

his net is fish. He is the biggest book buyer we have: not that he indulges in rare and costly books, but that he keeps himself fully informed of everything in current literature. As soon as a new book appears he buys it, no matter whether it be a novel or a history or a philosophical treatise. He is not a rich man, yet he spends large sums of money for books; his library must be a large and curious one."

A young man in Mount Forest writes to ask a reply in this column to his question, "What is the best book to buy to give me information how to be a successful business man? I have been brought up on a farm, but I have had a good education, and think I would like store-keeping. And please not to use my name." Well, young man, we shall not give away your name. The reading of any one book or any half dozen books will not make a thorough and successful business man of you. It is your preference to be a storekeeper, and this cannot be learned from books alone. It is out of the question to learn the qualities and values of merchandise by reading, or the proportions of each kind of goods that suits a general country trade. Something of bookkeeping; something of banking; some knowledge of human nature, too, must be had. Before you can earn a day's wages at a trade you must serve three or five or seven years at it. Do not then make the mistake some young fellows do—and old fellows, too, for that matter—in thinking that storekeeping can be learned without an apprenticeship to it. Begin at the beginning. Serve your time behind the counter. Go for a term to a commercial college if you can, or get some one who has "been through the mill" to teach you the rudiments of merchandising. But at the same time consider whether you had not better (far better in this country, we think) learn a trade or stick to farming. However, it will do you no harm to read, in any event, *The Successful Merchant*, by Samuel Smiles; and then *How to Keep a Store*, by Samuel H. Terry. You can get either of these from Day, the Guelph bookseller, who will probably tell you, as we do, that storekeeping is much harder work than farming, and less certainly successful.

The wonder of the hour is the great fall in price of Webster's Unabridged Dictionary. The copyright of this work having expired—it was first issued in 1847—cheap reproductions of it are the order of the day. The Merriams of Springfield printed seven editions of the work in 1847, 1859, 1864, 1875, 1879, and 1884, and these sold, calf-bound, at from \$10 to \$12. There is offered to-day by the Toronto News Co. a Webster's Dictionary with 1,530 pages, bound in leather, size 8x10½ inches, 4½ inches thick, which can be retailed at \$2.50. True, the owners of the old copyright state that this cheap edition is printed from old plates. Still it is a wonderful \$2.50 worth for all that.

An effort is being made by the Booksellers, Association of Ontario to get the Government to consent to a reduction of postage on periodicals to one cent per pound. This is the United States rate, but we can quite imagine Mr. Haggart saying to the booksellers, as he does to the advocates of our adopting the American rate of 2-cent letter postage: "The Department cannot afford it."

The stationery business is quiet, we may almost say dull, "all over the place," as the English say. Country dealers refuse to give orders in advance—for which they are to be commended—preferring to wait and see how trade is going to be after the navigation opens and the spring time comes, Gentle Annie.

The wholesale dealers on their part seem to have a keen sense that credit has been too cheap, and they would like, if they only had backbone enough, to say NO to lots of people who give orders, and to lots more who ask renewals.

While the Canadian Copyright Act has been disallowed by the Imperial authorities, it is significant that the English *Bookseller*, a weighty authority, practically endorses the Canadian Act. That journal contends that the adoption of the provisions of the Act would be the fairest thing all round for both author and publisher. The opinion of Sir John Thompson, our Minister of Justice, is said to be that we have an undoubted right to pass the Act in question.

Government has declined to put the duty on books which was asked for by a deputation, and we cannot say we are sorry. There has been a slight increase made, however, in the duty on electrotype and stereotype plates.

The announcement was made on Wednesday that Joseph Abner Harper, one of the oldest members of the firm of Harper & Bros., the publishers, had retired from the house, and that he had been succeeded by his son, John Harper.—*New York Tribune*.

#### FACTORY AND ENGINE-ROOM NOTES.

"Sprinkler risks" appear to be at present in great favour among fire insurance companies. The success of the New England Mutuals with this class of risks has led to the formation of a syndicate of companies in the United States to compete with the Mutuals. Supply companies have been organized for the purpose of equipping factories of all kinds with this fire extinguishing device. A starch factory at Chesterfield, Iowa, supposed to be an excellent risk, and fully equipped with the most approved automatic sprinklers, was nevertheless entirely destroyed by fire on the 14th inst. It burned so quickly, that the greatest surprise is expressed at the failure of the sprinklers in this case. With cheap construction companies comes indifferent work, and more than ordinary care must be taken when work of this kind is done by these companies.

Those who cannot see the advantage of one engine over another might bear in mind that when Corliss introduced his engine he was willing to take for his pay what it would save in fuel. Watt did the same thing in replacing the atmospheric engine with the steam engine.

Speaking of governors, we have noted a frequency of fly-wheel explosions because the breaking of the governor belt caused the engine to race, there being no automatic provision for this contingency. Every engine should be arranged so that an accident to the governing arrangement will stop the engine.

It was held in the New York Court of Appeals, in the case of *Brennan vs. Gordon*, that where employers select to run their elevator an employee who has never before performed such a duty, they are bound to provide him for a reasonable length of time with an instructor competent to teach him how to run an elevator, and are liable for any injury to him arising from the incompetency or negligence of such instructor.

"The place for a shop hand to get acquainted with babbett metal is to let him start off on a brushing-up job on his own hook, and see what he can make out of it. He soon learns that a shaft must have something more than

a chalked surface, or a screw thread a coating of soot from a smoke-lamp, to set it free when the babbett has congealed about it, and after reheating and melting out his babbett for the fifth time finally hits on a layer in the soft-soap line that gives satisfaction." Here is a paragraph which it would do Alonzo W. Spooner good to see; for he would immediately say, "O ye shop-hands, and shop proprietors too, use copperine and you will never be bothered with congealing bearings."

#### INSURANCE NOTES.

A week ago a farewell supper was given at Peterboro' to Mr. William Thompson, of the Sun Life Assurance Company, who has been promoted to a district agency with headquarters at Whitby. Mr. Thompson was Past Master of Peterboro' lodge of Masons, and was presented with an address and a gorgeous Masonic apron.

A fire near Duluth, Minnesota, last Friday destroyed 8,000,000 feet of lumber and a number of buildings which belonged to Paine & Co., Northern Pacific Junction. The loss is said to approach \$100,000.

The Caledonian Insurance Company of Edinburgh is going to do business in the States under the management of Mr. Henry W. Brown, of Philadelphia. It is understood, however, that the Caledonian will only do business in those States which do not require a special deposit.

The following list of two months' accidents occurring in New York city, according to coroner's office and police office reports, forms, says the *News*, a very good argument in favor of accident insurance. There were from January 21st, 1890, to March 20th, 1890, inclusive:—Falls, 411; cases of injury by falling objects, 79; pedestrians injured by street vehicles, 83; injured while riding in street vehicles, 4; shot, 7; burned and scalded, 30; kicked by horses, 9; elevator accidents, 8; cuts, 15; drowned, 3; run over on railroads, 5; miscellaneous, 12; total casualties reported, 666. Of the accidents above reported, fifty proved fatal, twenty-four persons were killed by falls, three were killed by blows from falling objects, four were run over by vehicles in the street and killed, six burned, one drowned, five were killed in railroad accidents, one killed in saw mill.

The Citizens' Insurance Co. having determined to discontinue its life branch, a definite arrangement has been made with the Sun Life Insurance Co. of Canada, whereby that company has taken over the entire life business of the Citizens'. It is to be hoped that the arrangement may be mutually satisfactory to all parties.

The Standard Life Assurance Company held its sixty-fourth annual meeting in Edinburgh on the 15th April. The company issued during the year 2,671 policies, assuring £1,379,002. The claims by death or matured endowments which arose during the year amounted, including bonus additions, to £455,777. The annual revenue was £974,948, and the accumulated funds £7,343,956, or over thirty-six and a half millions of dollars. The increase for the twelve months in the accumulated funds of this staunch old company was £353,600 sterling.

The Commercial Union Assurance Company, Limited, shows a dividend of 17s. 6d. per share, free of income tax, making with the November dividend 25 per cent. for the year 1889.