

special benefit. He mentioned last year that a syndicate of German manufacturers had bought up the whole production of over three years of bleaching powder made by an electrical process in this country, at a fixed price, and was offering it in the home market very much below what they had given for it, for the express purpose, as they phrased it, of "keeping us in order;" in other words, to induce that company by a system of reprisals to keep their goods out of the continental markets. It might have been thought that the heavy duties on British goods would have been ample protection to the continental manufacturer.

The transaction of the German syndicate, which had still eighteen months to run, had reduced the selling price of bleaching powder by 20s to 30s (\$4.86 to \$7.29) per ton, and had in fact, cost the Alkali Company a sum sufficient to pay ordinary shareholders a moderate dividend on their holding. The falling off in their trade had been attributed in some quarters to working with obsolete plant and not keeping pace with modern improvements, while the technical training of the heads and officials of the English chemical industry was defective as compared with those of other countries. Those were not the causes operating adversely, at least so far as that company was concerned. The true causes were those he had stated. With reasonable duties and fair play, they could hold their own, and hold it well. He made bold to say that their costs of production would compare favorably with those of other manufacturers—English, continental or American—but costs could not possibly be reduced sufficiently to make up for a duty of £11 13s. 4d. per ton on an article which sold at about £30 per ton; yet, that was what the American tariff required them to do. Hence the only way to retain the trade was to have an interest in manufacturing in the protected country. That they had done. A company had been formed and located at Bay City, in the State of Michigan, called the North American Chemical Company, in which they have a controlling interest. Those works, primarily established for the manufacture of chlorate of potash by electrolysis, began operations about November; and though not yet working at full capacity, turned out an excellent article at a cost quite within expectations, and promised to prove a very satisfactory investment. Having started so late, they did not contribute to the profit side of the present balance sheet. \* \* \* They were advised that day by cable that the whole plant at the Bay City works was now running.

#### BOOTS AND SHOES IN DENMARK.

Vice-Consul Blow writes from Copenhagen:—

"I consider the present moment most opportune for the introduction into Denmark of American boots and shoes, as the tendency to use ready made shoes is increasing rapidly, since the difference in price with those made to order is becoming marked.

"The import of foreign-made shoes increases steadily, as will be seen from the following figures:

	Pounds.
1889.....	194,502
1891.....	208,663
1893.....	311,866
1895.....	364,445
1897.....	379,452

"Austria, Italy, Germany, and, to a small extent, Great Britain, control this market; but there is no reason why other manufacturers should not secure a large share of this trade. Pointed and narrow shoes will not sell here, the Danish foot is large. Styles made for the German markets would find favor here.

"Several of the Danish shoe manufacturers have imported American machinery, but the Danish duty on shoes being very light (it varies according to the quality), other manufacturers could no doubt compete in price.

"Denmark has a population of about 2,350,000 inhabitants. The Danish shoe manufacturers produce about 4,000 pairs of shoes daily. The imports of foreign shoes are about forty per cent. of the whole consumption.

"Manufacturers should address: The Wessel & Vett, 13 Kongens Mytorv; Skandinavisk Skotøjsmagasin, 35 Ostergade; E. Oettinger, 44 Ostergade—all of Copenhagen.

"Mr. John Lund, 4 Læxegade, Copenhagen, is willing to accept agencies.

"The commercial agency of R. V. Fournais & Co., Copenhagen, will, for a small fee, rate any firm in Denmark."

#### OBSTACLES TO THE BICYCLE TRADE IN FRANCE.

Consul Jackson, of La Rochelle, writes:—

"If American wheels were sold at prices approximating those for which they sell in the United States, they would be purchased in this part of France in large numbers. It seems to me a serious mistake on the part of our cycle makers to give the sole agency of their wares for all of France to any one house. The result of this is that the prices are maintained at a very high figure. Machines which have always been known in America as "low priced" sell for about the same price as the most expensive at home. From figures recently shown me, one can buy certain wheels in New York at retail, pay the duty and transport, and then have them cheaper than the local dealer can purchase them from the agent at Paris. Consequently there is practically no competition in the market between American and French cheap wheels, and fewer American wheels are sold. The conditions which obtain here as to advertising, travel by railway, exhibition of goods, etc., are so different from those in the United States that it is an immense undertaking, if we demand high prices, to successfully introduce one particular 'marque' to 39,000,000 people.

#### PACKING FOR VENEZUELA.

Consular Agent De Sola writes from Caracas:—

"I cannot too strongly urge manufacturers to effect a radical change in their system of packing. The cases and crates are in many instances not strong, but are very heavy, owing to the thickness of wood employed. This is prejudicial, not only on account of the breakage, but because the customs duty in this country is collected on the gross weight.

#### HARDWARE IN LOURENCO MARQUEZ.

Consul Hollis, of Lourenco Marquez, writes:—

"Until recently, the dwelling houses in this town have been constructed upon the most primitive plans. They are, for the most part, merely boxes of galvanized corrugated iron, with inner walls, ceilings, and partitions of half-inch matched spruce boards. They contain no kitchens, bathrooms, hot or cold water pipes, stoves, or chimneys. The kitchens are generally galvanized iron shanties in the rear of the main buildings. As this place is getting more civilized, a demand is arising for a better class of houses. I recently had a talk with the leading builder and contractor here, Mr. William Blackwood. He told me that he wished to obtain full particulars relating to the following articles, which, I assured him, could be purchased at better advantage in the United States than anywhere else: Lead, steel and brass piping; water-closets, mosaic tiles, kitchen plumbing outfits, hot water boilers and connections, sinks, stoves for burning soft coal and with hot water connections, 200 to 300 gallon iron water tanks, outside galvanized iron guttering and piping; builders' fine hardware, such as locks, knobs, hinges, bolts, nails, screws, and special tools."

All these lines of goods can be purchased in Canada on as good terms as in the United States.