

departure after another—crockery, boots and shoes, confectionery, jewellery and stationery departments were started in quick succession. Had ten thousand Fenians, from New York and Chicago, swept down on Blackford, it would not have been so bad, for in that case they could have called on the Government for protection; but now there was nothing for it but to fight it out alone. When they started a new barber shop, little Joe Tomkins, the barber, went on a fortnight's spree, and his wife had to go and live with her mother, for she said, "Joe used such awful language she couldn't put up with him."

Still, the big store kept growing—a restaurant, a dentistry and a drug store were added. The farmers flocked in from all over the country; new additions to the premises went up, in which were opened up stoves and tinware, flour and feed, painting and paper-hanging, undertaker and photograph gallery. The advertisements of the Blackford Mercantile Company grew larger every week. They supplied everything necessary for a baby, except the baby, and everything for a funeral except the corpse; in fact, you could get all the necessities and luxuries of life from the cradle to the grave. The company started a dairy farm to supply the people with butter, eggs, milk and other produce. This farm scheme was, however, a fatal mistake, for it ruined the Blackford market for the farmers; the townspeople boycotted the farmers' market. There were no tall chimneys in Blackford to "contaminate the atmosphere and ruin the people's health."

As time went on, affairs round Blackford had been getting into very peculiar shape: practically all the trade of the neighborhood being done under one roof, small store after small store was closed up, murmurings deep and loud were heard, socialism was abroad in the land, taxes could not be collected. The big store had overleaped its bounds, however. The farmers joined hands with the townspeople when they found their market gone, huge mass-meetings were held, ten thousand people over the county signed the scroll, which bound them each to pay \$100 if they spent a cent or a dollar with the Blackford Mercantile Manufacturing and Importing Company. A few months later, the huge concern declined and fell, and now peace reigns once more in the land.

"This story shows," said Watkins, drily, "that it is only in large cities a departmental store can succeed, but in cities they may have come to stay."

A MONTREAL BUDGET.

Your western readers will hardly expect much commercial news from Montreal in winter, since the prevailing impression up West (as I have found it) is that we don't do business in Montreal in the winter; but play—we snowshoe, skate, curl, play hockey and drive round the mountain. Speaking of the mountain reminds me that the Board of Trade, some local organizations, and, not least, a deputation of women, not "advanced" women or blue-stocking women, but women like Lady Hingston and Mrs. Drummond and Mrs. Clouston, have been beseeching the city council not to allow our Mountain Park to be spoiled by an electric railway to run to the summit of Mont Royale.

To begin with some figures—you want figures, don't you?—both Customs and Inland Revenue returns for the port of Montreal show an increase for December, 1895, over the December previous. Thus: 1895 December excise collections, \$233,762; ditto 1894, \$221,575; Customs, December last, \$465,862; 1894, \$417,103. If there were not some business doing, how could these offices rake in for the Government \$700,000 in a single month? It is true that in certain lines we are very quiet in the business quarter; we could not be otherwise, as to heavy goods, dairy produce, etc., with both ocean and inland navigation closed. But in others there is, so the merchants tell me, the usual business for the time of the year.

There was a Board of Trade meeting on Monday, a special meeting, I believe. It seems that the authorities of the board have a good deal of faith in Sir Charles Tupper's influence in London, and especially at Downing Street, and they want to have a conference with the ruddy-faced knight about matters and things, the fast Atlantic service more particularly. Of course, if we can afford to get fast steamers for our shorter ocean highway to Britain, it means great things in the future for the St. Lawrence, and especially great things for this good old town of ours—which good old town is just now cursed and bedevilled with ringsters in the council that I don't believe the Republican Ring of Philadelphia or the Tammany Ring in New York can much surpass in the arts of extravagant misgoverning.

Our mayor is made a Senator: and Dr. Hingston is made a Senator—I don't mean any disrespect by not giving him his title, but everybody thinks of Sir William and speaks of him (admirably too) as Dr. Hingston—probably to console him for being beaten in the Parliamentary race by The People's Jimmy, that demagogue long of tongue, short of conscience, and with a handsome wife, who helps mightily in the contest. All who know him, everywhere, will be glad that R. S. White has been given the collectorship of Montreal. I am glad for

his sake that it takes him out of politics. He is too decent a man for certain forms of modern politics. I wonder if you know that Bob is an Ontario boy, was born in Peterboro', and went to school in Hamilton. I forget whether he went to college in this city or Toronto, but he was at some university. And he also occupied for a while that position of dignified responsibility, a bank clerkship, though never with the amount of exasperating hauteur that the real haw-haw bank clerk can put on.

Do you know the new Grand Trunk manager, Mr. Hays, who takes hold of the reins of power to-day? I have seen him, but I don't propose to judge him by his looks. Everybody ought to wish him well in the enormous task he has taken in hand. People here and elsewhere will be sure to load him up with advice, so he shan't have any of mine. You know from your frequent visits that there are plenty of restaurants in the business quarter here. But you may also be of the opinion of certain of our business men that some of them might be improved. As a result of some recent gustatorial palaver it has just been decided at a meeting held at the Windsor, that the Montreal Club, limited to a membership of 150, shall at once establish a down-town club in Hospital street, close to Francois Xavier. So when you come down again you will probably find it open. From the fact that Mr. G. F. C. Smith is chairman of the board, you may feel assured it will be up-to-date and first-class. Your banking correspondent will, of course, keep THE MONETARY TIMES informed about La Banque du Peuple matters, and that the directors are likely to be prosecuted criminally. But it is noticeable that in the latest lawsuit Mr. W. B. Stephens, as a shareholder and creditor, not only sues the directors civilly (jointly and severally) for alleged illegal advances of \$350,000, but he tackles the Molsons Bank for \$50,000 exchange it held, said to have been paid on the day before the suspension, in Banque du Peuple bills, prematurely.

Have I really kept away until now from the subject of the storm! Whew! That was a storm. I have felt the force of the wind at the Cape of Good Hope when it nearly blew men out of the rigging. I have been in a blizzard in Manitoba and felt the wind of Lake Huron on the high bank at Goderich, but I never knew wind play such pranks as it did here on Monday night and Tuesday. It blew down chimneys and fences and church steeples, wrecked buildings, damaged floating elevators on the harbor, uprooted trees, and carried away telephone poles. And what wonder, when scientists tell us its velocity was 72 miles an hour; and, to make it still more unbearable, $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches of rain fell during the night. The derangement and loss to the telegraph and telephone companies must be serious, so many wires tangled, so many poles broken. The sight, on McGill street, of eight huge telephone poles in succession broken, with the scores of wires on each swaying and screaming in a confused mass, was enough to scare pedestrians from venturing down. A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU.

Montreal, 1st January, 1896.

IN THE DRY GOODS STORE.

Prices of raw material in the glove market at Grenoble, France, are very firm, and there seems to be little chance of a change in values until the new crop sales in June, 1896.

From the last raw silk report of the Yokohama Chamber of Commerce, dated December 4th: "After a long period of dullness, the market closes active, holders being ready sellers. Prices are still irregular, and to all appearances better could be done."

Messrs. John Northway & Co., owners of retail dry goods stores in Tilsonburg, Orillia and Simcoe, and a wholesale house in Toronto, have entered the dry goods field in St. Thomas. Mr. Northway's characteristic energy ensures the success of this new venture.

Dry goods retailers complain that the jewellers secured this year the best of the Christmas trade. The weather was so warm that donors preferred to purchase jewellery for the recipients of their favors rather than winter wraps. Fur dealers have a like complaint to make.

Trade in the woolen districts of South Scotland is none too brisk. Manufacturers of worsted goods are busy, with all looms going, but makers of the regular Scotch tweeds are far from being busy. Repeat orders are not coming in at all well, and a number of the mills are going on short time. Very little can be said of the prospects for next season. Worsteds, it is thought, will continue to be in demand.

A number of Toronto merchant tailors have decided that it is not in their interests to employ union labor. The men have been given an option of leaving the union or being dismissed from their employments and, having chosen the latter, a lock-out has been declared in the several interested shops. The busy season among tailors is over, and it is thought employers will not suffer any serious loss in consequence of their action.

Not much has been heard of Canadian buyers in Leeds this past several weeks. The goods being made just now are, for the most part,