

## LET THE STOCKING YAWN.

The practice of making Christmas presents to customers is fast becoming obsolete. Though the process of its decay has been rather prolonged, it has been none the less sure. The usage is doomed, not only by the diffusion of more enlightened ideas on the subject, but also by stern necessity. The latter has weakened the hold of the gift system more than argument has. It is remarkable that it has been withstood so long. The grocer's profits have for many years been unsubstantial, and rendered precarious by the credit system. The grocer, of all men, should be least expected to dispense liberal bounty to rich and poor at Christmastide. He cannot afford it. It is a senseless piece of self-oppression to undertake the burden of a big largess just at the beginning of the year. The grocer's customers do not bring a store of supplies to the man behind the counter. Christmas may be sad or merry with him according as the uncertain patronage and pay of his customers determine. Why, therefore, should he be a district Santa Claus? The role is a popular one, no doubt, and the custom of making Christmas presents quite a graceful one, but there is no money in it. It is rather a crude intelligence that cannot be made to understand that the recipient of the gift is expected to be overtaken some time and made pay for the gift. It is a long lane that has no turn, and after a spell of bestowing the grocer must be expected to do a little retrenching in the way of reduced gravity or bulk in the quantities he deals out, subdued quality, sophistication, etc. People begin to suspect this, and conclude that the most generous grocer at Christmas is the most tricky man on days of the year not marked by a red numeral. The movement for the abandonment of the practice has made very good headway this year. Stratford is one of the places now considering it. — *Canadian Grocer*.

## FOG SIGNALS.

At a recent Board of Trade inquiry it was stated that a master of a ship, having fallen in with a fog, and not hearing a fog signal when expected, "lost his head." This observation was meant to express the fact that the master had got bewildered and lost his head figuratively, but his figurehead remained fast on his shoulders. This frequent assertion that powerful fog horns or sirens are not heard has been discredited by magistrates and nautical assessors who preside over enquiries relating to casualties. If, however, these worthy representatives of justice, and experts, would take the trouble to pursue the voluminous Parliamentary returns with respect to fog signals, they would learn that these warnings to mariners cannot or should not be implicitly relied upon in any kind of weather. Professor Tyndall and the elder brethren of the Trinity house, who were on board a yacht off the South Foreland when many experiments were entered upon, were surprised at the deviation and loss of sound. One day, in fine, clear weather, the noisy siren on the Foreland was scarcely distinguishable. Professor Tyndall and other talented men

attribute this distraction to acoustic clouds which are not perceptible to vision. Experiments made in the Baltic supported the same idea in distant signals. The Canadian Government appointed a staff of naval officers and meteorologists to determine whether, in foggy weather, there is any defect in the system of fog signals on the coast, and, if so, the cause. After a long series of trials and inspections, the specialists have made a report which bears out the previous tests, and the conclusions arrived at by that examining committee have induced the Canadian Government to issue a warning to ship masters, in which it is mentioned that no dependence must be placed on fog signals as they are no guides to distance, but only to locality. Complaints had been made that the fog signals in the Gulf of St. Lawrence were negligently worked, and could not be discerned; in other words, the fog signals were declared to be misleading. The Minister of Marine met these protests by a thorough and exhaustive enquiry. The committee of experts were requested to ascertain the merits of horns against whistles, and guns against bombs. The experts have discovered that even under the most favorable conditions, that is when placed on high, outlying points, with nothing to interfere with the passage of the sound, all fog signals are unreliable. Two reports of guns, fired under apparently similar circumstances, gave very different results, and a weak signal has been heard further than a stronger one. Shallow water, again, by causing unequal heating of the atmosphere, lessens the value of the signals. Save as regards cost, the whistle is held to be superior to the horn, and either is better than powder, but it is only in comparatively few places that the cost and inconvenience of a steam signal would be warranted. The minor lighthouses in Canada will be supplied with bombs. We have given the gist of the report, and the Canadian Government, which does not levy light dues, is to be credited with a desire to make the coast lights and fog signals as effective as possible. The Gulf of St. Lawrence is noted for fogs, and therefore it is important to have the best of light and fog warners. The Canadian Government have also been the means of corroborating previous investigations. We ask those who may have to express opinions on the causes leading to the stranding of ships to cast aside their dogmatic notions, and to make allowance for that which is beyond their comprehension. Masters who denied that they had heard foghorns were considered to be untruthful and awful slingers of the hatchet. Evidence has been invited to explain the make of foghorns and sirens, and to tell presidents of courts of enquiry that the signals should be heard for miles, but not quite so far as from England to China. Because these fog signals are constructed to send forth dismal noises, the gentlemen of England, who sit at home at ease, air their ignorance by saying that masters are, in common parlance, liars. We have done our share in showing that all sounds are more or less uncertain when sent forth from ships or towers. If masters would remember this instruction they would, as usual, listen for fog signals, but at the same time be sceptics. — *Liverpool Journal of Commerce*.

## THE BEET SUGAR INDUSTRY.

§§The amount of Beet Sugar produced in the United States this year will be greater than former years, some enthusiastic believers in the beet thinking that before many years America will be able to produce all the sugar it requires, and experts are now busy locating the most favorable localities for its growth. In Canada, proof is not wanting that beets can be grown which compare favorably with the best produced in the European States where the industry has been largely pursued. In Quebec, as well as other provinces where beets have been grown, the result has shown clearly that this branch of industry can be profitably undertaken, and the factory at Farnham, P. Q., has, this year, 14,000 tons of beets, or as much as its capacity will allow—the output, this season, being expected to reach about 3,000 barrels.

The product of the Farnham factory tests by the polariscope 99.3 to 99.5 degrees of sweetness, which nearly equals in saccharine properties cane granulated.

The beets are bought at \$1.50 per ton delivered on the premises or on cars, and, in addition to this amount, the Provincial Government pays 50c. per ton to the producer, demanding from him sworn testimony as to the amount of land employed and quantity produced per acre. On all sides, the results fully confirm the value of beet raising to the farmer, and we know of instances where one grower made \$100 per acre, whilst another, convinced of the money in it, from thirty acres last year, increased his area of cultivation this year to thirty-five acres.

There is little doubt that as an agricultural enterprise the intelligent production of the sugar beet, in large quantities especially, is an assured success, and further, it has been abundantly proved, that where bee culture has been extensively adopted, a great impetus has been given to all kinds of other farm products, and this fact is explained by reason of the greater care necessary in the raising of beets, and more intelligent farming on the part of the producer, thus creating a knowledge in respect to the successful cultivation of other products not before possessed, and consequently enhancing the value of his crops of all kinds.

The consumption of sugar in Canada is, this year, expected to reach about 225,000 lbs., Canadians annually importing the raw material to the value of over \$15,000,000, and it will be apparent what an immense saving could be effected were the manufacture of the sugar required for consumption to be produced within our own territory. Our soil and climate are well adapted for the production of the sugar beet in abundance, and of the very best quality, and with fifteen million dollars devoted to the opening out of the country, to the extension of other industries and to the increasing of the area under cultivation in the fertile regions, only waiting for the hand of man to turn them into gold, a tangible evidence of advancement would be perceptible in all that goes to make a country great.

How soon the people of Canada will rise to the opportunity now offered, it is hard to say. There will be obstacles to be overcome, and the Government will experience a drain upon its resources in order to fac-