship amongst the members and strengthening the community of interest.