A WEAK POINT IN STOREKEEPING.

Upon the readers of the MONETARY TIMES has frequently been urged the importance of the care and intelligence necessary to a proper reckoning of the profits of a business. We fear that in too many instances it is a feature of a storekeeper's bookkeeping about which a great deal of ignorance, or culpable neglect, is shown. Instances of almost weekly occurrence may be had from the columns of this journal which indicate that there are traders who have never known what it meant to take stock, and even where this had been done the system pursued was so crude that the most vital elements in the calculation were never included. "A year prior to his failure a good surplus was claimed," is frequently to be read in the brief biography of insolvents in our mercantile summary. Doubtless, according to their peculiar way of figuring, this was right. But the sequel disclosed where the trouble lay. A valued American exchange, writing upon this subject, briefly and clearly says: "There can be no profit in any transaction until not only the cost of the merchandise, but all the charges in connection with the purchase and transportation and selling and proceeds, have been taken into account, as well as the interest on capital invested and the salaries of the principals engaged in the management of the business. If the sum realized from the sale of the merchandise is not sufficient to pay rent and taxes, salesmen's and clerks' salaries, cartage, discount, interest, as well as bad debts, depreciation in value of stock on hand, then the result of the business has been a loss to the proprietor instead of a profit. The profit is used to designate the realized balance which goes to increase the net wealth of the proprietor after deducting all these charges. Where there is no balance left there must have been a loss as regards the enterprise of such concerns."

A SCOTCHMAN'S SUGAR ESTATE.

An enterprising young Canadian, now in Jamaica as the representative of several prominent firms in this country, has had his eye open to note other things than those referring to his own particular mission. He sends us the following interesting account of a sugar plantation owned by Mr. A. Crum Ewing, of Glasgow, Scotland. It is one of the best managed estates of the kind on the island, and is situated about nine miles from the city of Kingston.

"On this fine plantation are about 800 acres under cane; but Mr. Ewing has lately added a neighboring property, and his large new mill can grind for other growers. This is the plan which seems to promise best for sugar planters: to abandon their rude mills and antiquated machinery, and send their canes to a central repository, where the latest and most scientific methods are in use. Mr. Ewing's mill, the Caymanas, is also a sugar refinery. Here the juice is first boiled in the usual manner, after being crushed out of the canes by passing them through powerful rollers. The triple process is then employed for purifying the juice—three separate cylinders, heated by steam, each in turn receiving the saccharine extract, and passing it on to a great vacuum pan, where it is boiled for the last time, and discharged into the centrifugal apparatus. This revolves at immense speed, throwing out the molasses through small holes in the sides, and leaving the sugar white, granulated and ready for table use. At the old mills only the coarse muscovado sugar is made, and this must be sent to refineries before it can be used. The article turned out at this particular mill is so fine that it is nearly all sold in Kingston and used on the island. I am glad to learn that the intelligent manager, Mr. Kemp, expects soon to make the estate pay. If he succeeds in this a difficult problem will have been solved, and the success of the experiment may lead to great changes in the working of Jamaica sugar estates. The least desirable portion of the mill premises is what seems to be a necessary adjunct. This is always dirty in appearance, and has a sweet, sickening smell. If rum drinkers could only see the foul, dirty refuse out of which their favorite liquor is made, the blue ribbon would be a more frequent decoration. Into the boiling pan is poured all the molasses together with the vile, filthy stuff gathered in the sugar mill. This is distilled into fiery rum, 40 per cent. over proof, the curse of Jamaica as well as of many other places nearer home. The making of 20 puncheons a week of such stuff, in addition to 1,000 hogsheads of sugar sent out annually from the mill, must have a demoralizing effect, for the two Scotchmen in charge argued that they *must* grind and distil on the Sabbath in Jamaica, although they both keep the day at home! I presume, however, that this grows out of their eagerness to make the place pay, and not out of any instructions from the respected owner."

CLERKS AND SALESMEN.

No salesman can achieve success through misrepresentation.

There are four necessary qualifications for the successful salesman—tact, truth-telling, fairness and politeness.

One of the greatest helps to the young clerk is to take notice of the way the best merchants transact their business and to copy their style of doing it.

The clerk who graduates with honor from the country store is well equipped for the large marts of trade in any part of the world. He is possessed of a practical knowledge that can be turned to good account in any department of business.

Misrepresentation of anything never pays, and when a salesman tells his customers that the goods which he handles are superior to those of his competitors, when he knows the same to be false, is doing an injury not only to his employers, but to himself also.

A good salesman should have a comprehensive knowledge of the goods he sells, their origin peculiarities and advantages over other goods of similar character, and their general uses, so as to be able to properly commend them. He should also know their defects.

A clerk should keep in mind that what has been done by others in all human probability he can do by study and application. Some one may perhaps accomplish it quicker than he can, but that is no reason why he should be discouraged. Strict application makes up for many natural disadvantages.

The future kings and princes of the dry goods trade must come out of the army of clerks and salesmen, and those who prepare and fit themselves to fill high positions of credit and honor to themselves and benefit to their employers, are ones that have the best chances of attaining eminence.—*Dry Goods Chronicle.*

In woollen dress goods, novelty effects have controlled the situation with a moderately steady call for all staples.

FOR INSURANCE READERS.

A Danish inventor is said to have devised a novel fire alarm. It consists of a small copper cartridge closed in by an india-rubber button and filled with a colored fire composition. When the temperature of a room rises above the melting point of paraffine, the sulphuric acid in the fuse is liberated and ignites a chlorate mixture, which in its turn sets fire to the Bengal light. A fusible metal disk placed in contact with this mixture will also be melted, and thus make electrical connection with a call bell, so as to sound the alarm at a distance.

The New York Life and Equitable Life have, says *L'Assurance Moderne*, notified the Swiss Government of their intention to provisionally withdraw from that country owing to their not having obtained a sufficient amount of business.

An English policy-holder injured himself in cutting a corn and had to consult a surgeon. He was insured in an accident insurance company, and made a claim upon it, but the company contended that he did not meet with an accident within the meaning of the policy. He is simply suffering from his own unskilful treatment of himself.

A Louisville general agency recently received the following solemn inquiry from an interior agent: "Is a mill standing on the bank of a stream, the dam connecting with the mill, or otherwise, liable to damage by flood, drift, ice or overflow, properly, or in any sense, a 'marine risk?' If so, about what would be the rate at which such risk should be written?"

Admirers of the plan of insurance as pursued by the Federal Life, of Hamilton, and it has many among young people, will find that a goodly number of persons has been added to that company's list of policy-holders during last year. Upwards of 1,000 applications, covering $2,367,000, were favorably received, and the number and amount might have been increased by 131 and $321,000 respectively, but not coming up to the required standard, were declined. This result for 1890 makes the aggregate amount of insurance at force on 31st Dec., $11,026,587, represented by 4,337 policies. The net sum paid out last year for death claims was $94,850, and the income from premium receipts and other sources reached a total of $245,565.31, or something more than $30,000 of an increase over 1889. Exclusive of the uncalled guarantee capital there is an apparent surplus in favor of policy-holders of $80,000, or about $160 of assets to every $100 of liabilities. With the uncalled capital added the surplus would be nearly $700,000.

A Dr. Taylor, who died recently at his home in North Hudson, N.Y., was insured in eighteen benefit societies in that section of the country for an aggregate of $33,000.

Personal accidents to railway travellers in Great Britain and Ireland for the half year ending June, 1890, are reported at 5,607. Of that number, 5,108 were classed as injuries, and 459 resulted in death.

The last twenty-eight years has seen the assets of the Agricultural Insurance Company, of Watertown, N.Y., steadily increase from $95,572 to the sum of $2,133,893 in 1891. It issues over 85,000 policies a year, and the risks are so carefully selected and dispersed that the loss ratio is small, and the profit on each risk need, therefore, be only a small one to make it safe. This company insures on the joint stock plan, against loss or damage by fire or lightning on private residences, barns or stables and