

## KEEPING THE SECRET IN THE "TIMES" OFFICE.

The London correspondent of the Sheffield "Independent" describes the circumstances under which the announcement of the resignation of Lord R. Churchill was communicated to the "Times." He states that Lord R. Churchill "drove into Printing House Square shortly after eleven on Wednesday night and asked to see the editor. He was lodged with him for nearly an hour, at the end of which time, lo! as Mr. Black says in his novels, a strange thing happened. As soon as Lord Randolph had been seen off the premises an order was issued to lock every door, back and front, and take the keys to the editor's room. Despatches, as they arrived through the night, were taken in at a window in the courtyard. Not a soul, from the editor's room to the companionship of the printers' devil was permitted to leave the premises on any pretext whatever. For some hours mystery and consternation brooded over the establishment. The secret was till two o'clock in the morning locked in the breasts of the editor and two leader writers. The paragraph announcing the resignation, and the articles commenting thereon, were written and held back to the last moment. But even then, the hour being one at which other papers had gone to press, the doors were still locked, and it was not till the paper had gone to press that the doors were unlocked. This is 'how they brought the news to Ghent,' and how it was jealously kept there."

## SAFETY STOVES FOR RAILWAY CARS.

DEAR CRITIC.—In reference to paragraph on safety stoves for railway cars, allow me to suggest the Dutch Stove largely used in Holland and Germany.

It is of baked clay built in cells like a tubular boiler, only for hot air instead of hot water.

The stove is usually in houses fired only once for a day or night with a very small quantity of fuel, if I am not mistaken, of just kindling wood. A few minutes suffice to heat the stove, which is then entirely closed, the fire not being needed any more.

The heat given out by these stoves is very great, the hot air utilizes the heat of the fuel and the material of the stoves retains its power of radiating a long time.

Of course in cars branches of the stove might extend round the cars like a flue, and the stove be re-heated oftener, but at all events such a stove would not ignite the cars in case of an overturn, as when once heated it is hermetically closed by the dampers. Still further precaution might be taken by securing the firepot by an exterior cover of fireclay and wrought iron.

READER.

## OUR COSY CORNER.

Dinner-cloths or tray-cloths are now fashionable when made of the new Irish linen with colored borders in so-called peasant-work.

Wine table damask has the worked monogram in the centre of the napkins and table-cloths.

To polish brass kettles that are very much tarnished, first rub with a solution of oxalic acid, then dry and polish with rotten stone of the finest emery.

The best thing for cleaning tinware is common soda. Dampen a cloth and dip in soda, rub the tin briskly, after which wipe dry, and black and dirty tinware can be made to look like new.

GOOD LUNCH CAKES.—Try these lunch cakes: One cup of green corn pulp, one teaspoonful of sugar, and enough fine oatmeal to make the mixture sufficiently stiff to drop it in spoonfuls on the pan. Bake them fifteen minutes, and serve cold.

The prevailing wood for dining-room furniture the coming year will be oak, the finest carved antique style and highly polished. The room should have an oak mantel to correspond. Oak hall sofas and carved chairs are all the rage. Dining room chairs are usually cushioned in leather.

Plaistons are more fashionable than ever; the fronts of the bodices are either plain or plaited; they remain open shawl fashion to show the plaiston, and are closed over at the waist line. The plaiston is either of silk or of some fancy material which is also used in the trimming of the dress.

Do not buy an ugly piece of furniture simply because it is cheap. In purchasing, consider comfort first, then beauty. Try to combine the two in all you purchase. Do not be in haste to get everything at once, but gradually build up your home until it is "a thing of beauty and a joy forever" to all its inmates.

TO REMOVE BRUISES FROM FURNITURE.—Wet the bruised spot with warm water. Soak a piece of brown paper of several thicknesses in warm water, and lay it over the place. Then apply a warm flat-iron until the moisture is gone. Repeat the process if needful, and the bruises will disappear.

LITTLE DUMPLINGS.—This receipt for little dumplings for stew requires sour cream and sour milk or buttermilk, and is commended: Half a pint of buttermilk or sour milk, half a pint of sour cream, one teaspoonful of soda in the milk, two well-beaten eggs, a little salt and flour enough, with which is sifted one teaspoonful of cream of tartar, to make a stiff batter. Drop the batter by the spoonful into boiling water, boil for twenty minutes, or until the outside is done, and put it in the dish with the stew.

WASHING FLANNELS.—The following method of washing flannels, if closely followed, will prove thoroughly satisfactory. Make a soda by boiling a piece of ordinary yellow soap in soft water. Wash out the flannel in this, scrubbing as hard as is needed to remove the dirt, but taking care to rub no soap on the goods. If it is not clean enough from this washing repeat the process. Rinse out in clear warm water, and if the flannel is white, blue it, using a much larger amount of blueing than would be required for cotton goods, as the flannel does not take the color as readily. Hang the garment to dry in a shady spot, and while it is still damp iron it. White flannels treated in this way will not become as yellow as if washed in the ordinary manner, nor will they thicken to the disagreeable fabric they so frequently become. This method is especially good for use in doing babies' flannels, which are thus kept soft and preserve the blue-white tint that is so desirable.

THE ADVANTAGES OF BORAX.—The washerwomen of Holland and Belgium, who get up their linen so beautifully white, use refined borax as washing powder instead of soda, in the proportion of one large handful of borax powder to about ten gallons of boiling water. They thus save in soap nearly half. All the washing establishments adopt the same mode. For laces, cambrics, etc., an extra quantity of the powder is used, and for crinolines (requiring to be made stiff) a strong solution is necessary. Borax being a neutral salt, does not in the slightest degree injure the texture of the linen; its effect is to soften the hardest water, and, therefore, it should be kept on every toilet table. To the taste it is rather sweet; it is used for cleansing the hair, is an excellent dentifrice, and in 'hot countries is employed in combination with tartaric acid and bicarbonate of soda as a cooling beverage. Good tea cannot be made with hard water; but all water may be made soft by adding a teaspoonful of borax powder to an ordinary sized kettle of water, in which it should boil. The saving in the quantity of tea used will be at least one-fifth.

## COMMERCIAL.

The volume of trade in most lines continues to be light, but the situation has developed no new phase. As the year progresses, the evidences of a healthy condition of general business receive renewed confirmation, and a healthy and confident feeling pervades all departments. In many instances prices show a tendency to improve, and the indications appear to point to further profitable gains during the year.

Still, January and February are always quiet months with us, and dealers have had much to contend against this season. The weather has been so fluctuating that the roads have had no chance to become settled, making it unusually difficult for travellers to get about to their clients. The pending general elections distract popular attention from business to a considerable extent. Till these are over, little real work will be accomplished. Payments are fairly satisfactory.

We regret to note in our exchanges that shippers of fresh fish from Halifax and other Lower Ports are engaged in "cutting their own throats," having adopted the plan of consigning fresh cod, etc., to retail houses in Montreal and other cities west. This mode of doing business is calculated to injure their interests very materially. Their new customers formerly bought from wholesale commission merchants. Under the new style, shippers are competing against themselves, causing a complete disruption of the market and considerable slaughter in prices. Consequently, retailers can and do make their own markets in purchasing both from shippers and from the wholesale men.

About two weeks ago, a wholesale boot and shoe firm in Montreal failed, hurriedly called its creditors together, offered them 40 cents on the dollar, and had this offer accepted by part of the creditors within an hour of the commencement of the meeting, and without any examination of the firm's papers. Some of those interested, who had claims amounting to some \$15,000, refused to accept 40c, believing the estate is worth more. Writs of attachment have in consequence been issued against the estate. And now comes the fact that is important to all business concerns. It is affirmed, on apparently good authority, that the firm had habitually "cut prices" for months, and perhaps years past, underselling the market by about 20 per cent, and disposing of their goods below cost price. This is a most unprincipled thing to do, but we know that it has been done by some Halifax houses in the past, and suspect two or three others now in trade of the same practice. The only way to treat such concerns, who do business more for the sake of financiering than for making living profits, is to refuse to sell them goods except for spot cash. It is the business of the wholesale man or manufacturer to know in a general way what his debtor does with the goods that he buys from him on credit. If he uses them merely to demoralise the market and to "finance," the fact should be readily known, and it should be an easy task by refusing credit to put a peremptory stop to his mad career.

The City Railway on Monday last laid its track on Spring Garden Road from Pleasant street to the intersection of Birmingham street. The sleepers and ties were placed in position last fall, except at the curve where the new branch joins the main line on Pleasant street. This event is mainly noteworthy from the fact that the work was done on the 31st of January, when the outside world generally supposes Halifax to be bound up in fetters of snow and ice. There was no frost in the ground on that day.

DAY GOODS.—The market is fairly active for the season, and is in good shape. Some deliveries of spring goods are making, and new orders are reported to be coming in satisfactorily. All woolen goods have a very firm tone, and higher prices are predicted. In fact it is generally believed that woolens will become dear this year. Private advices are that French woolen goods, especially, promise to make a further advance and counsel prompt