

## GERMAN ENTERPRISE.

It has long been suspected that certain German manufacturers work upon a deliberate system of copying the style and appearance of English made goods; and the suspicion has just been turned into certainty under very sad and remarkable circumstances by the suicide of a young German named Hermann Haas, because he was unsuccessful in obtaining certain patterns of straw hats to transmit for imitation to Germany. In a letter to his parents, which he left behind him, there occurs the following passage —

"I have been trying very hard to find out something suitable for our purposes, but in spite of all my endeavors remain fruitless. I have been struggling through various warehouses, and sometimes success seemed certain, but at the last moment, when I got to the counting-house to pay for the hats I had chosen, they wanted me to testify that I was the owner of a milliner's shop, which was, of course, impossible, so I had to say good-bye to my hats. I have seen some very nice shapes, and I am trying to get them from milliners' shops. Amongst other various features, I have noticed a new way to utilize straw plait for making up hats."

While we deplore the fact that this unfortunate youth, who was only nineteen years old, should have been driven by his ill-success to take his own life, we cannot but feel some satisfaction in knowing that representatives of German houses do not find it easy to obtain in the wholesale trade the samples they want for purposes of imitation. No doubt it is quite possible for persons in the position of the unfortunate young suicide to obtain a good deal of what they require from milliners' shops; but in such case they cannot have so vast a variety to choose from as is to be found in the wholesale trade, and, moreover, the imitations are bound to be late in the market. — *Drafter's Record, London.*

## AN OPEN LETTER ON THE TARIFF.

DETROIT, Michigan, U S A, January, 1897

WILFRID LAURIER, Premier of Canada :

Will you permit a suggestion which may aid you in reaching a wise solution of the tariff question. I speak as one who is deeply interested in Canada, who believes that the commercial prosperity of the United States may, in time, be paralleled within Canadian borders, and who rejoices in the good fortune which has at last brought together, at this crisis, the evident opportunity and the man to take a right advantage of it.

My suggestion, briefly, is this — Will you not be much more likely to arrive at the best conclusion, if for a moment you lose sight of all minor details, and the many class interests which are selfishly forced upon you, and focus your attention on one salient, essential feature of the whole question, and that is the fact that you are legislating for only 5,000,000 people, and that the Canadian market is so limited and restricted that it is not practicable to so specialize as to produce to the best advantage.

It is recognized on all sides to-day that a large part of the advance made by modern industry has come through specialization—the division of an industry into its separate parts, each worked by a specialist. The history of man's industrial growth is a perfect illustration of this. The first settler grew the wool, sheared it, carded it, spun it, wove his own cloth, and wore his homespun, home made suit. By and-by, with the increase of population came, naturally, a sub-division of labor, and with a still greater increase came competition and the natural solution of competition — economic production through specializing. There are factories in the United States where, fifty years ago, one workman made an entire machine, where, to-day, the same workman does nothing but cut a small thread on the steel bolts of the machine. This is specialization, and it is the key to the industrial growth of Canada to-day, if she can secure the large market needed to make specialization possible to her.

Specialized industries are inevitably foremost in their line of product. As this question has a most important bearing upon the present Canadian situation, I shall ask you to let me cite briefly one or two instances of specialization. Compare the shoe trade of Canada and of the United States. Many of the Canadian shoe

manufacturers (though not all) say that Canada being the cheapest labor market on this entire continent, they would be quite willing to endorse the freest reciprocity between Canada and the United States, and that, the conditions being equal, they would be quite prepared and willing to compete, feeling perfectly confident of their ability to get an ample amount of profitable employment out of a market of 75,000,000 people. Those manufacturers who feel that they would not be able to compete with the United States are the men who are not specializing. They are engaged in manufacturing every variety of footwear worn by humanity, and this has been repeatedly shown to be uneconomical and wasteful. I have heard it estimated by competent authorities that their method of shoe production was equivalent to a waste of fully 20 per cent. How large a figure this waste amounts to may be better understood by reference to an item in the *Shoe Trade Journal*, of Chicago, the issue of December 26th, 1896, page 19. It is there stated that the total product of boots and shoes in Canada is about \$30,000,000. On these figures, which are, no doubt, reliable, the Canadian waste, through lack of specialization, reaches the enormous total of \$6,000,000. Now these manufacturers, burdened by the wasteful methods naturally associated with a small and restricted market for their labor, assume that the same conditions would prevail for them if there was commercial reciprocity between the two countries. They overlook entirely the fact that they would then be making shoes for 75,000,000 people instead of 5,000,000. They do not stop to consider that with such a market open to them they would immediately stand on an entirely different footing from their present position. They would specialize. In the place of their wasteful system of producing in one factory everything in footwear that is worn by humanity, they would naturally adopt the economical plan that is practised by the shoe manufacturers of the United States, and concentrate their attention upon special lines.

It may be interesting here to note the way in which the shoe business in the United States is focussed and centred. Brockton and its adjacent district make nothing but men's fashionable shoes. Natick, Spencer, the Brookfields and their district, make nothing but coarse kip, grain, such shoes as are worn by agriculturalists, navvies, miners, iron workers, etc. They specialize on these. Rochester, N.Y., specializes on women's and misses' fashionable high grade shoes. Some factories here specialize on children's. Cincinnati, O., makes only women's high grade. Philadelphia, Pa., specializes on children's and misses' (with some women's) of fashionable quality. Stoneham, Mass., on milkmaids', farmers', and working women's durable shoes, Beverly and Salem, Mass., on old women's comfortable shoes, Lynn, Mass., focusses on women's shoes of the cheapest fashionable kind. Haverhill, Mass., on women's slippers and low shoes, also men's dancing shoes. One or two factories here specialize on men's cheap light shoes for southern trade, Auburn, Lewiston and Bangor, Me., on men's fashionable shoes, St. Croix, Me. (actually on the Canadian border line) focusses its enormous production entirely on men's cheapest stylish shoes, New York city, on the finest grades of women's shoes, and a few factories on the finest grades of men's shoes, Newark, N.J., the very finest grades of men's fashionable shoes. Scattered towns through New Jersey group with Philadelphia and make children's and misses' shoes.

Everywhere we find the United States manufacturers specializing, and nowhere do you find a shoe manufacturer attempting to make all kinds. I remember remarking upon this to a Canadian shoe manufacturer, who showed me the enormous variety of footwear he was obliged to make, to get enough work to run his plant. I told him that "there were large factories in the United States who made nothing but men's fashionable shoes for \$1.60, and others who made nothing but men's fashionable shoes for \$2.25, and others who made nothing but plough shoes, brogans and creoles for \$1, and that they never thought of trying to make all kinds." His reply was that if a Canadian manufacturer should try to do this for a constituency of 5,000,000 people, he would have to close his factory before the end of the year.

Canadian manufacturers of all kinds meet this same difficulty when they buy their materials. They find that the producers of their