

THE TRADE OUTLOOK.

Seldom does a twelvemonth open with a fairer trade prospect than the one now before our own country. Everything foreshadows an exceedingly prosperous, if not a phenomenal, year's business. Generously has the earth brought forth her increase, not merely in local tracts, nor with unequal favor, but over all our cultivated area, and throughout the whole range of our products. Climate and soil have been liberal accomplices of the labor of man. The taking off of the grain crop has also been fortunate, and effected with little damage or loss.

It is true other countries have reaped bounteously as well as has ours. It may be that this circumstance will keep the level of prices below the highest of former years, but this will be overbalanced in its tendency by the large amount produced. There is more money likely to be put in circulation by abundance at a moderate price, than by scarcity at a high price.

THE REIGN OF TASTE.

Among civilized people the ornamental rarely precedes the useful, but in time grows out of it, becomes its adjunct and sometimes lingers as its survivor. It is generally accepted as in the nature of all beginnings that they are rude. But in no beginning is there any degree of uncouthness that human taste cannot in the end greatly mitigate.

Taste is about as strong an element of success in a business character as is tact, industry, or square dealing. In these days it is getting more and more to be recognized as their equal and ally, and finds a place in the creed and practice of most business men. Such, at all events, must be the conclusion of any man who looks into our country stores nowadays, with the pictures, unfaded in his memory, of what they were twenty years ago. If the shadows of a hideous nightmare should give way to the fountains and grottoes of a fairy dream, great would be the change; but scarce greater than the transformation of the old country store to its successor of to-day.

In the rural house of merchandise of our childhood variety and overflowing plenty were usually to be found. Sacks in all postures, piles of boxes just holding their own with gravitation, kegs of all sorts of nails, encumbered the floor and confounded all sense of order. On the shelves from floor to ceiling, in solemn or grotesque array, patent medicines, unwashed delf, glass and everything that would stay there enlivened the appearance of the walls. Dust sacredly undisturbed upon all things and in all recesses, the lair of the spider in the shelf corners, the record of the fly-season stamped upon all goods, the close and stuffy atmosphere—these had their day when trade was young and taste was a minor thing. Only in a few sequestered spots are they now to be found.

Gone are they all, and with them is gone the man of gloom and silence who used to tie our parcels.

Various degrees of improvement now meet the eye of the traveller. A bright, neat man is usually all alive behind the counter. The shelves are tastefully covered with light attractive wares. Coolness, freshness, brightness hang around the stock. Industry, method, taste, all have their part in stock-keeping; and the consequence is, that though there is more labor there are also less waste in the stock, many times a more pleasing effect upon the public, and a more refining influence and better health and spirits to the dealer himself. The sum of all this, however, is Profit.

BUSINESS MEN'S ASSOCIATIONS.

A meeting of the business men of Seaforth was held for the purpose of hearing the report of the delegates from that town to the Merchants' Convention at Hamilton last week. The chair was taken by Mayor Wilson, and Mr. John Fairley was appointed Secretary. The delegates were Mr. George Good and Mr. J. Brownell. They handed in a most comprehensive and interesting report of the business done at the Convention, and strongly urged the formation of a Business Men's Association for Seaforth. After some discussion the report was, on motion, received, and the suggestions for the formation of an Association approved of. A resolution was also adopted, appointing a committee, consisting of the Mayor, Reeve and Messrs. J. Fairley, George Good and T. O. Kemp to canvass the business men of the town for their signatures to an agreement to become members of the Association to be formed here, and to take an active interest in it, also to secure a copy of the by-laws, etc., now being prepared by the Central Association, as soon as possible. The intention is, of course, to form this local Association under the auspices of the Central Association, which was formed as the result of the Convention. The objects of the Association are. (1) To encourage well directed enterprises, and to promote the growth of the town in all its interests and the extension of its trade. (2) To promote a more social feeling among business men, and to foster the strictest commercial integrity among those engaged in the different lines of business. (3) To take concerted action in matters where the general good of business men is concerned, and where individual effort is powerless, such as needed concessions in freight, express and insurance rates, shorter hours of business, immunity from adulterated goods and short weights and measures. (4) To procure a list of delinquents in the neighborhood for protection only, so that they may no longer abuse the confidence of business men, and evade the payment of just debts. (5) To compel the pedlar to assume a portion

of the burdens borne by the merchants. It will be seen that the objects of the Association are not only entirely unobjectionable, but highly commendable. The Expositor expresses the "hope that the business men of Seaforth will take the interest in this matter that they should do, and that we may justly expect from their enterprise in other directions, and that a strong and vigorous Association will be formed, which will be not only of great benefit to individual members and the trade, but to the town also."

HOW TO SUCCEED.

A gentleman, who is now a prosperous merchant, in a conversation with a representative of the Economist, said that his life was changed by a simple performance of duty.

"I was clerk behind the counter in a large retail store in Boston at a small salary. I had been out of work some time, and when I secured the position in Boston I was thankful, and I made a mental promise that I would perform my duties thoroughly. I had been working for two days with poor success: trade had been quiet, and it was difficult to get any customers. I felt somewhat downhearted because my counter had been idle for some time. A customer making his appearance I tried my utmost to effect a sale, but do what I might I could not please the man. Everything was either too light or too dark, and if the colour was selected for his satisfaction the 'quality' was not what he desired. I have a quick temper and at times during the transaction I felt that I could strangle the customer, but I quickly curbed my temper and went at him tooth and nail. I felt that my reputation as a salesman was at stake and it was a question to conquer or to be conquered. At last I made the sale, and with it came a great satisfaction, but I was not done with the man yet. I wanted to sell him more. He said something about sending his wife around to look at some dress goods. I promised to send samples of new patterns as they arrived. The customer thanked me and said:

"It has taken you a long time to sell me a few goods. Are all your customers as hard to please as I?"

"It takes some customers but a short time to make their selections, while others wish to go lower; we are bound to please them all," I answered.

"Does it pay your house to devote so much time to so small a sale?" he inquired again.

"Yes," I replied, "I have taken pains to give you what you want. I know that you will find the goods as I say. You will have confidence and come again, and the next time it will not take so long."

"After getting his package he walked out of the store. In three days I mailed samples of the new dress goods to his wife, and the