

Anyone who is watching the signs of the times in business must be impressed with the growing sentiment for orderly and beautifully-arranged stores, shops, halls, and offices. These people are quick to discern the attractive window or the corner arranged for their comfort. Clean, fresh paper upon the desks, pens frequently renewed, ink that shows it has not stood long in the using—all these are small things, perhaps, but not small if what the "Sage of Concord" has said be true, that "If a man can write a better book, preach a better sermon, or make a better mouse-trap than his neighbor, though he build his house in the woods, the world will make a beaten path to his door."

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### HIRED MAN AND BOSS.

How different things often are when a man becomes a merchant from what they were when he was a clerk is illustrated by the following story from a Philadelphia paper. One man asks, speaking of a fellow named Quimby: "He's still employed by that big wholesale house, isn't he?" But the other replies: "No. I think Quimby is in business for himself now. He used to take an hour for lunch, but now he takes a bare five minutes." The same thing happens among the labor-unionists. Let the man amongst them who shouts loudest for a thirty-minute hour and an eight-hour day become an employer, and you will straightway find him working from twelve to fourteen hours a day. He may not do it, either, because he is making money so fast, but most often because of competition and the difficulties of business. What employees need most of all is some understanding of the troubles that perpetually beset business men. But the labor union men seem to think every manufacturer has got "money to burn."

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### PROTECTION FOR GARDEN PRODUCE.

In an article on fruit and garden produce, under the caption of "Is Protection Necessary?" the Canadian Grocer remarks that foreign-grown fruit and produce which might under ordinary circumstances compete with that grown in Canada, as a matter of fact does not do so to the injury of the latter, since it comes on the Canadian market before the domestic article is ready, and ceases to be imported directly the domestic article is ready for the market.

We are not advocates of a system of high protection for foodstuffs or other of the necessities of life, but it certainly seems to us that this is hardly a fair statement of the case. The Canadian grower of garden stuff, when he wants to ship his produce across the line is usually met by a forbidding duty sufficient to eat up all possible profit, even if he had any climatic advantage inducing him to ship at all. On the other hand, for the American grower, the way into the Canadian market is an easy journey; all he has to pay is a comparatively small duty, and as this is generally ad valorem, it really cuts but little figure in protecting the Canadian producer. Let us give one or two illustrations of what we mean. The United States tariff duty against cabbages is 3c. per head, practically a prohibitory duty, and practically more than the vegetable is worth at any time when Canadian gardeners could think of sending them across the line. On the other

hand, the farmer or gardener in the southern states, can send his cabbages north, with almost no competition to meet, and finds arrayed against him on the Canadian border a duty which, being chargeable on the value of the stuff at the place of origin, is little better than nothing.

Again, take potatoes. The Canadian duty is 15c. per bushel, which at the average price of the article, taking it through the whole year, is perhaps fair enough. But, when American competition is most felt, and at the time referred to by our contemporary, the early season, potatoes range in price around \$1.50 to \$2 per bushel. Fifteen cents on such a price as this hardly counts at all. To this, of course, it may be replied that it is a very good thing that Canadian producers thus meet with some check to prevent them extorting from the public such exorbitant prices. The reply is that to a large measure these high prices are paid by the consumer in any case, only they are paid now mainly for the American product. It should be remembered, too, that in order to produce this high-priced early stuff, extra care and a higher order of skill are requisite. The yield is small in any case, and the only return that can rightly be expected is in the shape of higher prices, the cream of which under existing circumstances goes to the foreign farmer. The Canadian gardener is handicapped largely by his climatic surroundings, so far as competition with his southern neighbors is concerned. Surely if the purpose of protection be, so far as possible, to equalize conditions, here is a case for its operation, if the whole theory upon which it is based be true, and as it is acted on along other lines of industry.

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### MEXICAN TRADE.

Mr. J. H. McLeod, a Canadian residing and doing business in Mexico, writes to confirm the opinion held by many that good opportunities exist for the developing of a large trade between Canada and the southern Republic. He has been one of the principal agents in the formation of what is styled the Canadian Commercial Club, whose aim is to supply Canada with data and useful information concerning the trade between the two countries. In this connection, it may be mentioned that the British Consul in the city of Mexico writes to a British Columbian paper giving a few hints for the guidance of exporters of goods to Mexico. He reminds them that they should pay particular attention to the Mexican customs regulations, consular invoices, etc. Intending traders would do well as soon as the proposed steamship line is an accomplished fact, to send a travelling representative to look over the ground. The new line will meet with considerable opposition from the German and American lines, who successfully ousted the Anglo-Chilian companies.

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### LUMBER.

In last report under this heading it was announced that business was less active, and that prices in some lines had shown a decline. This tendency to easiness of the market cannot be said to have become accentuated. Building appears to be going on rather more rapidly, in Ontario at least, than seemed likely a month or two ago, and this has