

his trade in fine fancy groceries, canned goods, tea, ground spices, tobacco, cigars, syrups, baking powders, extracts etc., leaving the wholesale grocer the lean and slender profits to be had from sugars, soaps, starch, etc., not bearing a sufficient profit to attract the rapacity of the specialty dealer. This feature of disintegration is however, being rapidly overcome by the enterprise of those wholesale grocers who have adopted the department system; who have placed experts at the head of various lines of goods, and are carrying a desirable and well-selected stock, and handling such goods as teas, cigars, spices, roasted coffees, canned goods, etc., on a closer margin of profit in connection with their other lines than specialty houses could afford. And it is remarkable that such houses have in the past few years made perceptible progress in concentrating business and increasing their sales.

Still another obstacle to concentration has been the indirectness of the wholesale grocery business. The foreign goods were brought here by importers, who sold to the jobber, and the jobber in turn sold to the wholesale grocer. A number of houses in the United States have in the past few years, by a bold stroke of enterprise brushed the cobwebs of antiquity from this system of doing business, and now import their own teas, coffees, spices, fancy groceries, etc. The writer was conversing with the agent of a very old importing house recently, who remarked that the importation of fancy groceries had been rendered unprofitable to importers by the action of a number of large grocery houses that were importing their own goods. In dry goods this has long been the case. The large houses do their own importing, and many of them are interested in manufacturing also. By examining the custom-house reports of importations each week it will be seen that dry goods houses regularly receive foreign goods by direct importation to St. Louis, while the number of wholesale grocers thus aspiring to do a direct business is not only small, but the importations are irregular and infrequent.—*Com. Bulletin.*

FEMALE COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS.

All the devices of drumming up trade throughout the country have been tried over and over again by our metropolitan merchants with an ingenuity and liberality that have resulted in great financial gains and a booming sale of goods each season. The travelling business, however, has been rather overdone during the past two seasons. Every small concern has its five or six commercial travellers roaming through the country now, and the novelty has quite worn off in this branch. The drummers swarm about the offices of the merchants throughout the country in such numbers now, and the rivalry has become so fierce, that business men find them a great bore, and have taken lately to the heroic policy of showing them the door and rudely slamming it in their faces. It will not take long at this rate, to bring the business of drumming up trade into such disrepute that it will be worse than useless to engage in it at all. So in their dilemma they are prudently casting about for some means of adding fuel to their fire or reviving the almost defunct spirit of the palmy days just after the war, when a drummer had only to take fine quarters in a first-class hotel and get all the merchants in the town boiling drunk, to be able to rake in the orders for goods at the rate of a cool couple of thousand dollars a lick. Two great firms, at least, in New York city think they have hit upon the very idea. They have each taken some of their youngest, best looking, and cheekiest salesladies, (saleswomen is meant) and sent them out on the road with samples to work up the trade, which, under the old system of drumming, was fast slipping away from them. The success of the ladies has been

quite phenomenal. We are informed that hardly in a single instance have they failed to secure large orders from their recalcitrant merchants who have "gone back on" the drummers of the bifurcated garments. Surely the astute tradesmen of Gotham are ahead when it comes to the ways and means of securing and holding trade. *American Exchange.*

MINNEAPOLIS FLOUR.

Ben Wilde, the Aurora funny man, has been up in Minnesota, and tells of a conversation he had with a Minneapolis man whom he met on the cars, the subject being, as usual, Minneapolis flour. Ben commenced with: "They make some flour in Minneapolis, do they not?" "No sir, it makes itself. Minnesota wheat is so full of flour it would be useless to try to keep it shut up in the kernels. It is such vigorous flour it would get out on its own hook if it were not taken out." "I understand," said I, "Minneapolis flour is sold in England cheaper than it is retailed at home. How is that?" "Clear enough, sir; clear enough," replied the healthy looking Minnesotan. "You see our railroads charge for freighting by the hundredweight. Our flour is so light that the more they put in a car the lighter the load grows. A cargo of Minnesota flour goes through for nothing, and is entitled to a drawback at the other end of the route. As for selling cheaper in England that is clear enough; its buoyancy makes it desirable for ships to carry. A shipload of Minnesota flour could not sink." "But if it should get wet?" I suggested. "The wetter the better. A swamped shipload of our flour would sop up the Atlantic in two hours and let the people walk across as the Children of Israel crossed Lake Minnetonka when the hosts of King Pharo were after them." "I have heard it is very life-sustaining," I added in compliment. "Well, I should emphasize!" and he straitened up as if to startle me, but I was beyond that. "Life sustaining! Well I should smile in capital italics! There is an effort being made by the medical fraternity and the undertakers to get an injunction against its manufacture. It is fairly driving them out of business. And if the Government would require vessels to carry a loaf of Minnesota bread for each passenger, we would hear of no more sea disasters because of inadequate life preservers." "Are you a dealer in flour?" I asked. "Oh! no; I am a clergyman. If I were a dealer in flour I could probably tell you many wonderful things about it." I don't want to meet a Minneapolis miller until I get tired of life.—*The Merchant* (St. Louis).

How WHITE LEAD IS MADE.—The uses of white lead are now so numerous that its manufacture has become one of the important industries of the country. The interesting process of manufacture generally followed was introduced from Spain, years ago, and is known as the "old Dutch process." The prime requirement in a white lead manufactory is pure pig lead, which is first remelted into large flat pieces having numerous holes, and are called "buckels." A dozen of these are put into an iron pot containing twelve ounces of diluted acetic acid. The pot is then covered with a layer of tan-bark, and so on until there are about ten layers of pots. In a few minutes the tan-bark commences to ferment, evolving heat and carbonic acid. By this means the acetic acid is evaporated, and, combining with the thin film of lead oxide on the surface of the buckels, forms a sub-carbonate of lead, which is decomposed by carbonic acid, and acetate of lead is formed. This process continues about one hundred days, when the buckels are formed into carbonate of lead, which latter substance, after screening to separate the

worthless portions, is ground, mixed with water, again ground, and then mixed with distilled water. Finally, it is allowed to settle, in which state the acetate of lead and acetic acid are removed from the white lead, which is obtained from this last chemical action, and is dried by means of indirect steam heat. The use of pure white lead in painting is considerably less than in former years, but it is the foundation of all colored paints of the day, and its manufacture was never greater.

PETROLEUM.—The decline in crude oil in American markets for some days past does not appear to have affected Canadian much, if at all. The price of crude touched 61 cents on the 29th says a New York despatch, because of a scare occasioned by the opening of new wells. In Petrolia crude is still quoted at \$1.50. In this market American prime white is quoted at 23c. per gallon in lots of one to five bbls., and water white 25c. Canadian is steady at 18c. in lots of 5 to 10 bbls., and 18½c. per gall. for the single barrel.

—In Illinois and some other western states the telephone companies are perfecting a system of operations which will be of great benefit to towns away from railroads. The plan is to have a central station in each county seat, with wires leading to all the towns in the country. From the county seats it is proposed to communicate with the capital or principal city of the State, thus giving a complete circuit. By new devices greater distance than heretofore is covered, and connections over a State can be easily made. The work has proceeded furthest in Ohio, where more than half a dozen counties and a large number of towns have been brought within hearing distance of Cincinnati. In Illinois considerable work has been done, and Joliet and various towns beyond are connected with Chicago. The tariff established is 50 cents for five-minute conversations, with commutation to regular patrons.

Mr. M. H. Gault, one of the Montreal members, gave in the House some interesting statistics of the increase in number of employees and of wages paid in the factories of that city. Between 1878 and the close of 1881, the number of hands employed had increased between from 6,971 to 13,190; and the weekly wages paid had increased from \$40,723 to \$91,064; an increase in employees of 6,179 and in weekly wages of \$50,340. That is a remarkable showing. The annual amount paid out in wages in the various industries named, was, in 1878 \$2,108,311, and in 1881, \$4,692,518, an increase of \$2,584,207, paid to the work people and spent among the shopkeepers of the city. In 1878 the average annual earnings of each person employed including the young women in cotton, tobacco and other factories, and apprentices, were \$304.67. In 1881 the annual earnings of each person so employed had increased to \$359.63, an increase which represents a substantial improvement in the condition of the people.

Respecting the new Globe yarn mill, Fall River Mass. said to be the largest in the States, we learn that it is on the site of the old Globe Print Works, is of brick, three stories high with basement, 317 feet in length by 75 feet in width. There is also a wooden mill, 127x35, of three stories, containing offices, picking, spooling rooms, etc. The brick mill contains 32,000 spindles, divided into 25,000 ring frames and 7,000 mule spindles. These mills are the largest in the country and are fully equipped with the latest improvements. They make a specialty of fine counts, their range being from 20s. to 80s.; and will also furnish yarns on beams, cop on spools, chain warp, skeins (single, two, three and four-ply).