

DULL GENERAL TRADE.

The Cincinnati *Price Current*, perhaps the best authority in the United States, has the following concerning trade conditions: Of course the reduced volume of business can not be justly attributable to any one single cause, but while there is a combination of circumstances which has been detrimental to trade, there seems to be a consensus of opinion among business men that the chief impediment was the demoralization attending the change in the tariff. This has been hanging over the country month after month, and while assertions are made that there will soon be definite action, and we shall know what the duties will be on the importation of foreign goods, yet we can but remember that these promises have been frequently made before only to be disappointed, and we can have no great faith in them now, and until the tariff bill becomes a law, if indeed it ever does, business must remain unsettled. The demoralized condition of labor all over the country has been recently one of the main factors in preventing an adjustment of trade on a favorable basis; it is a bad time for the efforts of labor to obtain better conditions, but perhaps it is as well to get that matter out of the way while the tariff is being adjusted, for there can be no satisfactory adjustment of business while either question is pending. Production of most manufactured articles is on comparatively a low plane, but if there has been such a surplus over the requirements of trade during recent years as has been recently estimated, it is evident that there are yet abundant supplies of most articles, and there is scarcely an article that has advanced in price on account of a deficient supply; many articles, if they become scarce can be replaced by others of similar character at the same or lower prices. But it is confidently predicted that the tariff bill will be passed in the not remote future, and that it will prove to be better for manufacturers than has seemed probable or even possible, so that it will help the revival of fall trade. The recent advance in wheat and flour has infused more confidence into the markets for those articles, and, if sustained, will have a salutary effect upon general trade. While we admit all this, and that there is doubtless a future that will be more satisfactory, it seems to us that the road which leads to it must be a long one, because it is necessary to get the mass of consumers into a condition where they will be able to buy more freely. But there are indications of more confidence in monetary circles, and this is where the improvement ought to begin, for if it is based upon good grounds it will soon help general trade upon its feet again, and all business enterprises will feel its revivifying effect. It is to be hoped that there will be no disap-

pointment in this, for the delay already suffered has made the heart sick, and it is high time for something to occur which will give substantial encouragement to business men. God speed the time.

A FEW FACTS ABOUT CIGARS.

It is the prevailing opinion, even among dealers in cigars, that imported and domestic goods are affected differently by this climate. The general opinion is that imported goods deteriorate in value, and that the domestic article improves in quality, with age. This is not true; but it is true that they are affected alike and that both grow worse with age. Just why this is the case no one can tell; but that it is the fact any honest manufacturer will admit.

Climate is responsible for a good deal. For instance, if a man be in Havana, he can smoke Havana cigars continuously and experience no nauseating effects; but if he smokes the same tobacco in this country, a much smaller amount satisfies him. Imported cigars never satisfy one so well as in the country where the leaf is grown. There is a vast difference in the aroma, and a very perceptible difference in the taste.

Many smokers entertain the belief that a cigar fresh from the maker's table is infinitely better than one that has become seasoned. This is also a mistake. A fresh cigar is never so good as one that has laid a while. Certain properties in tobacco require that a certain time shall elapse before the manufactured cigar shall have its best aroma. Years ago, in Germany, dealers were wont to advertise the fact that they had five-year-old cigars, and they kept them stored well up under the ceiling—the popular impression having been that age helped tobacco just as it does wines and liquors. It is needless to say that the practice was long ago discontinued.

As to the best manner of keeping cigars, where retailers or jobbers buy large stocks, experienced manufacturers recommend a perfectly dry but well ventilated cellar. They should not be moistened except when wanted for the show case, and then care should be taken not to over-moisten them. Neither fresh nor dry, but just between—that is when a cigar smokes at its best.

ELECTRICITY THE COMING POWER.

The coal fields, with all their vastness, cannot stand for many generations more the drain to which they are now subjected. For years the question has been gravely asked, what will our descendants be able to substitute in their place? The one great hope has been that a way would be found to harness the waste

forces of Nature—the winds, the waves, the waterfalls and the sun's energy, which is received by the earth and again dissipated into space. The near approach to completion of the gigantic experiment undertaken at Niagara looks as if a successful solution of the problem had been reached. If the power of those falls can, through the agency of electricity, be economically distributed over a radius of one, two, or, perhaps, three hundred miles, what may not result from future developments in this line? The power of running water can be found in almost every section of the country. The power of wave action extends for thousands of miles along our coasts, and the power of the wind is everywhere. Coal has already ceased to reign alone in its old domain, and may soon cease to be king.

Throughout the country electric trolley roads are extending with marvellous rapidity. Scarcely a village of any note but has its trolley railroad. From motives of economy wires for furnishing power have been in many instances connected with the trolley wires, having ground or earth returns; this is, perhaps, as dangerous a mode of use as any which can be adopted for electrical wiring and the distribution of power, and in no case should it be permitted. The use of the trolley itself in thickly-settled towns is a source of danger such as is believed by many cannot very long be tolerated. Using the earth as a return circuit disseminates an amount of electrical current reaching water pipes and gas pipes, and gradually working their destruction, which must lead at no distant date to an entire change of system either by the substitution of storage batteries, or by a return wire in place of the ground connection. Lately, the use of electricity has been extended to include many household purposes, it being adapted for heating, cooking, heating of sadirons and curling irons, involving new dangers, which require new safeguards to be adopted, in addition to the rules and requirements for the general use of electricity.

In view of the position which this new power is so rapidly assuming, too much study and care cannot be devoted to the applications of electricity by the fire underwriters. To attempt to check its progress would be as futile as an effort to dam that same Niagara. The people are bound to utilize electricity regardless of insurance. The only thing which can be done is to make its use consistent with safety.

The paper mill at Alberni is now in good working order, the first paper having been manufactured.

Six thousand three hundred and seventy cattle, 1,387 sheep and 399 horses have been shipped from Canada to England this season.